

## Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

*Series II, Volume 21*

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### **Cable to G.S. Bajpai<sup>1</sup>**

5. On our side of ceasefire line we have in Jammu and Kashmir State today about 75,000 troops. Their role is three-fold. First, they have to prevent infiltration and raids all along ceasefire line. Secondly, they have to guard Ladakh-Tibet frontier. Thirdly due to presence of 40,000 odd Pakistan and 'Azad' forces in 'Azad' area, as well as proximity of regular Pakistan Army concentrations, Pakistan are in a position to concentrate strong forces against us at any point of their choosing. Thus, our forces are spread out along entire ceasefire line as well as on eastern frontier while Pakistan can attack at any point. We must, therefore, maintain an adequate force to deal with such a threat. For all these tasks our present strength is barely adequate.

6. For these reasons, withdrawal of only 5,000 regular Pakistan troops from 'Azad' area would make no material difference. Militarily, the risk to security of State could only be removed if Pakistan troops were withdrawn, 'Azad' forces were disarmed and disarmed and disbanded, so that there might be no link, and army concentrations in Pakistan were shifted considerable distance from ceasefire line. This would make reconcentration of forces on both sides equally difficult. We can hardly expect Pakistan to agree to removing their forces far away from the Kashmir-Pakistan frontier and that danger has anyhow to be faced. If, however, all Pakistan troops were withdrawn from 'Azad' area and 'Azad' forces disarmed and disbanded, risk to security would be somewhat

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<sup>1</sup> New Delhi, 8 February 1953, Jawaharlal Nehru Collection.

reduced and we could then carry out the substantial reduction in strength of forces on our side to which we have already agreed.

7. The question, therefore, of reducing Pakistan or 'Azad Kashmir' troops in 'Azad' area does not help at all so long as there is that link. Danger of sudden attack remains which can only be reduced by clearing 'Azad' area of all armed hostile elements.

8. This leads to the conclusion that it is not possible for us to reduce our present forces on our side if only Pakistan troops are withdrawn from 'Azad' area, leaving 'Azad' forces intact.

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**Cable to G.S. Bajpai<sup>2</sup>**

4- We have also to keep in mind Tibet frontier. (For your information). In Jammu at present a violent agitation is being carried on by Hindu communal elements supported by Jan Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha and even Akali Dal, who are threatening spread of movement to other parts of India.

5- Withdrawal of 5, 000 Indian troops, though involving of their forces from 'Azad Kashmir' would hardly attract notice. Our withdrawal would have large significance at present and would create trouble for us both in Kashmir and in rest of India.

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**To K.N. Katju<sup>3</sup>**

New Delhi

February 13, 1953

My dear Kailas Nath,

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<sup>2</sup> New Delhi, 9 February 1953. File No. 52/2000/NGO-52, MEA. Also available in Jawaharlal Nehru Collection.

<sup>3</sup> JN Collection. Extracts.

... Nevertheless, I am writing to you because this matter has been delayed very greatly, although it is of high importance.<sup>4</sup> A Border Defence Committee was appointed long ago and it made certain recommendations about the putting up of check-posts and taking other steps on the UP-Tibet border. There is no doubt that has to be done, but long argument has resulted over the quantum of expenditure which the Government of India or the UP Government should bear. Then Finance Commission somehow comes into the picture and we wait for its report. On the whole we forgot about this important matter.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

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### **Need for Check-Posts on UP-Tibet Border<sup>5</sup>**

I think I have your attention previously to the difficulties we are experiencing on the UP Tibet border. Two years ago or so a committee under certain recommendations about the steps to be taken on our frontier areas. Among these, they dealt with the UP-Tibet border and suggested check-posts, etc. Since then the UP Government has repeatedly written to us on this subject,<sup>6</sup> but somehow the matter has got hung up between the Home Ministry and the Finance Ministry, 2. I drew the attention of the Home Minister to this some days ago<sup>7</sup> and he said that he would immediately expedite it. The main things to be done are the development of communications and some kind of barracks or accommodation to be built at the border for our check-posts.

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<sup>4</sup> The sensitive border areas of UP adjoining Tibet had been causing concern to the Central and UP Governments. Nehru and forwarded to Katju a letter sent by K.M. Munshi, the Governor of UP, about this matter.

<sup>5</sup> Note to Secretary General, MEA, 9 March 1953. JN Collection.

<sup>6</sup> See *Selected Works* (second series), Vol. 16 Pt. II, p. 541.

<sup>7</sup> See *ante*, p. 305.

3. Shri Govind Ballabh Pant, Chief Minister of the UP, again spoke to me about this matter today, because all kinds of rumours are afloat there about possible infiltration.

4. Another aspect of the question is of developing those areas on our side so that the people living there might have some occupation. That is probably a UP Government matter. But communications and accommodation for our police or other forces there are party at least a Central Government interest.

5. Could you please see that this matter is dealt with expeditiously?

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### **Approach to Defence Problems<sup>8</sup>**

If I may give some kind of a rough and ready equation about defence, I would say that defence consists of armed forces, plus their equipment etc., plus the industrial production of the country, plus the economy of the country, plus the morale of the people, plus the international relations or international position. All these are important, every one of them affecting each other. And the first thing to realize is that defence does not consist merely of the armed forces. Essentially, and more and more, it consists of the strength behind those armed forces, the strength of the nation's economy, the industrial capacity of that nation to produce goods required for defence, etc., and other things that I have mentioned.

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### **Enlistment of Gurkha Soldiers in Nepal**

4. I explained to the High Commissioner that there was much force in the King's arguments and while he had no desire to end the Gorkha

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<sup>8</sup> Reply to the debate of the Defence budget, New Delhi, 26 March 1953, Parliamentary Debates (House of the People), Official Report, Vol. II, Pt. II, cols 2907-27. Demands totaling over 215 crores were made for the Defence budget.

enlistment by the UK abruptly and, indeed, had no particular objection to its continuing for some time, he had to do something which he could explain and justify to his own people. Also there was always the question of Tibet or China across the border which might take advantage of any step which could be utilized for public agitation in Nepal.

5. The High Commissioner said that he appreciated these arguments but, at the same time, this year's notice was very difficult for them to accept. They could hardly build up anything on that basis. I pointed out to him that in the world today, and in Nepal today, any long term agreement had no particular value. It was quite possible that any turn of events or a new Government would refuse to abide by it. The best thing was to accept this present position and continue it as long as one could. In fact, if this became a subject for much public argument, then it would become still more difficult to have an agreement at all for any period. The chances were that the agreement could be carried on.

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### **North-Eastern Frontier Situation<sup>9</sup>**

I have read these papers with interest. It is clear that we should remain wide-awake about our North-Eastern frontier situation from Ladakh right up to Bhutan and Assam. Mr. Sinha's<sup>10</sup> note is helpful in drawing our attention to various present and possible dangers.

2. But I find Mr. Sinha's approach to be coloured very much by certain ideas and conceptions which prevent him from taking an objective view of the situation. The note starts by reference to the lust for conquest of the Chinese and is throughout based on this. Mr. Sinha looks back with a certain nostalgia to the past when the British exercised a good deal of

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<sup>9</sup> Note to the Secretary-General and Secretary, MEA, 5 March 1953. JN Collection Extracts.

<sup>10</sup> S. Sinha, who was officer in charge of the Indian Mission in Tibet in 1950, was Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of External Affairs at this time.

control over Tibet and he would have liked very much for India to take the place of the British of those days. As a matter of fact, the weakness of our position in Tibet has been that we are successors, to some extent, of an imperial power which had pushed its way into Tibet. When that imperial power has ceased to have any strength to function in the old way, it is patent that we cannot do so, even if we so wished. We do not, in fact, wish to do so in that particular way. What we are really interested in is our own security maintenance of our frontiers intact.

3. It serves little purpose to think regretfully of past days and past ways. That is only done by people who have been pushed aside by the advance of history and who can only think of the past when they played an important role in the historic process. The biggest event since the last War is the rise of Communist China. It is totally immaterial whether we like it or dislike it. It is a fact. It followed naturally that a strong Chinese Government had done with more or less success. It followed also that there was no power, however big, which could resist that claim in Tibet. Certainly we could not do so. To take up an attitude of resistance without the strength to follow it up would have been political folly of the first magnitude. Therefore, we had to accept the changes that took place. We shall have to accept any other changes internal to Tibet. But one thing we are not prepared to accept is any modification of or intrusion across our frontiers. Therefore, we must concentrate on that and not think vaguely of other matters.

4. While there is much in Mr. Sinha's report that has a basis of truth, this is put forward in such an exaggerated and emotional way that it loses force. I am sorry that a representative of ours should allow his objective analysis to be affected in this way. That does not help in understanding a situation.

5. We live in a revolutionary period when the whole of Asia is in a state of turmoil and change. We have to keep up with that change and not merely regret the days of pre-change. In the ultimate analysis we have to build up our strength. That strength means not so much frontier outposts and

the like but internal strength—political and economic. One of the biggest things in Asia today and in the future is the rate of progress of India and China. . If India makes good, more especially on the economic front, in the course of the next five to ten years, then India's future is not only assured but is very promising. If we fail internally, then of course anything can happen on our frontiers or elsewhere.

6. We have, of course, to be alert and vigilant on our borders. This is not so much from the point of view of resisting any major incursion but rather to make clear to China and the world that we are going to stick to our frontier. Any challenge to our frontiers will have to be met. In fact, it means a challenge to the whole of India, and not merely to the frontiers.

7. As Mr. Kapur<sup>11</sup> says, and many other reasons can be advanced also, no major challenge to these frontiers is likely in the near future. If we are alert, no challenge will take place within a reasonable time and possibly even later.

8. It must always be remembered that the strength of our position lies in certain geographical factors which cannot easily be changed or overcome—not so much to Himalayan mountains but the added and inhospitable land of Tibet on the other side which cannot support or logistically provide for any large forces. The weakness of our position on those borders lies in the fact that Bhutanese etc., are closely allied culturally and socially to the Tibetans and naturally look towards Tibet from that point of view.

9. The weakest parts of the frontier are those lying between Bhutan and Sikkim. In a sense there is graver danger in Nepal, if that country goes to pieces.

10. The general policy we should pursue is:

- a) Strengthen our communication system with the border areas and have well-equipped check-posts there.
- b) Strengthen our Intelligence system.

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<sup>11</sup> B.K. Kapur, India's political officer in Gangtok, Sikkim.

c) Develop these border areas economically and otherwise and thus bring them more and more within the orbit of India's economic and national life by making them feel that they are integral parts of India and profit by it.

11. In regard to Bhutan the difficulties arose because we do not function there at all or hardly at all. Nevertheless, as Mr. Kapur pointed out, the position in Bhutan is not so bad, so far as we are concerned, as Mr. Sinha seems to imagine. We should develop these relations and more particularly communications there. This has to be done with tact.

12. For the last year or possibly two years the UP Government has been writing to us about their border with Tibet and the difficulties of maintaining any check-posts there because of lack of communications and accommodation. In spite of urgent reminders from the UP Government, the matter has got stuck up either in the Home Ministry here or in the Finance Ministry. This should be looked into, as this is important.

13. We should like, of course, to have as full information as possible about Tibet. How exactly to do it is not clear to me. If Mr. Sinha would apply his mind to this rather than indulging in fears and speculations, he would be much more helpful.

14. There is no question of our making India the main route of supplies to Tibet for the Chinese. We should not agree to this. But, on the whole, even from the larger political point of view, it seems desirable that a trickle of supplies should be allowed to go through and this type of contact maintained. That itself has a certain psychological significance, demonstrating the reliance of Tibet on India. Of course, trade should be encouraged, where possible.

15. Whenever any incident takes place in Tibet involving any affront or discourtesy to Indians or India's interests, we should take a strong line. A strong line does not mean an offensive line, but it does mean that we do not intend to submit to such treatment. As I have said above, we can only remain in Tibet in any shape or form with China's acquiescence. But so long as we remain there, we must remain there with dignity.

16. There are references in Mr. Sinha's note to Tibetans boasting about their claims to Bhutan or parts of North-East India. Whenever any such thing is said publicly or formally or semi-formally, we should take immediate objection to it and make it clear that we are not prepared to tolerate any such claim language.

17. When Sardar Pannikar was in Peking, the question arose of our settling our frontier with Tibet, that is the MacMahon line, finally with the Chinese Government. Mr. Panikkar was of opinion that we had made our position clear to the Chinese Government and that it will serve no useful purpose to raise that question formally at that stage.<sup>12</sup> We agreed at the time. Perhaps the present is not a suitable time to raise this question. But if occasion offers itself and especially if any challenge to that frontier is made, then we shall have to make this perfectly clear.

18. We have to deal directly in our Ministry with the North-East Frontier Agency. That is our responsibility and we should keep the development of those areas constantly in mind. Fortunately the Governor of Assam is deeply interested in this matter and has helped greatly by extensive tours. In a wider sense, it is our responsibility to look after the entire border even apart from the North-East Frontier Agency. External Affairs should keep itself in close touch with developments along this frontier in Kashmir, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Assam so that a coordinated policy might be pursued in cooperation with the other Ministries or State Governments concerned.

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<sup>12</sup> In a cable to Nehru on 17 June 1952, K.M. Panikkar argued that India's position on the frontier with Tibet was well known to China, and as Chou En-lai had not raised the border issue in his interviews with him, his silence should be presumed to be acquiescence, if not acceptance.

### **Supply of Mica to China<sup>13</sup>**

Some time ago the question of supplying mica to China and Indonesia came up before me. The view had been taken that, since we should not supply mica to China, we should not also supply mica to Indonesia. I did not agree with this view. I suggested that we should certainly supply to Indonesia straightway and, in the case of China, we can consider the matter afresh a little later.

2. Will you please let me know what was done and what the position is now?

3. The reluctance to supply mica to China is presumably due to a fear that this might create complications with the US Government and their laws. I have previously stated that there is absolutely no reason why we should consider ourselves bound down by US laws or policy on this subject. We should certainly take that factor into consideration when examining a case. But it should not be the determining factor.

4. As is known, Ceylon supplied rubber to China in spite of the disapproval of the US. It is odd that Ceylon can function in this way and we should be apprehensive. I have just been reading in a report from our High Commission in Ceylon a quotation from a statement made by the Ceylon Government on this very issue of rubber. After announcing their adherence to the aspirations of the western democratic world, etc., and their opposition to communism, the Government goes on to say that: "It cannot be a party to any policies which sacrifice economic well-being for political expediencies and so are apt to produce just those undesirable consequences which are sought to be avoided or eliminated."

5- This statement, it is said, was widely welcomed not only in Ceylon but in the Press of the United Kingdom.

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<sup>13</sup> Note to Secretary General, Foreign Secretary and Commonwealth Secretary, MEA, 19 March 1953. JN Collection.

6. I think, therefore, that we should give up this attitude of fear and apprehension in our dealings with China. They should be governed solely by our national interest. If that interest requires it, we should certainly supply them with mica.

7. The Commerce Secretary, H.V.R. Iengar, happened to see me this afternoon and I had a talk with him on this and like subjects. He told me that it was the External Affairs Ministry that was coming in the way. He mentioned that their negotiations with the Czechoslovak Government had been held up because of mica. The Czech Government wanted mica to be included in the list of articles supplied by us to them. We had been reluctant to include this in the list, although, apparently, we were prepared to supply it to them. I do not see why we should be reluctant in this way. We should certainly supply mica to them if we can spare it, as I believe we can, and include it in any list of articles supplied to them.