

From Sardar Patel to Nehru

A Prophetic Letter (November 7, 1950)



Nehru rarely consulted his colleagues when foreign affairs were concerned



"Political and administrative steps to strengthen our borders"



Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister

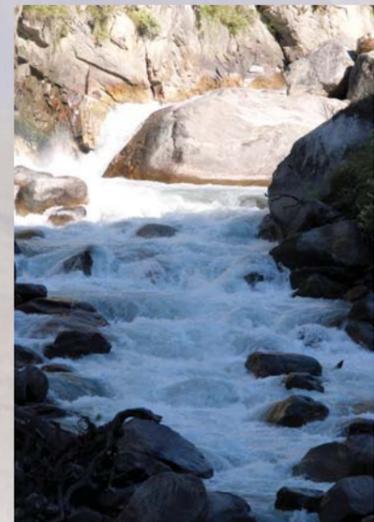
On November 7, 1950, a month after Tibet was invaded, Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru: "The Chinese Government has tried to delude us by professions of peaceful intention. ...They managed to instill into our Ambassador (K.M. Panikkar) a false sense of confidence in their so called desire to settle the Tibetan problem by peaceful means. ...The action of the Chinese, in my judgment, is little short of perfidy."

Patel's conclusion was: "from the latest position, it appears that we shall not be able to rescue the Dalai Lama."

He passed away 5 weeks later.

Nehru did not acknowledge Patel's letter. The Sardar had strongly suggested amongst other things:

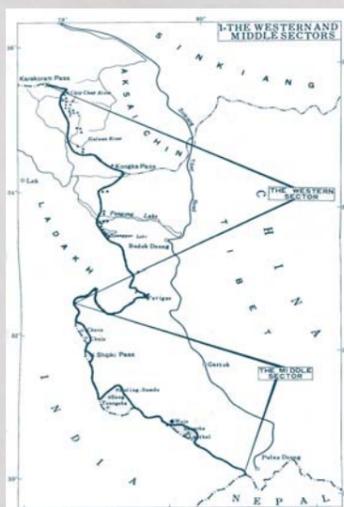
- ✦ A military and intelligence appreciation of the Chinese threat to India both on the frontier and internal security
- ✦ An examination of our military position and such redistribution of our forces as might be necessary
- ✦ An appraisal of strength of our forces
- ✦ A long-term consideration of our defense needs
- ✦ The question of Chinese entry into the UN
- ✦ The political and administrative steps to strengthen our Northern and North-Eastern frontier.
- ✦ Improvement of our communication, road, rail, air and wireless in these areas and with the frontier outposts.



Another security threat, many India rivers flow from Tibet



Today China continues to claim large chunks of India's territory



Several years later, India discovered the Chinese claims over its territory



The McMahon Line in Arunachal Pradesh (Bumla)



The Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai policy of Nehru ended with the Sino-Indian War in 1962



"Improvement of the communications" has finally started (Hercules landing in Daulat Beg Oldi, Ladakh)