

Note of a Discussion with Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan¹

Lord Mountbatten

December 22, 1947

Pandit Nehru recalled that I had, at one of the earliest of the previous series of meetings held at Delhi between the Prime Ministers, read out a note expressing my Government's policy that all the agreements should hang together. He said that he considered the present situation to be tantamount to undeclared war, in which, in the opinion of the Government of India, Pakistan was encouraging the aggressors. It was not the question to hand over large funds to Pakistan in these circumstances.

Liaquat Ali Khan pointed out that these funds did not in any way belong to India; they were Pakistan's legal share of the cash balances.² It was not a question of a loan or a gift being made. He considered that they should be handed over straightaway.

Mr. Mohammad Ali made the point that all the financial agreements had been made on their own merits. With this Mr. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar agreed, but gave his view that the whole background in reaching these agreements had been the intention to reach an overall settlement.

I asked to what extent the action of making a reference to U.N.O. could be taken as a detente to stop the fighting and lead to a decision to implement the financial agreements.

Nehru did not answer this. Instead he said that the fighting was taking place on Indian Dominion territory, which had been attacked. He said (though this was on the spur of the moment and rather a hurried remark) that he admitted that the delay in implementing the financial agreements was a method of bringing pressure against the Pakistan Government. But this was not the main pressure that was being brought to bear. The military pressure, which was in reply to

¹ New Delhi, 22 December 1947. Extracts. Lord Mountbatten Papers Broadlands Archives Trust Broadlands Romsey, Hampshire, Those present were Mountbatten, Nehru, Liaquat Ali Khan, Gopaldaswami Ayyangar and Mohammad Ali.

² Under the financial settlement between India and Pakistan out of the Rs. 400 crores of the total cash balances Pakistan was to get Rs. 75 crores, out of which Rs. 20 crores had already been paid to her. As for the public debt, the whole of it had been taken over by the Union Government and Pakistan's share was to be repaid to India in 50 annual instalments on favourable terms. The settlement also related to sterling balances, pensions, military stores, ordnance factories and other fixed assets.

aggressive military pressure against Indian territory, was of greater import.

This gave Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan the opportunity to point out that he did not recognize Kashmir as Indian Dominion territory -in exactly the same way as India did not recognize Junagadh as Pakistan territory. These remarks did not improve the atmosphere of the meeting.

I then emphasized that the agreement to make a reference on Kashmir to U.N.O. had been reached the previous evening before the question of the date of implementing the financial agreements arose. Therefore, there was no question of pressure having been applied to Pakistan in order to make them agree to this procedure.

Pandit Nehru reiterated that the reference which he intended to make to U.N.O. would be on the question of whether or not Pakistan had supported the aggression against Kashmir. All the evidence which was available to him showed that they had supported this to a most serious degree.

Pandit Nehru then handed to Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan the letter, which represented the first step in making a reference to U.N.O. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan was in such a bitter mood that he first said that he did not wish to open or read this letter. But he subsequently repented, read it through, and undertook to send a reply as soon as possible-after he had consulted his Government. I suggested that Pandit Nehru should draft the formal application to U.N.O. without waiting for Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan's reply, so that this could be despatched with the least possible delay. Mr. Liaquat AG Khan then returned to the question of the implementation of the financial agreements, concerning which he confessed that he was very bitter. He said that he regarded the delay in implementation as equal to, if not worse than, repudiation. He would indeed have preferred complete repudiation.

Mr. Mohammad Ali made further reference to the financial position of Pakistan. The Rs. 20 crores which had been made available to them before August 15 were now nearing exhaustion. However, leaving aside all other possible sources of raising cash, there was no question at all of Pakistan running out of funds. Therefore, there was no question of pressure being applied in India's delay in making available Pakistan's share of the cash balances. He repeated his opinion that the attitude of the Government of India was not helping towards a settlement of the Kashmir issue, but rather the opposite. It was "putting up the backs" of the Pakistan Government. To this Mr. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar replied that the assistance which Pakistan was giving to the raiders was "putting up the backs" of the Indian Ministers to a far greater extent.

Pandit Nehru then weighed in with the remarks which I had hoped that he would refrain from making. He said that the normal military action

for India would be to hit out at the concentrations of raiders, their bases and supply lines (which were, of course, situated in Pakistan territory). However, the Government of India wished to avoid any action which was likely to lead to war, and was restraining itself. Nevertheless, it was an impossible position that a territory which should be friendly was being used as a base for operations. In his view the situation would now either improve rapidly, or deteriorate rapidly. He advocated that all concerned should now work for rapid improvement; the rest would follow.

I suggested that no publicity of any kind should be given either to the proposed reference to U.N.O. or to the question of the date of implementing the financial agreements. With this Pandit Nehru agreed. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan agreed with the first point, but not with the second. He said that he wished to reserve his position with regard to publicity over the implementation of the financial agreements.

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan³

New Delhi
22 December 1947

Dear Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan

On various occasions, I have drawn your attention to the aid which the raiders into Kashmir State are deriving from Pakistan. They have free transit through Pakistan territory. They are operating against Kashmir from bases in Pakistan. Their modern military equipment could only have been obtained from Pakistan sources; mortars, artillery and Mark V-mines are not normally the kind of armament which tribesmen possess. Motor transport, which the raiders have been using, and the petrol required for it, could also be obtained in Pakistan only. Food and other supplies are also secured from Pakistan; indeed, we have reliable reports that the raiders get their rations from military messes in Pakistan. According to our information, huge numbers of these raiders are receiving military training in Pakistan, which could only be under officers of the Pakistan Army.

2. The forms of aid, enumerated in the preceding paragraph, which the raiders are receiving, constitute an act of aggression against India because they are being used against a State which has acceded to the Indian Dominion. The Government of India, while protesting against the action of the Pakistan Government in furnishing or allowing such assistance to be furnished and urging that the Pakistan Government should stop such help and at least urge the raiders to withdraw, has so far taken no action itself which might involve entry by Indian forces into Pakistan territory. They have been hoping, all these weeks, though with diminishing hope, that the Pakistan Government themselves would put a stop to aid to the raiders which is of the nature of help to India's enemies. Since protests have failed to bear fruit, the Government of India now formally ask the Government of Pakistan to deny to the raiders :

- (1) all access to and use of Pakistan territory for operations against Kashmir;
- (2) all military and other supplies;
- (3) all other kinds of aid that might tend to prolong the

³ This letter was personally handed over to Liaquat Ali by Nehru during the Inter-Dominion Conference on 22 December. White Paper on Jammu and Kashmir.

present struggle.

3. The Government of India have always desired and still earnestly desire to live on terms of friendship with Pakistan. They sincerely hope that the request which they have now formally made will be acceded to promptly and without reserve. Failing such response, they will be compelled to take such action, consistently with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, as they may consider necessary to protect their interests and to discharge their obligations to the Government and people of Kashmir.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to the Maharaja of Kashmir⁴

New Delhi
23 December 1947

My dear Maharaja Saheb,

I sent you a letter⁵ three or four days ago on the subject of our talks with the Pakistan Ministers regarding Kashmir. Our Cabinet came to the conclusion that the best course for us to adopt in the circumstance.s was to draw the attention of the United Nations Organisation to the aggression on Indian Dominion territory by people coming from or through Pakistan with the aid and encouragement of the Pakistan Government. The U.N.O. would be asked by us to call upon the Pakistan Government to stop this aggression as in the alternative we will have to take such steps as we might think fit and proper to do so. Prior to our approaching the U.N.O. it was considered desirable to send a formal request to the Pakistan Government asking them to stop giving any aid or encouragement to the invaders. This was the line we took up in our conversation with the Prime Minister of Pakistan and I gave him a letter to this effect. A copy of this letter is enclosed.

We shall now wait for a few days, which are not likely to exceed four or five for Pakistan's reply. We shall then refer the matter to the Security Council of U.N.O. AB this procedure need not take very long. The Security Council will probably have an early hearing of our representative and may then call upon Pakistan to reply to the charges made against them. They may thereupon send a commission to India. Meanwhile, of course, we shall carry on our military operations as we are doing. Indeed, we hope to carry them on more vigorously. Future action will depend on other developments.

This matter has to be kept perfectly secret at this stage.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

⁴ Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1943-50, Vol. I, pp. 126-127.

⁵ See *ante*, item 66

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to the Maharaja of Kashmir⁶

New Delhi
25 December 1947

My dear Maharaja Saheb,

The news of the setback in Jhanjar reached us last evening. We were naturally put out by it. It was not important in a sense, but it did exhibit certain weakness on our side and lack of foresight. However, the only thing I to be done in such circumstances is to pull ourselves together again and go ahead with greater vigour.

2. We spent several hours in conferences with some of our colleagues and military advisers. We asked General Thimayya to come over from Amritsar and he was present at our conferences. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad was also here and we took advantage of his presence to consult him in regard to many matters.

3. We considered the situation in all its aspects which, as I have previously pointed out to you, means not only the Kashmir aspect but the larger national and international aspects. Kashmir is very much an all-India problem and to some extent an international problem today. The eyes of the world are upon it and the Great Powers are specially interested in its fate. We have constant enquiries from various Ambassadors in regard to it. What happens to Kashmir is of significance not only to India but to the rest of the world.

4. It was because of this that we came to certain conclusions a few days ago and I wrote to you about some of our decisions. Those decisions not only related to U.N.O. but essentially to further offensive action that we might take against the invaders. We are preparing for this both politically and in a military sense, and we were specially trying to raise irregular forces to support our regular army. We hoped to be ready for further action within two or three weeks. Recent developments, however, and specially the capture by the enemy of Jhanjar, have hastened the pace and we had to think afresh.

5. It is clear that no halfway objectives or measures are good enough and we are now mobilising for a total effort. We are taking all necessary steps to this end. Our resources of course are not unlimited and it is not easy to put out this all-out effort quickly. Nevertheless we

⁶ J. N. Collection.

hope to move quickly enough and within the next few days several important steps are being taken. These will affect the situation. We are preparing not only in Jammu and Kashmir State but also in other fronts.

6. I need not go into these measures now except to assure you that we propose to do our utmost to meet this menace and I have no doubt that we shall defeat it. One step that we are taking is of great importance in our eyes and that is the raising of sufficient irregular forces for guerilla warfare and frontier patrol. These will be raised in cooperation with Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. But they will be under the control and general direction of our army commanders. We shall raise these irregular forces in Kashmir and also in East Punjab. Further regular army forces are also being sent. Our strength will grow immediately from tomorrow onwards. We should be in full trim by the middle of January.

7. For you as for us recent happenings have been distressing. But such setbacks only steel us to further resolve and effort. As I have said on many occasions we are going to see this Kashmir business through. Rest assured of that and even in the present, if I may say so, do not worry about the future. We shall pull through right enough. With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Conclusions of the Joint Defence Council Meeting⁷

I have read the paper prepared by the Conference Secretary, Joint Defence Council, in regard to the conclusions of a meeting held at Government House on Monday, the 22nd December, which was attended by the Governor General and Ministers of India and Pakistan.

2. I do not think that this paper gives a correct picture of what was agreed or what took place.

3. There is no question about agreement as detailed under Item or I on Kashmir. The Pakistan Ministers can hardly agree to being charged by us with various offences under international law. What happened was that mentioned on Sunday, 21st night, that the Government of India proposed to make a reference to the Security Council of the U.N.O. charging Pakistan with aiding and abetting aggression on Indian Dominion territory and asking them to call upon Pakistan to put an end to this.

4. This was a unilateral declaration on our part which required no agreement.

5. The next day I handed a letter to the Prime Minister of Pakistan in which we formally charged them with this aggression and asked them to stop it. This letter would, of course, elicit a reply within a few days and thereupon we would probably take the action contemplated by us, that is reference to the U.N.O. Here again it is hardly correct to say that this was an agreement. It was just an indication of possible developments. I do not know what the Pakistan Government may say or do about this and our action would naturally depend on their action.

6. As for our preparing a draft of the application by India to the U.N.O., this is entirely a matter for us to consider as to when and how to do it and not a matter of agreement between Pakistan and us. Naturally we are anxious to expedite this and we hope to be ready for any further step as soon as the time comes for it. But every subsequent step is governed by the previous step and when these previous steps are not known, subsequent steps cannot be determined.

7. Action in regard to Item II (Financial Settlement): I cannot stand as

⁷ Note, New Delhi, 23 December 1947, Extracts, File No. 123-KU/56, M.E.A..

it is when Item I is altered. It is a fact that in discussing Kashmir the question of the date of implementing the recent financial agreement between the two Dominions had not arisen.

8. It is also a fact that I confirmed on behalf of the Government of India that there was no intention to repudiate the financial agreements. We stood by them completely.

9. The way (iii) as stated does not appear to be wholly right. It is my business to report to my Cabinet what I consider proper. This is hardly an agreement between me and the Pakistan Prime Minister. As a matter of fact, I have received a letter from the Pakistan Prime Minister on this subject which is being sent to my colleagues in the Cabinet. This letter contains the Pakistan Prime Minister's views on the subject.

10. Item III: What step the Government of India will take in regard to the disputed land between East and West Bengal, it is for the Government to decide. I do not see how the Secretary General, Pakistan, and the Conference Secretary to the Governor General could come to an agreement about this matter. The status quo might be maintained. But the status quo has recently been changed by force of arms by the East Bengal Government and we have the strongest objection to this. If there is to be any enquiry, as there should be, the status quo prior to this aggression must be restored. This is the business of the Home Ministry and it is not proper for any agreement by outside parties to be made over the heads of the Home Ministry and the Cabinet.

11. Item IV: Licenses for Arms. The draft given in appendix A is agreed to in so far as it goes. I would point out, however, that at a recent conference on Secretariat level an agreement was reached about the restoration of licensed arms and ammunition which had been confiscated. It was agreed that the two Dominion Governments should issue instructions to all the Provincial Governments to have the arms and ammunition restored wherever receipts for them were held. In case where no such receipts were held, the Dominion Governments should furnish lists of cases to each other and all such cases should be properly investigated. All this need not be stated in the press communique, but the following sentence might be added:

"In cases where arms and ammunition have been confiscated contrary to the inter-Dominion agreement, the two Governments would take steps to restore them to the rightful owners: "

12. Item V: The Minister without Portfolio stated that he would enquire into this matter.

I find that the paper drafted by the Conference Secretary has already been sent to the Prime Minister of Pakistan. I regret that this should have been done without any reference to me as this, as I have stated above, does not give a correct picture of what happened. This is likely, therefore, to give a wrong impression and possibly to create misunderstandings.

This note is being sent to the Conference Secretary who has already been informed by telephone that I do not approve of this paper.

Cable from Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan⁸

Your telegram No. 1229 dated 25th December. I have been greatly surprised to receive this as it bears no relation to anything that has happened in Kashmir or Jammu during the last seven weeks. I have received no joint or other representation from Messrs. Alexander⁹ and Symonds¹⁰ on the line you mention. I have already expressed my regret to you for the attacks on the convoys in Jammu area that took place on the 4th and 6th November. The Indian Army had nothing to do with these. On the contrary they took most vigorous action against attackers killing 150 seriously injuring 200 and arresting 500. Ever since they have fully controlled the situation nothing of the kind you mention has happened. Your telegram therefore has absolutely no relation to facts or to anything that has occurred since the Indian Union troops have been functioning in Jammu. Muslim life is perfectly safe in Jammu. During the past six or seven weeks the invaders coming from Pakistan have perpetrated large scale massacres in various parts of Jammu Province. I have repeatedly drawn your attention to these facts and to the use of Pakistan territory as a base of operations against Indian Dominion territory resulting in massacre and looting and destruction on a large scale.

I would draw your attention to the letter I gave to you personally on Monday the 22nd evening and would request a very early reply to it.¹¹

⁸ New Delhi, 26 December 1947. White Paper on Jammu and Kashmir.

⁹ Horace Alexander.

¹⁰ Richard Symonds (b. 1918); Deputy Director, Relief and Rehabilitation, Government of Bengal, 1944-45; with Friends Service Unit, Punjab and Kashmir, 1947-48; member, Secretariat, United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan, 1948-09; U.N. Representative, Sri Lanka, 1953-55, Yugoslavia, 1955-58, Europe, 1959-62; Regional Representative, East Africa, I9GI; Consultant, U.N. Population Division, 1969; U.N.D.P. Resident Representative in Greece, 1972-75, Tunisia, 1975-78; senior Adviser, U.N.D.P. and U.N. Fund for Population Activities, 1978-79; author of *The Making of Pakistan* (1950) and other books.

¹¹ See ante, item 68.

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to General Roy Bucher¹²

New Delhi
26 December 1947

My dear General Bucher,
Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad telephoned from Jammu to say that he had approached General Kalwant Singh and asked him for the rifles etc, which you had said he could get from him. General Kalwant Singh told him that he had nothing to spare and therefore could not give anything. Perhaps something might be lying in Pathankot. I do not understand this whole business and where your supplies go to. It appears from the latest reports t6at the position round about Naushera as well as other places is grave. I do not worry about this much but it does make me rather sad to think that these happenings will prolong the campaign because in any event we are going through it whatever the cost and whatever the consequences. We shall naturally continue our efforts in the political field, by reference to U.N.O. etc., to bring about some cessation of fighting if it is possible. But I am sure that this will not result in fighting stopping at present. Indeed there is every chance of its spreading more and endangering our security. We have thus to be prepared for every possible contingency and to be prepared soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

¹² J. N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Lord Mountbatten¹³

New Delhi
26 December 1947

Dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your letter of the 25th December which I received on the 26th afternoon.¹⁴ I have read it with care and I entirely agree with you that we owe it to you to inform you what our views are about Kashmir. I am sorry to confess that I have not read the minutes of the last Cabinet meeting with any care. I do not know therefore what those minutes say about Kashmir. I entirely agree with you, and I think my colleagues of the Cabinet are of the same opinion, that fighting in Kashmir is most deplorable and the sooner it is ended the better. We realize fully, even though we might not have done so at the earlier stages, the dangers and risks involved in it. Even more so we feel that it is coming in the way of so much that we want to do and that there is a possibility of it doing great injury to us. We would therefore like this fighting to end as soon as possible. You mention in your letter that you missed the note of urgency in our Cabinet meeting of 20th December. I can't speak for the minutes, but I can assure you that all of us have felt this note of urgency and indeed it is difficult for me to apply myself to other work because of this. There is no question of our sending a report to U.N.O. in order to delay matters. We thought of this because U.N.O. might ask us for a report. That is the usual practice in the Security Council and we want to be ready to send a person at short notice if such a demand was made.

Ever since we have thought of making a reference to U.N.O. we have been anxious to expedite matters. We stayed our hands for two or three days because Liaquat Ali Khan was coming here. Since then we have been waiting to get his reply. It has not come yet and I feel that we should wait no longer. We propose therefore to make our reference within two days or so. There is no question of the *char* lands in West Bengal being linked with Kashmir.¹⁵ I don't think anyone even

¹³ L/P&S/13/1862, I.O.L.R.

¹⁴ In this letter Mountbatten had cautioned Nehru about the consequences of sending Indian troops into Pakistan.

¹⁵ Mountbatten wrote that he had read in the minutes of the Cabinet meeting a reference to the "linking the issue of certain *char* lands in West Bengal with their reference on Kashmir " The lands in question were Natayanpur, Pakka, Fathepur, Gotha, Rianpur, Baidyanathpur, Tarapur, Manacharpur, Radhanagar, Dewanpur and Sarandaspur. In the Revenue Thana map of 1947 they were shown as parts of the Murshidabad District. They originally formed part of the mainland of the district when the river Padma flowed along the eastern boundary. The river having shifted

mentioned this. That question stands apart. It is true however that all aggression on the part of Pakistan is viewed more seriously than otherwise would, because of Kashmir. You will remember that from the very first date that we discussed the Kashmir issue, I have laid stress on the fact that we must drive out the raiders and establish peace and order in Kashmir State.

It was only then that the question of plebiscite arose. At no time did I think of accepting the presence of outside raiders in any part of Kashmir State. The position of inhabitants of Poonch who might have joined the raiders was different. There was no question of driving them out. As we had offered a plebiscite on the restoration of order and as we were committed to popular democratic government in Kashmir, there was no reason whatever for any people in Poonch to carry on revolt against the State. I felt quite sure that this situation could be dealt with easily when the raiders had been pushed out. No one thought, to my knowledge, of crushing the inhabitants of Poonch by brute force.¹⁶ This question hardly arose at present and there was no point in worrying about it. Much will no doubt happen before we have to face that issue, and what will happen now will no doubt govern subsequent developments. In any event there is no desire to coerce a large section of inhabitants against their will and by force of arms. At the same time, if any people carry on a war against a state, even when it is on a popular basis, then they have to be opposed. While we ardently desire peace and the end of fighting, we must not be unrealistic. Our desire does not lead to peace unless something is done to that end. We have not started the fighting. We have come into the picture to oppose a well-planned invasion and I do not see how we can submit to this kind of aggression. To do so would be to encourage wild elements in Pakistan and to invite continuing trouble not only in Kashmir but elsewhere in India. It would in fact not mean peace but war. I pointed out some time ago at a meeting of the Defence Committee that on no account would we submit to this barbarity whatever the cost. That was not an emotional outburst, but the result of cool thought given to the problem. I am convinced that any surrender on our part to this kind of aggression would lead to continuing aggression elsewhere and, whether we want it or not, war would become inevitable between India and Pakistan. During these last two months I have studied the Kashmir situation very carefully and I have received numerous reports from the Frontier Province and the Punjab. I am convinced that the whole of this

westwards, these lands got detached from the district and appeared closer to the opposite bank.

¹⁶ Mountbatten had written that it would be morally unjustifiable "to impose our will on a predominantly Muslim population."

business has been very carefully planned on an extensive scale and that high authority in Pakistan has encouraged this. However that may be, the present situation is that the Frontier Province and a considerable part of the West Punjab have been turned into military training grounds where vast numbers of tribesmen, ex-servicemen and others are being armed and trained and then sent on to invade Kashmir. The resources of Pakistan are being employed to this end. It is quite impossible to conceive that over 100,000 men should be transported by train and motor transport, fed, lodged, trained and kept in camps without the fullest support from the authorities in Pakistan. We have direct evidence that the authorities are continuing this. The only inference to draw from this is that the invasion of Kashmir is not an accidental affair resulting from the fanaticism or exuberance of the tribesmen, but a well-organised business with the backing of the State. We are not dealing merely with tribal irregulars, but with regular armed forces properly led and with good staff work behind them. We have in effect to deal with a state carrying on an informal war, but nevertheless a war. The present objective is Kashmir. The next declared objective is Patiala, East Punjab and Delhi. "On to Delhi" is the cry all over West Punjab. How are we to face this? You will observe that I am not underrating the dangers which I think are considerable. Nevertheless I have no doubt that unless we meet the danger halfway at least, we shall be much worse off: The policy we have pursued thus far has been a cautious defensive policy and all the advantage has been on the other side. The Pakistan ministers have refused to dissociate themselves publicly from the invasion much less to check it in any way. Their newspapers have encouraged this invasion. The Muslim League in West Punjab is openly enrolling recruits. In fact everything is being done to help military operations against Kashmir State. I am not surprised at the Pakistan ministers being reluctant to say anything against this invasion because by their policy and acts they are committed to it. They are not anxious for peace and they want to present us with accomplished facts. Because of this they delay matters. If this is the correct analysis, as I believe it is, then we must not take any step which helps the Pakistan policy and we must not carry on our own operations in a weak defensive way which can produce no effective impression on the enemy. The stakes are not Kashmir only, but something even bigger than that so far as Pakistan is concerned. They have gone so far that it is difficult for them to withdraw even if they want to, and I doubt very much if they want to accept terms which it is possible for us to accept. From a strictly legal and constitutional point of view it is our right and duty to resist this invasion with all our forces. From the point of view of international law we can in self-defence take any military measures to

resist it including the sending of our armies across Pakistan territory to attack their bases near the Kashmir border. We have refrained from doing this because of our desire to avoid complications leading to open war.¹⁷ In our avoidance of this we have increased our own peril and not brought peace any nearer. Peace will come only if we have the strength to resist invasion and to make it clear that it will not pay. That is the only way Pakistan seems to understand. And if even the Pakistan high authorities understood and appreciated some other way, it is clear that the great majority of the invaders are incapable of understanding anything but the way of force. In the course of a Defence Committee meeting I have made it clear that we attach the utmost importance to Kashmir and on no account are we going to submit to armed invasion whatever the consequences. To submit to it means not only the loss of some territory but disruption of the whole of India and chaos. I have said that if necessary we shall employ all the resources of India to combat this horrible method of coercing a people. Even if the whole of Kashmir State was occupied by the enemy we would fight on and would not surrender. It is only the declared will of the people of the State ascertained under peaceful conditions of law and order that we will accept. On no account will we accept any decision enforced upon us. Two months ago we offered a plebiscite. That has not yet been accepted formally by Pakistan and war is being carried on. That does not indicate either a desire for peace or for a plebiscite on the part of Pakistan. I think this invasion of Kashmir is thoroughly immoral and bad, and, with this conviction, am totally unable to surrender to it for that will involve a complete degradation of India which I could not possibly tolerate.

Your suggestion that the question should be referred to U.N.O. and that they should be asked to send a commission involved a great many difficulties.¹⁸ First of all, according to Pakistan, they are no parties to this fighting. The actual invaders therefore were people with no formal standing as a state. We cannot ask U.N.O. to arbitrate between raiders and the Dominion of India. We cannot bring Pakistan into the picture when they deny complicity. It must be remembered that all the fighting has taken place on Kashmir State territory, i.e.

¹⁷ Mountbatten had felt concerned over the reported passivity of Indian forces taking possession of the "bases" or "nerve-centres" inside Pakistan from where the raiders launched their operations. He said his "reaction was not inspired by military considerations, but by the fact that it would mean war between India and Pakistan.... The idea that a war between India and Pakistan could be confined to the subcontinent, or finished off quickly in favour of India without further complication, is to my mind a fatal illusion....".

¹⁸ Mountbatten wrote that "surely the main object should rather be to bring U.N.O. here... to get a team nominated to come out and dealt with the business and help to stop the fighting".

Indian Dominion territory. We have not thus far touched Pakistan territory. We are the aggrieved party. Are we to seek the cooperation of the invaders and those who have done us this grievous wrong and appear jointly before the U.N.O.? I do not think that would have been a proper procedure for us to adopt. Nevertheless your suggestion that the matter be left to U.N.O. was accepted by us in the only way it seemed feasible, and in acceptance with facts. This was for us to draw the attention of U.N.O. to this invasion, and to the fact that Pakistan was siding and abetting it, and ask them to call upon Pakistan to refrain from doing so. This would inevitably be a unilateral reference. To say that it was an agreed reference would make it a collusive one without any force. Of course when U.N.O. is seized with the matter, other developments may take place. If Mr. Liaquat AU Khan wants an excuse to put before his people, then he would have that excuse when we make a reference to U.N.O. We shall proceed with this U.N.O. matter. But, meanwhile, the situation is becoming a dangerous one. Vast numbers of the enemy are entering Kashmir at many points. This in itself shows that instead of checking this invasion Pakistan is pushing it forward with all its might. There are large concentrations near the West Punjab border also, where the cry is "March to Delhi". There is imminent danger of an invasion of India proper. Can we afford to sit and look on? We would not be discharging our duty to our country if we did so. We would deserve to be sacked immediately. We must therefore prepare for every eventuality, whatever that might be, and mobilise all our resources to that end. We have taken enough risks already; we dare not take any more. We can't even permit much longer the continuation of the use of bases in Pakistan to attack our troops and our territory in Kashmir. There is no question of small operations going on in Kashmir through the winter months, but of quick developments. If some development takes place which endangers our position, then we must take immediate action to defend ourselves, even though it might involve marching across Pakistan territory to their bases. We don't wish to do so unless we are compelled by circumstances. You repeat in your letter that the only thing to be done is to stop the fighting. Yes, certainly, but how? We neither started it, nor can stop it. Of course we can in a sense surrender. That I am sure you would never advise us to do, and indeed if we thought of it, others will fight on and there will still be no peace even with surrender. Nobody on our side wants war. The very idea is hateful. What is a state to do if it is attacked and invaded and its very existence endangered? The fact that this is done in an underhand way makes matters worse and even more immoral. That cannot be an excuse. My conclusion is that we should immediately proceed along two parallel lines of action.

1. Reference to U.N.O. in the manner indicated above. As soon as we do this Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan will of course be informed.
2. Complete military preparations to meet any possible contingency that might arise. If grave danger threatens us in Kashmir or elsewhere on the West Punjab frontier, then we must not hesitate to march through Pakistan territory towards the bases. I have written to you at length. I hope I have explained what I have in mind. I think I represent the views of my colleagues also in what I have said above.¹⁹

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Source: Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Series II, Volume 4

¹⁹ Replying on 7 December, Mountbatten voiced his fears at the possibility of out between the two countries "before the U.N.O. can be brought in". He advised Nehru to write to Attlee since the "H.M.G. have a right to know if war is becoming imminent."