

Nehru to Patel

objecting to States Ministry's Interference in Kashmir Affairs

NEW DELHI
23 December 1947

MY DEAR VALLABHBHAI,

Gopaldaswami Ayyangar has sent me copies of correspondence which has passed between him and you last night regarding 150 motor vehicles being sent from East Punjab to Kashmir. I must confess that I am greatly surprised to read this. I do not appreciate the principle which presumably the States Ministry has in view in regard to its work. That Ministry, or any other Ministry, is not an imperium in imperio, jealous of its sovereignty in certain domains and working in isolation from the rest. If that was so then the Government would not be a close knit organism working together with a common purpose, and the PM. would have no function to perform. But I do not wish to consider the wider question of principle at this stage though it may have to be discussed later.

The present issue relates to Kashmir. This raises all manner of connected issues-international, military and others-which are beyond the competence of the States Ministry as such. That is why it has to be considered by the Cabinet as a whole frequently and by various Ministers separately or together. And that is why I have to take personal interest in this matter as PM. to bring about co-ordination in our various activities.

Gopaldaswami Ayyangar has been especially asked to help in Kashmir matters and at our request has visited the State twice. He has to deal with East Punjab also and the MEO organisation there. Both for this reason and because of his intimate knowledge and experience of Kashmir he has to be given full latitude. Accordingly, after repeated talks with representatives of the Defence Ministry, all manner of arrangements have been made about supply of arms and equipment etc. In this connection the urgent need of motor vehicles has been repeatedly raised. Ultimately it was decided to ask the East Punjab Government to relieve a number of these for Kashmir and steps were taken accordingly.

I really do not understand where the States Ministry comes into the picture, except that it should be kept informed of steps taken. In any event I do not understand why the States Ministry should intervene and come in the way of arrangements being made. All this was done at

my instance and I do not propose to abdicate my functions in regard to matters for which I consider myself responsible.

May I say that the manner of approach to Gopaldaswami was hardly in keeping with the courtesy due to a colleague?

Yours
JAWAHARLAL

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Patel to Nehru Tendering Resignation in Utter Anguish

DRAFT¹

23 December 1947

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Your letter of today has been received just now at 7 p.m. and I am writing immediately to tell you this. It has caused me considerable pain.

Before I received your letter I had already written to Gopaldaswami a letter of which a copy is enclosed herewith. If I had known (that) he had sent you copies of our correspondence I would have sent to you a copy of my letter to him straightaway.

In any case, your letter makes it clear to me that I must not or at least cannot continue as a Member of Government and hence I am hereby tendering my resignation. I am grateful to you for the courtesy and kindness shown to me during the period of office which was a period of considerable strain.

Yours sincerely,

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

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Source: Sardar Patel's Correspondence

¹ The letter is marked 'draft'. It was not sent presumably because Sardar was persuaded to drop the controversy.