

# SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*Series II*

*Volume 53*

*(October 1-31, 1959)*

## **18- Press Conference<sup>1</sup>**

*Question: The Chandigarh Resolution referred to political resistance or military?*

Prime Minister: I suppose both. Frankly, there is no question of parrying with words. We are dealing with a difficult situation. At the present moment, according to us there are one or two areas, like the Longju area, like some areas in Eastern Ladakh which the Chinese have occupied. These areas are relatively small areas, in Ladakh it is a little more, Longju is a couple of miles. Then there is in Northern Ladakh, the Aksai Chin area, which is a bigger area, way across the Himalayas and bare, uninhabited land. In the main, these are the three possessions. Now, we do not intend to start military operations against any of these places at this stage when we are dealing with this matter on the political level—I hope it may not be necessary at any stage. But if any kind of advance is made on the border from existing positions, that will be certainly fully resisted.

*Question: This morning the Shillong correspondent of a paper says that Longju outpost has been strengthened, reinforcements have been brought to Longju and Khinzemane. Is it your information?*

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<sup>1</sup> New Delhi, 8 October 1959. AIR tapes, NMML.

Prime Minister: May be.

*Question: Now the Chinese have overpowered us in Longju. How long it will continue that we will be resisting and they will go on succeeding?*

Prime Minister: That is a matter for the future. You can see what happens.

*Question: Your latest letter seems to indicate that since the publication of the White Paper, the Chinese seems to have fanned out in Eastern Ladakh and opened new outposts at three more places. What would be the extent of area that they have now occupied there? There is a reference to troops in the Aksai Chin area in your letter. Does that mean that they have established military camps there too?*

Prime Minister: I have no information on the subject. No good my guessing.

*Question: If Chinese have built a road in Ladakh, will it be under the control of India or of the Chinese. According to rules, one must have a passport. How will you enforce it?*

Prime Minister: That area, Aksai Chin area is first of all, is an area where normally speaking no human being or any other animal lives.

*Question: Then what is the use of building a road there?*

Prime Minister: For passage. They do not live on the road, they pass across the road. There is not a tree or a blade of grass in that area. It is 17,000 feet high which is higher than Mont Blanc in Switzerland. But it is a connecting link between Western Tibet and Chinese Turkestan. They may

pass up and down. No doubt it is convenient for them to do it. I cannot say if they have established any post there or not I don't know.

*Question: I am John Konar from London. A few days ago, Sir, I noticed General Cariappa in your office. Does that suggest that you are having any further correspondence through him with Gen. Ayub on the future of Kashmir?*

Prime Minister: He has asked me that since I saw General Cariappa a few days ago, does that suggest that I am utilising him for some kind of correspondence with General Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan. Well, my brief answer is it does not suggest at all and it would be an odd way of my dealing with the situation if I deal with it through General Cariappa or any other person. We have fairly competent people as our Ambassador and others.

Now, somebody talked about Cambodia, what about Cambodia? I do not know.

*A correspondent: The British Prime Minister's proposal to wind up the Cambodian Commission.*

Prime Minister: I find, I think in today's paper, some kind of a reference to this in Mr. Krishna Menon's speech in the United Nations.<sup>2</sup> He has pointed out that these Commissions, appointed by the Geneva Conference, cannot be or should not be wound up till they perform their functions fully. That has been India's attitude throughout whether it is Laos or Cambodia or

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<sup>2</sup> On 8 October *The Hindustan Times* reported Krishna Menon's speech of 6 October in the UN declaring that winding up the International Control Commission in Laos without the consent of all parties (India, Canada and Poland) to the Geneva Agreement would amount to a unilateral denunciation of the agreement.

whether it is Viet Nam. They may go on reducing their functions or their personnel. That is a different matter. In Laos we went further and what you call it suspended them, not suspended, adjourned it *sine die*, adjourned it to be called when necessary, but in theory it exists. The question really is, apart from any legal interpretation, a practical one: do we still go on adhering to the Geneva Pacts or do we just think that they are over and we can go ahead as we like. We are not just an odd country. We are a country charged by the Geneva agreement. We have a certain responsibility. We have been made Chairman of these Commissions. Our terms of reference are the Geneva Agreements and no other, and so long as it is possible for us to carry out the duties entrusted to us by those Agreements, we carry them out. If it becomes impossible, we don't, we withdraw and explain our inability to do so, but we don't understand how these agreements can be made to fade out in this way. Let there be a formal decision this way or that way and the Commissions are the result of the Agreement. You cannot separate them from the Agreement.

Now, the next subject is the Communist Party of India's resolution on this border matter.<sup>3</sup> Well, you don't expect me to say much about it except that I disapprove of that resolution thoroughly, and indeed it is quite an extraordinary resolution for any organisation, even the Communist Party, to pass in India.

*A Correspondent: MacMahon Line.*

Prime Minister: Yes, by the way may I say that I dislike ourselves also using the word MacMahon Line. It is our border, it is our frontier. MacMahon Line that is something outside, a thing imposed there, but we use the word simply for facility. Instead of using a phrase every time we use a word but I

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<sup>3</sup> See item 9 and fn 60.

should like this use given up. Just it is our border. There the matter ends. Lastly, the next is about a food bank in the country, the Food Minister's proposal to build up a food bank.<sup>4</sup> In a sense that proposal has been there for a long time, for a food bank means large reserves. Call it a food bank or reserves or whatever you like. Such a thing has been attempted and now he is going ahead with it vigorously. In addition to what we can procure in India, he wants to get considerable quantities from abroad to be kept here. The idea is not that we should purchase so much from abroad but that we should keep it or rather it should be kept in India, the ownership remaining where it was so that the very presence of it would have a very healthy influence on the situation here. As he has been pointing out, the actual deficits even when they have occurred, have been marginal and sometimes even when there is no deficit, there some maldistribution and trouble occurs. All this could be avoided if there was a big reserve at hand to whomsoever it may belong.

*Question: In Nagaur, Rajasthan, the Chief Minister said that in the Third Plan, if sufficient water facilities are provided, Rajasthan would be able to meet the food deficit. So, instead of looking to other countries for help, would it not be better to concentrate on some such project here?*

Prime Minister: Undoubtedly it is better.

*Question: At Chandigarh the Food Minister gave the impression in Chandigarh that the food situation was not very bad. It was only marginal and that by keeping some food reserves we may be able to meet the*

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<sup>4</sup> The editorial of *The Hindustan Times* of 8 October 1959 stated: "S.K. Patil seems confident of being able to persuade the Americans to create a food bank in this country from which the Government of India could make purchases as and when necessary."

*situation.*

Prime Minister: The Food Minister was completely right in pointing out that these deficits are only marginal. In fact, as a people if we had a little sense of discipline and a little sense of restraint, there will be no difficulty whatever. I think that in spite of all this, the amount of food that is wasted is still very considerable.

*Question: Will it not have any depressing effect on food production, some sort of deterrent for the farmer to grow more?*

Prime Minister: That depends on how far you go.

*Question: Would there be some kind of relaxation of the present policy of state trading in this background?*

Prime Minister: That has no connection with this. It is quite an independent one. Food bank is a new word but if you talk about food reserves then you come back to the old thing. It is the same thing.

*Question: There has been opposition to this policy of state trading on the ground that if we have enough resources you push them wherever there is scarcity and high prices....*

Prime Minister: My dear Sir, if there is enough food in the country and more than enough, then no particular policy is necessary. If we have less or not quite enough or some marginal difficulties but have enough resources then also there is no difficulty. We can push them in where there is lack. The other thing, the possibility of some kind of control, etc., only arises when

these ways are not open. About state trading we have been aiming at state trading being done more and more by cooperatives. In some parts of India, in the districts, the cooperatives have been in charge of this not the slightest difficulty in the last six months had been there about food in spite of difficulties arising all-round because the cooperatives were in charge.

*Question: I am from TASS. Sir according to the latest information, our Soviet rocket is just near the moon and the cosmic station is making circles round the moon. What is your opinion about this...*

Prime Minister: That is a fascinating piece of information. Of course we are expecting it ever since this rocket went. My view about this is, of course, it will presumably lead to new types of information about the moon and space travel; but in the final analysis, all this is part of the tremendous developments that are taking place, in the realm of science and technology which undoubtedly will have powerful effects on human lives, not immediately but may be, in the course of the next generation. All our present problems may seem rather silly in the context of these new scientific developments. This moon rocket is a tremendous achievement and the scientists concerned in the Soviet Union are to be warmly congratulated on this great achievement.

Thank you.

## China

### **163. To Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit: Researching Maps at the India Office<sup>5</sup>**

October 6, 1959

My dear High Commissioner,

I have your letter of October 1. We have also received a report from the Deputy High Commissioner, about this incident of the map. The story depends on K.L. Madan's account. I presume that you consider him reliable in this respect. There is no reason why he should make up a story of this kind, and therefore, *prima facie*, we should accept it.

This incident must put us on our guard, both in London and in Delhi. I am glad that some steps have been taken to this end in India House. There is one aspect of this question which is not clear to me. How could any outsider get to know that a person from India House was going to India Office for a map? It is hardly likely that this news leaked out from India Office as there was not much time for this. The presumption, therefore, is that it leaked out from India House. I take it that you are enquiring into this matter. Such an enquiry should not be very difficult as only a few persons apparently knew about this.

It is our intention to send one of our senior officers from our Historical Division to London, so that he can personally look through all the papers in India Office connected with the tripartite conference between India, China and Tibet in 1912 and later.<sup>6</sup> Also any other relevant papers in this

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<sup>5</sup> Letter to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, India's High Commissioner to the UK

<sup>6</sup> See SWJN/SS/52/item 94

connection. Probably Dr. Gopal, the Head of the Historical Division will himself go.<sup>7</sup> He is, as you perhaps know, Dr. Radhakrishnan's son.  
[Yours sincerely], Jawaharlal Nehru

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### **164. To MEA: Strategic Analysis** <sup>8</sup>

This is a very interesting record of what Field Marshal Montgomery<sup>9</sup> said. He looks ahead and, on the whole, I am inclined to agree with him, though not on some details.

2. One of the basic facts of the situation today is the emergence of China as a great power. She is not strong enough perhaps today to function in opposition to the other great powers. But there can be no doubt that she will grow in strength. She is already past the stage when she can be suppressed. With her tremendous population and the rapidity of her industrial advance, she may well become, in course of time, the strongest power in the world. We have also to keep in mind that the Chinese have always tended to be expansive and even aggressive.

3. It is quite conceivable that the leaders of the Soviet Union see this picture emerging in the future and, for all their friendship and alliance with China, are rather apprehensive of it. Because of this as well as because of the dangers of war in the near future, they will strive their utmost to settle their issues in dispute with the Western nations. The immediate fear, however, of the Soviet Union continues to be a united Germany opposed to

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<sup>7</sup> Sarvepalli Gopal, Director, Historical Division, MEA, New Delhi

<sup>8</sup> Note to SG, and FS, 14 October 1959

<sup>9</sup> Commander-in-Chief of the British Zone of Occupation, Germany

them. If the Western countries go on insisting on this, the immediate fear will overcome the distant fear.

4. It is, on the whole, likely that the Soviet and the U.S.A. will come a little nearer to each other in the course of the next few years. What effect this will have on China, I do not know. But it will be a check. As a matter of fact, the rapid pace of advance in modern weapons and fighting power is such that it might upset all calculations. There really is no choice left in the world but of a firm peace and disarmament or moving fairly rapidly to vast wars and destruction.

5. Looking at this picture, it seems to me that the policy we have thus far pursued has not only been right in the past and the present, but will be even more so in the future. We must not be swept away by momentary passions or public excitement into any adventurist line of action. We must, at the same time, strengthen ourselves, and that really means industrial strength which can be reflected in the defence forces. I hope we shall never have to use those defence forces in war, and if there is a real widespread disarmament, we should welcome it and abide by it. But I fear that a mere desire for peace is not adequate for maintaining it or even preserving our independence and integrity. While, therefore, we should quietly and without fuss strengthen India industrially and otherwise, we should, at the same time, strictly adhere to a policy of peace and friendliness with other countries. We cannot surrender in any sense to Chinese claims or threats. But we must also remember that China is our permanent neighbour and to invite trouble from China is wisdom neither in the present nor in the future. Even in the strictest practical sense, that is the only course we can follow.

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### **165. To M. Mohammed Ismail: How to Negotiate with China<sup>10</sup>**

October 18, 1959

Dear Mr. Mohammed Ismail,

Thank you for your letter of the 17th October which I have just received. I do not think there is any particular connection between events in Kerala and Chinese aggression. Anyhow we cannot connect the two in determining our policy on the frontier. Actually, the recent aggression by the Chinese is over a small village, Longiu, which is just three or four miles on our side of the border.<sup>11</sup> The Chinese maintain that this is in their territory. Any withdrawal from this village is not a complicated affair, and it cannot be dragged on for long. Either the Chinese withdraw or they remain there. The policy we have enunciated is that while we are prepared to discuss minor points in dispute in regard to the border, we cannot discuss the major issues raised by their maps. Even the minor points in dispute can only be discussed by us after they had withdrawn from Longiu.

Yours sincerely, Jawaharlal Nehru

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### **166. To Krishna Menon: Chinese Attack in Eastern Ladakh<sup>12</sup>**

There has been a clash between an Indian police party and Chinese troops on the eastern Ladakh border. Two constables were sent on reconnaissance patrol. As they failed to return, a small police party went in search on October 20th but returned without any information. On 21st morning a somewhat larger police force was sent in search of this patrol. This party was attacked by Chinese forces entrenched on a hill top. Fifteen of Indian personnel and

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<sup>10</sup> Letter to M. Mohammed Ismail, Rajya Sabha MP from Madras

<sup>11</sup> See SWJN/SS/51/item 197

<sup>12</sup> Telegram, 23 October 1959

two officers were killed and a number received serious injuries.<sup>13</sup> The survivors returned to their check-post a few miles away. All this occurred well within our territory according to our maps.

While we were waiting for fuller particulars, we received yesterday protest from Chinese Govt about intrusion into their territory. We are replying to it giving the facts as we know them and protesting strongly against their intrusion into our territory, arrest of our men and unprovoked firing on Indian personnel.

We had a discussion on this incident with the Chiefs of the Army and Air Staff and others this morning. Information about this incident is being released to the press tonight.

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### **167. To Lalji Mehrotra: No Mediation<sup>14</sup>**

My dear Lalji,

I have just received your letter of the 21st October.

I really do not understand or appreciate this desire of some good people to make me embrace Chou En-lai somewhere. We do not want any help in our dealings with China or, at any rate, the kind of help that is suggested. I have no intention whatever to seek a meeting with Premier Chou En-lai and certainly I shall not go to any other country for this purpose. I hope, therefore, that U Nu will not take any further action in this matter.

Yours sincerely, Jawaharlal Nehru

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<sup>13</sup> According to The Hindustan Times of 21 October 1959 the MEA said only 9 Indians died in this attack

<sup>14</sup> Letter to Lalji Mehrotra, Ambassador of India to Rangoon, (n.d.). Probably 23 October 1959

## **168. To Krishna Menon: Attacks on India-China Border<sup>15</sup>**

Your telegram 242 October 23rd.<sup>18</sup> Developments in Eastern Ladakh took place rather suddenly without any previous hint. Except at Chushul we have no army men at any check post in Ladakh. The other checkposts are held by border force which has been functioning directly under Intelligence. When Army was asked to take charge of entire border with Tibet-China, Thimayya asked Intelligence men to continue in these checkposts except Chushul as he could not make adequate arrangements for Army to take them over soon. The incident that took place, was some distance away from Chushul, probably about fifty miles. Police outpost had been established at a place there, and they sent two constables with some ponies to reconnoitre. As these did not return, a small section was sent to look for them. They returned soon after without any information. This was on 22nd October. On 23rd morning, larger section of police forces was sent in two batches to search for the two constables. In all, probably they numbered between sixty and seventy. After covering some miles, these people saw Chinese entrenched on a hill-top. As our men reached base of hill-top, they were fired at by the Chinese troops apparently rather suddenly. Mortars and hand grenades were used by the Chinese. Seventeen men on our side were killed (including an officer) and four seriously wounded. Thereafter, the remaining police party returned to their base.

2. We have not received any clear account yet of what happened. Chinese account says that Indian forces entered their territory and attacked them and Chinese forces fired in self-defence. They admit taking some as prisoners and also say that their forces suffered some casualties, though number is not mentioned.

3. According to all our maps and our general information, Chinese entered about forty miles from what we consider our border. Chinese maps however

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<sup>15</sup> Telegram, 24 October 1959. 18. See Appendix 10, p. 560

have claimed large part of this area as theirs, but, some months ago, one of our patrol parties went across this area right up to our border and there were no Chinese posts then. It would appear, therefore, that Chinese entered this area fairly recently and established their post.

4. It must be remembered that this area is about 17,000 ft. altitude and very sparsely populated in summer, some people coming for grazing purposes. No trees exist at that altitude and it is all hard bare ground and exceedingly cold at night.

5. Our Army authorities have been asked to take full charge of all this area on the Ladakh border. That means that our police border forces there will receive directions from the Army and report to them.

6. There is no particular significance in Bakhshi taking over Ladakh as his special charge.<sup>16</sup> This was done some time ago. It is difficult to form a clear idea of what happened and what lies behind it. Probably there was no particular intention at present of invasion as such, but there has been a definite move forward by Chinese forces to occupy parts of Eastern Ladakh. Chinese maps give varying lines of their border with Ladakh. We learn from our Embassy in Peking that Chinese Government have withdrawn their old maps of this area.

7. You will remember that Chinese had agreed to take a big part in our Agricultural Exhibition in December in Delhi.<sup>17</sup> Later they suddenly informed us that they could not participate in it. This was much criticised everywhere. Today we had a message from our Ambassador in Peking that the Chinese Government have now again changed their opinion and are prepared to take part in this Exhibition.

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<sup>16</sup> He was the Prime Minister of the Jammu and Kashmir since 1953

<sup>17</sup> See item 110 in this volume

8. Conference with Pakistan on Eastern border issues ended yesterday morning satisfactorily.<sup>18</sup> Broadly speaking, all these issues of Eastern border have been settled and elaborate ground rules laid down to prevent any possible conflict. It has been suggested that a similar conference should be held sometime in December to consider border with Western Pakistan.<sup>19</sup>

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**169. To Ghulam Mohammad Bakhshi: Killing of Indian Soldiers<sup>20</sup>**

October 25, 1959

My dear Bakhshi,

I enclose a copy of a letter I have addressed to the Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab and the Lieutenant-Governor of Himachal Pradesh.<sup>21</sup>

I spoke to General Thimayya today about your two companies of Ladakhis who, you suggested, could be used in the border regions of Ladakh.

Thimayya said he knew about them fully and intended using them. In fact he had had them in mind all the time. He was not quite sure that the training thus far given them was quite adequate for the purpose but this could be added to.

We have received a long telegram from Peking conveying the answer of the Chinese Government to our protest note. They have taken up a strong line in it to justify what has happened and cast the blame on our own people. In this telegram it is mentioned that the Chinese frontier guards captured seven Indian personnel and there were corpses of nine Indians. This indicates that perhaps the number of people who died in this conflict was

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<sup>18</sup> From 15 to 22 October 1959

<sup>19</sup> It was held in Lahore on 5-6 December 1959.

<sup>20</sup> Letter

<sup>21</sup> See the next item

not seventeen as we imagined and that some of them were captured by the Chinese. In effect, the Chinese say that they have got ten Indian personnel captured by them, that is, three previously and seven later. They have offered to release them and also to allow us to take back the bodies of the nine Indians who were killed.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

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### **170. To Chief Ministers and Others: Army in Conflict Areas<sup>22</sup>**

The recent serious and tragic incident in Ladakh which resulted in a conflict between some of our border police forces and the Chinese forces, has brought our border situation rather to a head. About two months ago, when we had trouble on the NEFA border, we decided to place the responsibility for the protection of the entire Northern and North-Eastern border on our army. The army thereafter took over the NEFA border and roundabout. As regards some of the areas, they decided to leave them for the present as they were, but it is clear that there should be the closest coordination and the general directions of the army authorities should be carried out.

In Ladakh our outposts were in charge of our border police force. It was in fact difficult for the army to take direct charge in the near future. It is seldom realised how difficult of access these places are in our Himalayan borders. For instance, the place of the recent conflict in Ladakh is about three to four weeks march from Leh over very difficult terrain.

However difficult of access these places might be, we have undoubtedly to take effective steps to guard them. Those steps have to be carefully

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<sup>22</sup> Note to Chief Ministers of UP, Punjab, Lieutenant-Governor of Himachal Pradesh, 25 October 1959. Also copied to the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir

thought out. We cannot function in an excited way as some people and some newspapers advise us and get badly entangled in the high mountain regions without being able to support them properly.

Anyhow all these matters have to be carefully worked out and coordinated. It seems to me essential that full effect should be given now to our decision taken in August last, that is, that the army should be made fully responsible for all these frontier areas and their direction should be carried out, subject to some local variations, such as the army authorities might agree to. There should be uniformity in our policy in all these areas and in regard to receipt of information. Any action involving any kind of operation must necessarily be dealt with by the army authorities who can take a broad picture of the situation and decide accordingly.

This involves not only the frontier in NEFA and Sikkim, but also the frontier areas of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Ladakh. Thus far, in U.P., Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, the State Governments have been responsible. This final responsibility should now be transferred to the army but, of course, the army authorities would like to have the fullest cooperation of the State authorities concerned and to function in consultation with them. The manner of functioning in a particular area will presumably be decided after consultation by representatives of the army and the State Government.

I am sure you will agree that this is a matter which requires urgent handling and the closest coordination and the only way to do this effectively and properly is to put the army in charge.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

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### **171. Public Meeting, Meerut: Survey of Options<sup>23</sup>**

"Nehru in Favour of Pursuing Cautious Policy: Effective Steps to check Further Incursions"

New Delhi, Oct. 25. "What next on the Himalayan front?" is the problem engaging the serious attention of the Central Government. Although Prime Minister Nehru, speaking at a public meeting in Meerut last night, gave the impression of seeking to ridicule those who wanted firm action against China, he was in reality asking the Indian people "to ponder over the situation so that any step that is taken is so done after foreseeing its full implications and not in anger or passion".

In fact, this is what Mr. Nehru himself and other leaders are now doing. They are aware of the national humiliation caused by the series of setbacks on the Himalayan front and they realise that some striking step must be taken to sustain national morale.

The Chinese offered a long-existing status quo on the border. But they are actually advancing all the time and occupying areas where there is no resistance. At Longju, on the north-east frontier, an Indian outpost was overrun and it suffered casualties at the hands of the Chinese forces. In spite of repeated demands, China has not vacated Longju. The Chinese have violated the Sino-Indian agreement by denying facilities to Indian official trade agencies and Indian nationals to pursue their normal functions. But the Chinese trade agencies and nationals in India are enjoying all facilities guaranteed to them under the agreement.

Even as correspondence was in progress between the two countries, superior Chinese forces overwhelmed, using mortar and machine-gun fire, an Indian police patrol party and inflicted heavy casualties. This happened

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<sup>23</sup> The abridged version of Nehru's speech made at Meerut on 24 October was reported on 25 October 1959. From The Hindu, 26 October 1959

in southern Ladakh which is indisputably Indian territory. But the Chinese occupation of Aksai Chin area in north-east Ladakh and a number of mountain passes on the border have been the subject matter of numerous protests. Discourteous and aggressive language which the Chinese have been using without any provocation has evoked numerous protests. Against this long list of Chinese commissions, all that India has done is to vacate the Tamadem outpost in the NEFA area on a unilateral consideration that it is situated north of the MacMahon Line.

### Security of Country at Stake

Apart from the fact that these incidents make a steady inroad into India's prestige, there is a more vital question to which an answer is still in the process of analysis and that question is "Should India proceed on the assumption that China is a potential friend or enemy?" At the moment, leaders do not have a precise answer to this question. While undoubtedly there is apprehension as to the Chinese intention, the leaders are fighting the idea that China may prove a perpetual hostile neighbour. An affirmative conclusion would involve a reappraisal not only of India's foreign policy but defence and other national policies covering a wide field with far-reaching implications. It is the absence of a clear-cut view on the subject that inhibits any firm action even on minor issues. One step which suggests immediately is to ask the Chinese to close down their trade agency at least in Kalimpong which is a centre of considerable anti-Indian propaganda. But it is pointed out that even this step, however much it may be welcomed by the Indian people as an indication of the Government's resolve to be firm, involved a decision on the major issue as to the nature of the relationship to be maintained with China. It is felt that any action is bound to have a chain of reaction. It is realised however, that it is not the success of the foreign policy that is at stake, but the future security of the country itself.

Viewed in this context, the conflict within the Communist Party, however interesting from the point of view of internal politics, pales into insignificance.

Attention is now concentrated on the prevention of further Chinese infiltration. It is noted that on the MacMahon Line there has been no violation by the Chinese ever since. Mr. Nehru took a firm stand and handed over defence of the border to the armed forces. Equal firmness has not been adequately shown in regard to the Ladakh frontier. Even yesterday, at Meerut, Mr. Nehru said that the area was a mountainous and uninhabited area. He even rebuked those who suggested that the army should guard the area and said. "It is easy for people to say so because they know that they do not have to go themselves to those barren border areas 17,000 feet above sea level where not even a blade of grass grows". Apparently, the Chinese have interpreted Mr. Nehru's attitude as a license to extend their operations in this sector. The tragic incidents of last week occurred in this region.

Activity in New Delhi gives the impression that Chinese penetration in Ladakh is soon to be effectively checked. Ladakh is now practically under the control of the Central Government and only technically it is a part of the Kashmir State. An experienced officer from the NEFA area had been appointed District Magistrate at Leh to deal with years of inefficiency and corrupt handling of road construction and other development works. Two other obstacles still remain to be overcome. One is the absence of trained personnel familiar with warfare in high altitude mountainous areas. The second is finance, and here a major decision is yet to be taken to divert substantial resources from development schemes to the defence sector. Also, there is the question of priority as to which primary importance is attached to the MacMahon Line. Then comes the boundary adjoining the northern States of the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. Ladakh which is physically

a couple of hundred miles way across almost impenetrable mountains comes last. No one, whether a Minister or a soldier thinks that there will be anything like a major invasion by the Chinese and therefore no military preparations to meet such an eventuality are being thought of at all. Defence as well as civil authorities realise that the magnitude even of the limited task of preventing further penetration by the Chinese is stupendous. Few consider the question of throwing back the Chinese by force as coming within practical politics. Strategically the Chinese hold advantage as they were the first to advance, the hilltops all along the 2,500 mile front. Nor are the Chinese likely to retire from any of the positions they now occupied. It is in these circumstances that the question arises whether Chinese stabilisation on the existing positions could be regarded as consistent with dignity and equality. Fuller expression of public opinion, bearing in mind all the essential factors of the situation, would help the Government also to finalise its conclusions.

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### **172. To S. Dutt: Chinese Propaganda in Kalimpong<sup>24</sup>**

In our entanglement with our border developments, perhaps we have forgotten the activities of the Chinese in Kalimpong.<sup>25</sup> I think we should give thought to these and consider how far we should limit them. I am referring chiefly to their propagandist activities and the papers, leaflets etc. that they distribute there.

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<sup>24</sup> Note to FS, 27 October 1959

<sup>25</sup> See SWJN/SS/47/pp. 476-479; SWJN/SS/48/pp. 223-224; SWJN/SS/49/pp. 322-324 & 545-555; SWJN/SS/50/item 158; SWJN/SS/51/items 187 and 194

### **73. To Krishna Menon: Tension in Eastern Ladakh<sup>26</sup>**

October 27, 1959

My dear Krishna,

wanted to write to you at some length about this recent incident in Eastern Ladakh, but really there is not too much to say, apart from what I have said in my telegram to you.<sup>27</sup> It appears now that the actual casualties on our side were nine dead and one missing, and the Chinese took ten of our men as prisoners. They have offered to hand back, these prisoners as well as the dead bodies to us and we are trying to arrange this.

We are still trying to get more facts from our check-post people.

One thing is clear that during the last summer, the Chinese have gradually crept up in various places in Eastern Ladakh and tried to establish themselves. The most dangerous place from our point of view is near Chushul airfield. They are just four or five miles away from it, and almost overlook the airfield.

I am, however, writing to you now more particularly to suggest that you should return here as soon as possible. There is very great excitement among our people and all kinds of suggestions are made as a result of this excitement. Even the Communist Party is in a bad way, and Dange has refused to attend their Central Committee meeting. I do not suppose that anything extraordinary is going to happen in the next few days or weeks on our border, but the fact is that the temperature of the people is very high. In this state of affairs, I do not think it is right for you to remain in New York. This kind of thing has a very irritating effect on people generally and they say that whatever danger threatens India we are casual about it and do not care.

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<sup>26</sup> Letter

<sup>27</sup> See item 166 in this section

I suggest to you, therefore, to come back as soon as possible. In such circumstances, the Minister of Defence should be here even though the situation may not be a war-like one.

Parliament is meeting on the 16th of November, but I think you should come here sooner than that and not wait till the last day before it begins. Even the Congress Party in Parliament is much agitated and there is likely to be a meeting of it long before Parliament meets.

Yours affectionately,

Jawaharlal Nehru

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#### **174. To Chou En-lai: Radhakrishnan Will Not Visit China<sup>28</sup>**

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I thank you for your letter of October 19th which your Ambassador in Delhi forwarded to me on the 24th October.<sup>29</sup> In this letter you have been pleased to invite our Vice President, Dr. Radhakrishnan, to pay a visit to China. I have consulted the Vice President in this matter. He appreciates your kind thought but states that he is fully engaged till the middle of next year. He also added that in view of recent developments involving a strain in the relations between India and China and the mood of the two countries, such a visit might not be desirable in the near future.

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<sup>28</sup> Telegram sent through G. Parthasarathi, 29 October 1959

<sup>29</sup> The letter said: "We have always held His Excellency Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of the Republic of India, in esteem. In 1957, we had the honour of receiving him as an emissary of our great neighbour India on a friendly visit to China. His noble personality and his fervent sentiments for Sino-Indian friendship have left with the Chinese people a very deep impression. We would welcome him to China for a second friendly visit. If His Excellency Vice-President Radhakrishnan deems it convenient for him to visit China in the near future, the Chinese Government intends to extend to him a formal invitation."

With regards,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

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**175. To U.C. Patnaik: Ladakh Conflict<sup>30</sup>**

October 29, 1959

My dear Uma Charanji,

Thank you for your letter of October 25th. We are all naturally concerned at these unfortunate developments on our border and it is incumbent on us to take the fullest measures possible for its protection.

You suggest to reclaim lands on the border and establish settlements there. That is hardly feasible as these border lands consist of very high and difficult terrains. In Ladakh, for instance, the average altitude is from 14,000 to 17,000 feet. Only the toughest of mountaineers can stand it. There are practically no means of production of food and water is often lacking. It is for this reason that these areas are very sparsely populated. The place where the conflict occurred in Ladakh recently<sup>31</sup> is two to three weeks' march from Leh. In fact, even the troops we use there have to be specially selected from mountain folk.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

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<sup>30</sup> Letter to U.C. Patnaik, Independent, Lok Sabha MP from Ganjam, Orissa

<sup>31</sup> On 6 October 1959

**176. To Panjabrao S. Deshmukh: Be Restrained With China<sup>32</sup>**

October 30, 1959

My dear Panjabrao,

You sent to our Ministry today two letters, one addressed to Premier Chou Enlai and the other to the Minister of Agriculture of the Chinese Government.<sup>33</sup>

As you know, our relations with the Chinese Government are very tense. Still, if they wish to join the World Agricultural Fair, they can do so and we shall welcome them. But in view of the tension existing between the two countries, I think that we should not be too effusive in our letters or communications to them. Also I do not think you need to write to Premier Chou En-lai. I suggest, therefore, that you should send only one letter to the Minister of Agriculture, and that should be far less effusive than your present letter. You may say that you are glad to learn that they have reconsidered their previous decision and agreed to participate in the World Agricultural Fair. This will certainly make the Fair fuller and add to its utility. The necessary visas to the members of the Chinese Exhibition team would be issued and facilities would be given to the Chinese Delegation to set up their Exhibition in the Fair.

I think that is quite enough. I am, therefore, returning to you the two letters you had sent to our Ministry.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

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**Tibet**

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<sup>32</sup> Letter File No. 31/94/59-70-PMS

<sup>33</sup> Liao Luyen

### **177. To S. Dutt: Tibet at the UN<sup>34</sup>**

I have received Shri Krishna Menon's telegram No. 228 of October 10<sup>35</sup> and your note on it. Also Parthasarathi's telegram 220 of October 10.<sup>36</sup> I do not attach much importance to Pandit Kunzru's views in this matter.<sup>37</sup> But, on the whole, I think it would be better for us to abstain from voting on the question of inscription. I give below reply to Krishna Menon which please send.

2. As for Parthasarathi's telegram, you should inform him that while we welcome this apparent change in Chinese attitude, we propose to go slow in this matter. We shall not take any step on our side till some approach is made to us by Chinese Government. Meanwhile we shall endeavour to avoid public controversy.

3. On my return to Delhi, we shall discuss this matter further.

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### **178. To Krishna Menon: Tibet at the UN<sup>38</sup>**

I have received your telegram 228 of October 10 at Hyderabad and have given earnest consideration to what you have said. I agree that there is some force in what Russian Delegation says, but primary consideration for

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<sup>34</sup> Telephonic message, 11 October 1959.

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix 7, pp. 554-555

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix 8, pp. 556-558

<sup>37</sup> On 10 September 1959, Kunzru stated in the Rajya Sabha that Indian foreign policy was in the melting pot. He also referred to non-alignment and to Panchsheel being a slogan and an opiate. In response to his statement Nehru replied that "Kunzru had failed to appreciate-he may disagree, but he had failed to appreciate-the basic reasons for our foreign policy."

<sup>38</sup> Telegram, 12 October 1959. 42. See Appendix 7, pp. 554-555

us is reactions in India to any step that we might take. Question of Tibet has got tied up here now with border issues which have aroused strong feeling. As it is, I am being criticised for following weak policy on border issues and trying to appease China. I feel that if we vote against inscription this will be strongly criticised in India and give rise to considerable controversy here which will do no good to us or indeed to wider issues. The best course therefore appears to me for us not to vote on question of inscription. We may do so without any public explanation or by brief statement explaining our attitude as you think best.

As for resolution itself, our attitude should depend on text of resolution. We may then either abstain again from voting or even oppose resolution if we consider it highly objectionable. For us to vote against inscription and then abstain on resolution itself would be rather illogical.

Privately we should explain to other delegates that while we agree that a discussion of these items will not serve any useful purpose, in view of special position we are place in, we have decided to abstain on this issue. Those countries that seek our advice might be told that they can oppose inscription if they so choose or abstain. We have no desire to come in their way in opposing inscription if they want to do so.

I had long talk in Delhi two days ago with Mukhitdinov and Soviet Ambassador. Former had met Khrushchev after return from America and had also spoken to him on telephone after Khrushchev's visit to Peking.<sup>39</sup> I was given full and detailed account of Khrushchev's talks with Eisenhower and general impressions of visit to America which were favourable. But no mention was made to me about China or our border problems.

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<sup>39</sup> He went to Peking on 29 September 1959 to attend China's 10th anniversary celebration, held on 1 October 1959

Our Ambassador in Peking reports a certain favourable change in general attitude of Chinese Ministers to him and apparent desire to deal with problems through diplomatic channels, but nothing definite has emerged. I shall return to Delhi on 14th October afternoon.

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**179. To P. Subbarayan: Border Roads<sup>40</sup>**

October 16, 1959

My dear Subbarayan,

The position of some of our border areas with Tibet has always been rather bad because of lack of communications and roads. Owing to developments in Tibet, this position has become much worse as all trade with Tibet has stopped and the people living on our side of the border are suffering greatly. I think we have to push roads there. What is the programme of your Ministry in regard to this?<sup>41</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

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**180. To A. Krishnaswami: Tibet and the UN<sup>42</sup>**

October 20, 1959

Dear Krishnaswami,

Thank you for your letter of 20th October.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Letter. File No.2 (242)/58-64-PMS. Also available in IN Collection

<sup>41</sup> Subbarayan replied on 21 October 1959 with details of work in progress and an estimated cost of Rs 15.66 crore

<sup>42</sup> Letter to A. Krishnaswami, Independent, MP from Chengleput, Madras State

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix 9, pp. 558-559

We have given a great deal of thought to this question of Tibet being raised in the United Nations. I made it clear in the Lok Sabha as well as in press conferences what our views were and that we were not in favour of this question being raised in the United Nations. It was entirely in accordance with our views and our directions that our Delegation took up the attitude it did recently.

Having taken up that attitude, it would be illogical for us now to take up a contrary attitude when the matter is discussed more fully in the United Nations. I shall not go into the various reasons for it. But I might tell you that we discussed this matter at one time with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.<sup>44</sup> He entirely agreed with our approach to this question in so far as the U.N. is concerned. Indeed he was especially of opinion that the question of Human Rights should not be raised in this context. Apart from the fact that China has not signed the Charter and is not represented in the U.N., it is very difficult to discuss this matter without reliable evidence. Nearly all the evidence that is supposed to be collected is from refugees who left Tibet before the recent troubles took place.

Your suggestion that some kind of a panel of experts should be appointed does not take us any further.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

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**181. To R.G. Menzies: Tibetan Refugees<sup>45</sup>**

October 23, 1959

My dear Prime Minister,

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<sup>44</sup> Dag Hammarskjöld

<sup>45</sup> Letter to R.G. Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia

I have received your letter of October 8 from your High Commissioner. Thank you very much for it. My colleagues and I greatly appreciate your Government's offer of such generous financial assistance for the rehabilitation of the Tibetan refugees in India. There are about 13,000 refugees now. Their reception, accommodation and feeding have imposed a rather heavy strain on our exchequer, but we are even more concerned about their future rehabilitation. There is very little hope of any appreciable number of them either going back to their country or finding homes in other countries. For various reasons, it will not be easy to rehabilitate them. We are now engaged in drawing up schemes for this purpose. The problem of rehabilitating these persons who do not know our language and are not familiar with the ways of life in our country, will present particular difficulty and any scheme is bound to be extremely costly. It will involve training them for occupation and setting up small industries for them. Our intention is to utilise your very generous assistance in implementing some of the rehabilitation schemes. As soon as details have been worked out, we shall let your High Commissioner know. We do not need the money immediately.

Thanking you again and with kind regard,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru