

SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Series II, Volume 39

Cable to Bhagwan Sahay¹

Continuation of my last night's telegram. Food situation here now and at least till end of year even more difficult than I had thought. However, as we are anxious to help Nepal to our utmost ability, we propose following:

As explained in last telegram, 1900 tons rice are being sent now. In addition, we are prepared to make available immediately 1600 tons. Within a month, we shall make available another 1500 tons.

All this will total up to 5000 tons of which 1500 are part of Nepal's previous purchase and 400 tons are our gift. We suggest that payment for the remaining 3100 tons should be in kind in the course of the coming harvest. This is most we can do at present. Position later will depend on success of procurement policies.

I think Nepal's real difficulty will be to transport in near future even the rice that we make available now.

I hope you will explain position fully to Prime Minister K.I. Singh and tell him that we are taking this step, which involves some risk to us, because of our extreme desire to help Nepal. We would not agree to do this with any other country.

¹ New Delhi, 21 August 1957. JN Collection.

Trade and Travel Agreement Between China and Nepal²

I have read your note as well as the other notes in this file. I have also read again the agreement between China and Nepal.³

2. As the Prime Minister of Nepal has definitely asked for our views and our advice in this matter, we cannot withhold them. It may be that our views leak out. We cannot help that. Not to give any advice, when we are asked for it would be improper.

3. Two questions arise: (1) Whether the agreement or treaty between Nepal and China should be formally ratified or not, and (2) relating to the frontier between the two countries.

4. These two questions appear to me to be independent of each other. There is no reference to the frontier in the agreement. That subject is left open.

Whether it was desirable to leave it open or not at the time the agreement was entered into, is a matter which does not arise now. The agreement was arrived at, signed and proclaimed. The Chinese Government has ratified it. The Nepalese Radio etc., have announced the agreement of the Nepal Government to it. The only formal step that remains is for the Nepalese Government to inform the Chinese Government of their ratification.

5. Normally speaking, an agreement which has gone through all these processes, has to be accepted by a successor Government, unless that successor Government comes in through some revolutionary process and is prepared to abrogate all previous treaties and understandings. There has been no such revolution in Nepal. The Head of the State still continues to be the King of Nepal who has entered into these treaties and engagements. Only the Government has changed. It would thus be a very extraordinary procedure for the present Government of Nepal to go back on this treaty or to refuse to

² Note to Foreign Secretary, MEA, New Delhi, 23 August 1957. IN Collection

³ The reference is to the Trade and Travel Agreement between China and Nepal, signed on 20 September 1956 at Kathmandu. See also Selected Works (second series), Vol. 35, p. 501

ratify it. Such a procedure would inevitably be greatly resented by the Government of China. If any attempt is made, as is suggested, to make the ratification contingent on an agreement about the frontier, the Chinese Government might well say that they are not prepared to enter into any talks for a further treaty or agreement when the previous one was rejected at the last stage. If a new Government in Nepal has the right to do so, then the same contingency might have to be faced in the event of the present Government in Nepal changing. There can be no assurance about the future.

6. Thus, to imagine that this will be some kind of pressure tactics on the Chinese Government to induce them to agree to discuss the frontier question and further to agree to hand over a part of what is considered their territory now to Nepal, seems to me wholly unreasonable. The effect on the Chinese Government is likely to be the very opposite of this.

7. The actual agreement between the two countries, which now await formal ratification by the Government of Nepal, appears to have no objectionable clauses. It is a straightforward treaty between the two countries, chiefly relating to trade, pilgrims, the nationals of the two countries and the exchange of diplomatic and consular missions. I do not see how the Government of Nepal can take exception to any part of this agreement. At the most, they may not like the establishment of Chinese consular missions in Nepal. But that appears to me inevitable. Nepal wants to have its missions in Tibet.

8. I do not know what talks took place in Nepal when this agreement was discussed between the representatives of the two countries. While these talks were taking place, we had several visits from the Ambassador of China in Delhi,⁴ who kept us informed of the broad nature of these talks. He assured us that he was anxious to have the goodwill of India in this matter as they recognized India's interests in it. He further gave the impression that the initiative came from the then Prime Minister of Nepal, probably during his visit

⁴ Pan Tzu-hi.

to China. He further said that they had no intention of opening a separate mission at Kathmandu at least in the foreseeable future.

9. Thus, the attitude of the Chinese Government appears to have been quite straightforward throughout. Apart from this agreement, they gave a large sum of money to the Nepal Government.

10. I really do not understand on what ground or pretext the present Nepal Government can go behind this agreement and refuse to ratify it. That would undoubtedly be an unfriendly act to China. It will bring no pressure on China and there might well be a good deal of pressure on the Nepalese residents in Tibet, who might be harassed in many ways. Thus, there is no advantage at all, even from the strictly practical point of view, in rejecting this agreement or refusing to ratify it at this stage.

11. My advice, therefore, would be to ratify this agreement in the normal course. So far as the second question is concerned, the one relating to frontier, this can certainly be raised as a separate issue. I do not think it should be related in any way with this agreement. Any such attempt to relate it will probably be disadvantageous to Nepal.

12. Whether on the merits this question of frontier should be raised at this stage or soon is another matter. I am unable to express any firm opinion about it, as I do not know the actual geography of the place and have seen no map. Nor do I know the historical background.

13. But from these papers it appears that the Chinese Government or the Tibetan Government have been in possession of these areas which appears to be about a thousand square miles, for a hundred years. Thus, long term possession is in favour of the Chinese Government. Everyone knows that it is never an easy matter to "challenge old possession and few Governments accept the argument that by giving up some territories they occupy, they will have what is called a scientific frontier. If scientific frontiers were sought between various countries in the world, the present map of the world would

have to be changed greatly. I cannot personally conceive of the Chinese Government agreeing to this demand, even though it might be considered logical. I have no idea of the kind of population that lives in this territory which is claimed by Nepal. Is it predominantly Tibetan or Nepalese? But whatever it may be, the major fact remains that there is hardly any chance of the Chinese Government agreeing to give it up. As I have said above, delay in the ratification of the agreement will not bring any pressure for this purpose on the Chinese Government. So far as procrastinating tactics are concerned, probably no Government can beat the Chinese at this game.

14. If this question of a rectification of the frontier is raised, it should be raised in a friendly way. Anything in the nature of a demand backed by some action, which is in the nature of pressure, is not likely to be successful.

15. Thus, my view is that an approach about the rectification of the frontier can be made, if the Nepal Government so chooses, but there is very little hope of success. In any event, it should be treated separately from the ratification of the agreement.

16. It may be pointed out that we have some minor frontier disputes with China. The areas concerned are on the Tibetan border in the high mountains. They are very small and are of no great value to either country. Nevertheless, these matters have not been settled yet, although the Chinese Government has agreed to discuss them with us. This shows that even a small frontier dispute is not easy to settle, even though it may have no great significance. In Burma, there have been interminable arguments about their frontier disputes.

17. I suggest that a copy of this note of mine might be sent by airmail to our Ambassador in Kathmandu. He can give the substance of it to the Prime Minister of Nepal who should be told that we are sending him our views because he was good enough to ask for them.

18. There is no need at this stage to refer to the Historical Division. For our own information, however, we might ask the Historical Division to send us a

note about this thousand square mile territory to the west of Mustang, which is now sought to be claimed by Nepal. We need not wait for this note before writing to our Ambassador in Kathmandu. If there is anything important in the Historical Division's note, we can communicate it to our Ambassador later.

To Bhagwan Sahay⁵

New Delhi

September 4, 1957

My dear Bhagwan Sahay,

About a week ago, I had a visit from Ram Narain Mishra of the Nepali Congress. I believe he comes from the Terai. He said that the Nepali Congress was much distressed at recent developments which were likely to give rise to a good deal of trouble, and they wanted my advice as to what they should do. The election date was the 22nd October, but there was no chance of elections being held then. Then, there was the question as to whether there should be a Constituent Assembly or a Parliament.⁶

There was also some sorrow expressed at the fact that we were supporting the present Prime Minister.

I told him that, as a Government, we would support any functioning Government or Prime Minister in Nepal. It was not proper for a Government to intrigue against another Government. So far as the Nepali Congress was concerned, we had supported it for a long time, and we still considered it as

⁵ JN Collection,

⁶ On 3 August 1957, K.I. Singh announced that Nepal's first general elections would be held for a parliament with full powers to draft a constitution. On 9 August, Nepal's three major political parties—Praja Parishad, Nepali Congress, and Nepali National Congress formed an alliance under the name of Prajatantric Morcha or the Democratic Front with the objective of consolidating and strengthening the democratic forces to meet "the present threat to democracy."

probably the biggest political organization in Nepal. But, we were not responsible for the mess made repeatedly. Nor were we responsible for any new Government formed there. That was for the King to decide, and we cannot impose our wishes on the King.

I told him that I had received a letter some days ago, which was purported to be signed by B.P. Koirala.⁷ This letter was in very abusive language, and I did not believe that it could be from B.P. Koirala. It must be a fake letter. Ram Narain Mishra said that no such letter could have been sent by RP. Koirala. As Ram Narain had talked about the Nepali Congress considering a direct action move, I said that any such move would be unfortunate. They should work quietly for the election.

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Treatment of Indian Traders in Yatung⁸

I have been reading a number of telegrams from Yatung about the ill-treatment of the Indian traders there. I think we should take up this matter very seriously. I do not see why we should put up with this kind of thing. We might even advise the Indian traders to come away from Yatung if they are not treated with courtesy and decency there. The Chinese Government should be addressed on this issue in clear and unequivocal language. The Foreign Bureau at Lhasa should also be addressed in this way.

2. I do not see why we should advise these traders not to have a hartal if they want to have one to show their displeasure.

3. Anyhow this matter must be cleared up one way or the other. We do not wish Indians to live on sufferance anywhere.

⁷ Nepali Congress leader.

⁸ Note to Foreign Secretary, MEA, New Delhi, 24 August 1957. JN Collection

Kalinga Airlines Services to Tibet⁹

You can certainly see these papers about the proposed Kalinga Airlines to Tibet.¹⁰

When Patnaik came to see me about this matter some two or three months ago, I told him that I had no objection to his running a Service to Tibet from India, but, of course, the Chinese Government's permission would have to be taken. I asked him to see the Chinese Ambassador¹¹ here which, I believe, he did. About the same time, I think, we wrote to our Ambassador to sound the Chinese Government on this subject. The response of the Chinese Government, so far as I remember, was an evasive one and I got the impression that they did not wish to encourage any such service at this stage.

Patnaik talked about going to Peking to discuss this matter. I advised him to go there only if the Chinese Government expressed previously their willingness to see him. The last time I saw Patnaik, I told him to find out from the Chinese Ambassador about this matter.

Our position in this has been that we are agreeable to such a service, but we do not wish to sponsor it ourselves and this is a matter between Patnaik and the Chinese Government. We can, however, tell the Chinese Government that we have no objection to it and if they agree, we shall give the normal facilities at this end.

My impression is that the Chinese Government do not want any such service from India to Tibet at present at least. They are having continuing trouble in

⁹ Note to Defence Minister, 31 August 1957, Y.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML. Also available in JN Collection.

¹⁰ Bijoyanand Patnaik spoke to Krishna Menon on 31 August about his project of a freighter-cum-passenger service to Tibet. Krishna Menon had already asked the Chinese Ambassador to convey this to Chou En-lai, who replied that the freighter or other service question might be discussed between the Governments. Krishna Menon enquired whether he could explore this possibility with Nehru's approval.

¹¹ Pan Tzu-Li.

Tibet and they are not anxious to see many Indians going there. Recently, the Indian traders there have been badly treated and we have even protested both to the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama.

In these circumstances I did not wish it to appear that we were overanxious to push this service to Lhasa.

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Cable to S. Dutt¹²

I have received message from Premier Chou En-lai expressing his strong concern about Taiwan's inclusion in International Red Cross Conference.¹³

Chinese Government have been protesting throughout on the issue of invitation to Taiwan. Apparently Rajkumari Amrit Kaur defends Taiwan's inclusion on ground this was mere acceptance of an independent Government and did not derogate from Peking's claim to represent China. It is said Taiwan is not even a member of International Red Cross. China is a member and there cannot be two Chinas. Rajkumari's contention accepts principle of two Chinas which we do not accept nor is it accepted by any other country. Premier Chou En-lai is greatly distressed at this approach and intends lodging telegraphic protest first to Standing Committee and then to Plenary Session. If Taiwan still attends, Chinese delegation will not attend Conference.

¹² Hong Kong, IS October 1957. File No. 28(31)/56-57-PMS. Also available in JN Collection.

¹³ Chou En-lai objected to Taiwan's inclusion in the International Red Cross Conference, to be held in India in October 1957 (See also post, pp. 743-746). He told I.J.Bahadur Singh, Counsellor and Charge d' Affaires, Indian Embassy in Beijing, that the attempt to include Taiwan was part of the general "US intrigue" to foster the "two China" idea. Chou's main concern was that Amrit Kaur, who was Chairman of Preparatory Committee for the Conference, was unwittingly playing into the hands of the protagonists of the "two China" theory.

We have sometimes submitted to Taiwan being treated as China because some international organizations consider it so. But when India is active sponsor and Chairman of Preparatory Committee for us to do so is another matter. But on this occasion special difficulty arises because two Chinas being represented. It is obvious that our Government can be no party to this at any stage. Not only People's Government of China but Soviet Government and some other Governments will raise question of credentials and we must necessarily vote for one China only namely People's Government. We cannot associate our Government in any way with invitation to Taiwan and more especially in order to give direct or indirect support to two China theory. Will you please explain this clearly to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur?

Message to Chou En-lai¹⁴

Thank you for your message about International Red Cross Conference in Delhi. I am myself much concerned at developments about possibility of Taiwan's inclusion in this Conference which you have mentioned. I have been unaware of them and I am entirely opposed, as you know, to any recognition of Taiwan. Also we have never accepted the "two China" theory. This Conference is entirely a non-official affair and Government of India have nothing to do with it. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was elected President in her personal capacity. She is no longer connected with our Government. I am immediately conveying your message to her and expressing my own strong opinion on this subject. But as organization is entirely independent international body, I cannot issue any direction. Even Indian Branch of Red Cross is non-official. I shall, however, do my best to dissociate our Government from any wrong action which might be taken.

¹⁴ Hong Kong, 15 October 1957. File No. 28(31)/56-57-PMS

Message to Chou En-lai¹⁵

I have received your message of October 18 sent through your Ambassador in New Delhi about Red Cross invitation to Taiwan. I have had the past records examined. The Indian Red Cross Society issued invitations to various countries for the forthcoming Conference and were guided entirely by decisions taken from time to time by the Standing Commission of International Red Cross. This latter body alone can decide the form and procedure to be followed in issuing invitations to Red Cross Conferences. In September 1955, the Commission decided that the Government of Formosa should be invited as a member of the Conference and the Red Cross of Formosa as an Observer. When the Minutes of September 1955 meeting were taken up in Geneva on 9th May, Prof. Pachkov (from USSR) drew attention to a contradiction in the text of these minutes, which said, "On the proposal of Lady Limerick¹⁶ it was decided that the invitation to Chinese Nationalist Government would mention that it was extended solely on account of their Government's authority in Formosa", while the invitation list of 19th Conference mentioned "the Republic of China". Professor Pachkov thought that this title should be corrected in accordance with the proposal made at the earlier meeting. The Chairman agreed with the Soviet initiative and accordingly the title of Taiwan authorities was corrected and called "the Government of Formosa, Taiwan". This decision was acceptable to all members of the Commission except to Mr Nicholson (from USA) who made a reservation. I thought that this factual information would explain the circumstances in which the invitation to Taiwan was issued.

¹⁵ File No. 28(31)/56-57-PMS. Also available in JN Collection.

¹⁶ Countess of Limerick (1897-1981); Poor Law Guardian, 1928-30; Chairman, Maternity and Child Welfare and Public Health Committees; Member for South Kensington on L.C.C., 1936-46; Privy Council representative on General Nursing Council for England and Wales, 1933-50; Member, Royal Commission on Equal Pay; Deputy Chairman of War Organization, B.R.C.S. and Order of St. John, 1941-47; Vice Chairman, British Red Cross Society.

2. It will be seen from the above that the Indian Red Cross Society had no discretion at all about deciding which authorities should be invited to the Conference. It is possible that the Standing Commission felt that the authority in immediate control of Taiwan should be invited to a Conference which deals solely with humanitarian problems. However, according to our information, Taiwan is not participating in the Conference. As far as the Government of India are concerned, I need hardly assure you that we can never encourage, far less accept, the theory of 'two Chinas' and left to ourselves, we would not have favoured invitation to Formosa at all.