

## Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Series II, Volume 15 Part 2

### **Cable to K.M. Panikkar<sup>1</sup>**

Reference my telegram Primin 22327 dated 25th October<sup>2</sup>. This morning's papers report an official handout in Peking ordering units of the Chinese Army to advance into Tibet.<sup>3</sup> We have received no information from you about this. We deeply deplore this development both from the point of view of continuance of friendly relations between India and China and because this will help the drift to world war. We tried our utmost to develop these friendly relations and to work for peace. It is matter of great regret to us that Chinese Government have suddenly taken this action, which appears to us to be contrary to assurances of peaceful settlement given to us and on eve of departure of Tibetan Mission for Peking. We are protesting formally against this action to Chinese Ambassador here. Please communicate following to China's Foreign Minister.<sup>4</sup>

### **Messages to Chou En-lai<sup>5</sup>**

We have seen with great regret report in newspapers of official statement made in Peking to the effect that "People's Army units have been ordered to

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<sup>1</sup> New Delhi, 26 October 1950. J.N. Collection.

<sup>2</sup> See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol.15 Part I. p.444.

<sup>3</sup> The hand-out of 25 October stated that the advance of the Army into Tibet had been ordered to free Tibetan "from the Imperialist oppression and consolidate the national defences of the western border of China"

<sup>4</sup> See the next item.

<sup>5</sup> New Delhi. 26 October 1950. J.N. Collection. This message was conveyed to Chou En-lai on 28 October 1950 on behalf of the Government of India

advance into Tibet." We have received no intimation of this from your Ambassador here or from our Ambassador in Peking. We have been repeatedly assured of the desire of the Chinese Government to settle the Tibetan problem by peaceful means and negotiations. In an interview which India's Ambassador had recently with the Vice Foreign Minister, the latter, while reiterating the resolve of the Chinese Government to "liberate" Tibet, had expressed a continued desire to do so by peaceful means.<sup>6</sup> We informed the Chinese Government through our Ambassador of the decision of the Tibetan Delegation to proceed to Peking immediately to start negotiations. This Delegation actually left Delhi yesterday. In view of these facts the decision to order advance of China's troops into Tibet appears to us most surprising and regrettable.

We realise that there has been delay in Tibetan Delegation proceeding to Peking. This delay was caused, in the first instance, by inability to obtain visas for Hong Kong, for which the Delegation was in no way responsible. Subsequently the Delegation came back to Delhi because of the wish of the Chinese Government that preliminary negotiations should first be conducted in Delhi with the Chinese Ambassador. Owing to lack of knowledge on the part of the Tibetan Delegation of dealing with other countries, and the necessity of obtaining instruction from their Government, who in turn had to consult their Assemblies, certain further delay took place. The Government of India do not believe that any foreign influences hostile to China have been responsible for the delay in the Delegation's departure.

Now that the invasion of Tibet has been ordered by the Chinese Government -peaceful negotiations can hardly be synchronised with it, and there will naturally be fear on the part of the Tibetans that negotiations will be under duress. In the present context of world events, the invasion by Chinese troops of Tibet cannot but be regarded as deplorable and, in the considered

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<sup>6</sup> See *Selected Works* (Second Series) Vol. 13.Part 1, pp.437-438

judgement of the Government of India, not in the interest of China or of peace. The Government of India can only express their deep regret that, in spite of the friendly and disinterested advice repeatedly tendered by them, the Chinese Government should (have decided to seek a solution of the problems of their relations with Tibet by force instead of by the slower and more enduring method of peaceful approach.

### **Cable to K.M. Pannikar<sup>7</sup>**

Your telegram No.265 dated October 25<sup>8</sup>. We cannot help thinking that your representation to the Chinese Government was weak and apologetic. In fairness to the Chinese Government as well as to ourselves our views regarding threaten invasion of Tibet and its probable repercussion should have been communicated to them clearly and unequivocally. This has evidently not been done. We have not even had any information from you regarding the Chinese Government's directive to the "Liberation Army" to advance into Tibet. A full copy of this order was transmitted to us by the U.K. High Commissioner; and it was embarrassing for us not to have received intimation from our own Ambassador regarding such serious developments<sup>9</sup>. The Chinese Government's action has jeopardised our

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<sup>7</sup> New Delhi, 27 October 1950. J.N. Collection.

<sup>8</sup> Panikkar reported that in a communication to the Chinese Foreign Office on 2 October he had said that the Tibetan Delegation would be leaving India shortly to Peking and had expressed the hope that further military action would, therefore, not be necessary. "It will help the peaceful settlement of the Tibetan question if the Chinese troops which might have entered territory under the jurisdiction of the Lhasa authorities could restrict themselves to western Sinkang."

<sup>9</sup> On 27 October, Panikkar telegraphed that the "official release issued on the 25th afternoon contained merely the news of the official orders to the army to advance into Tibet first heard over All India Radio on the 25th morning. By some error text of orders was published earlier in London and Delhi than in Peking."-

interests in Tibet and our commitments to Tibet; and our persistent efforts to secure the recognition of China in the interests of world peace have suffered a serious setback. Whether or not any representations from us would have deterred the Chinese Government from their course it was certainly necessary that our own attitude should have been explained to them with force and clarity.

### **Tibet and Chinese Fears<sup>10</sup>**

*Question: What is the significance of the resolution passed by the National Conference to hold elections for a constituent assembly?*

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Kashmir Government has always intended to create an elected constituent assembly. Before the outbreak of fighting in Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference had envisaged that such an assembly would decide among other questions, Kashmir's Constitution and political future, what the real attitude of people was on the issue of accession to India. This project was of necessity abandoned during the confusion accompanying the fighting. But now it is rational for the people of Kashmir to want to restore some normality in their State to enable them to get on with rebuilding a stable State. The failure of the United Nations so far to hold out any prospect of solution to the Kashmir dispute has only increased their sense of impatience.

From what I have seen of the National Conference resolution to hold constituent assembly elections, I don't think that it conflicts with the United Nations efforts to settle the dispute; on the contrary, anything which

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Reuter's diplomatic correspondent, Srinagar. 29 October 1950. From the *National Herald*, 31 October 1950.

increases internal stability and confidence in Kashmir should help towards peaceful settlement.

*Q: Do you think the elections envisaged in the resolution will be valid for the whole of Jammu and Kashmir State?*

JN. In practice the proposed elections will only be possible in those parts of Kashmir which are under the administration of Sheikh Abdullah's Government. As that Government is a legal and continuing Government of the entire State, it is understandable that the resolution should treat elections as valid for the whole of Jammu and Kashmir State.

*Q: What do you think are the Chinese Government's intentions as regards Tibet?*

JN: It still is not clear what the Chinese Government's real intentions are. There are certain disputed areas in eastern Tibet where China had been given the right to station garrisons under the terms of former agreements. The apprehension in Peking that the United States is bent on destruction of the new regime in China is rightly or wrongly very real. This fear, based on continued American support to Chiang Kai-shek, was aggravated by General MacArthur's Formosa statement and became acute when the United Nations forces under his command crossed the 38th parallel.

I think that this fear is unjustified. The fact that Peking has not moved into North Korea does not mean that China's fears that the fighting in Korea is in danger of spreading to wider areas have disappeared.

The current Chinese policy can perhaps partly be attributed to the fact that, although Peking's policy may not be dictated by Moscow, much of the information upon which this policy is based came through Soviet sources.

For example, Moscow has repeatedly said that Anglo-American "intrigues" in Tibet aimed at bringing that country into an anticommunist bloc or sphere of influence.

However unfounded these accusations may be, I wonder whether they may not have influenced the Chinese decision to move into Tibet.

*Q: Are the Indian Government, through their Ambassador in Peking and through the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi, attempting to allay the Chinese fears of which you have spoken?*

JN: Yes, we have tried to do so, but I don't know with what success.

*Q: How do you view the Chinese action in Tibet?*

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JN: Yes, we have tried to do so, but I don't know with what success.

*Q: How do you view the Chinese action in Tibet?*

JN: I greatly regret the action that the Chinese Government has taken in

Tibet. News from inside Tibet is still very uncertain owing to great distances and lack of communications. The local administration in the vast country is largely autonomous for purely geographical reasons. Lhasa is situated far to the east of Tibet, and I doubt whether, even if China occupies the Tibetan capital, this will necessarily profoundly affect the situation in the western areas of the country.

*Q: Do you think that events in Tibet will have repercussions in Ladakh?*

JN: On the basis of the present information available, I don't think that events in Tibet will have immediate repercussions in Ladakh.

### **Tibetans Free to Appeal to the United Nations<sup>11</sup>**

I have received a "suggestion" from Tibetan sources that Tibet would like to appeal to the United Nations against the Chinese Army's invasion. I have replied that India does not feel free to sponsor such a resolution in the United Nations, but Tibet is free to appeal directly, if it so chooses, through Secretary-General Lie.<sup>12</sup>

India has neither the resources nor the inclination to send armed assistance to Tibet. About 150 years ago an Indian army had invaded and subdued part of Tibet considered then and ever since as a remarkable military feat in that unfriendly terrain. But the end result was that in the following winter the Indian army froze to death.

We feel India has been ill repaid for her diplomatic friendliness toward

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<sup>11</sup> . Interview to I.F. Stone of United Press, New Delhi, 1 November 1950. J.N. Collection.

<sup>12</sup> In a signed communication to the UN from Lhasa on 7 November the members of the Tibetan Cabinet and National Assembly of Tibet strongly protested against the Chinese invasion and repudiated the Chinese claim of suzerainty over Tibet.

Peking. We have set forth our dissatisfaction and resentment in two notes of protest to the Chinese Government.<sup>13</sup> The second of these notes was dispatched yesterday,<sup>14</sup> in which India refused to accept the validity of Peking's explanation of resort to aimed invasion to enforce its suzerainty over Tibet. The texts of the diplomatic exchange between Peking and Delhi will be released on Friday.

India does not dispute China's suzerainty over Tibet and so far as India is concerned all rights formerly vested in Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Government passed to Peking at the time of India's recognition of the communist regime. But India feels that Tibet's autonomy is as valid as China's pre-eminent domain in Tibet. Sending an army is a poor way to maintain autonomy and come to a settlement.

What was disturbing more than anything else was that Peking promised to negotiate differences with Tibet peaceably, yet started its army marching after the Tibetan Delegation had announced that it was going to Peking. Peking's statement of two days ago that it is still willing to negotiate a peaceable settlement when the Tibetans arrive at the Chinese capital is also hardly assuring. For how can there be peaceable talks at Peking, while an army advances along the rocky trails of the Tibetan Delegates' homeland? What India will do if Tibet complains directly to the United Nations may

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<sup>13</sup> For the first note, see ante, pp.331-332.

<sup>14</sup> This note sent in response to the note of the Government of China of 30 October repudiated China's allegations that India's representation to her about Tibet was affected by foreign influences hostile to China and the Tibetan Delegation's departure to Peking was also delayed by outside instigation. It was pointed out that the suggestion of the Government of India that the Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and Tibetan autonomy should be reconciled by peaceful negotiations was not prompted by any desire to interfere or to gain any advantage. The note also said that in view of military operations undertaken by Chins in Tibet the Government of India could not advise the Tibetan Delegation to proceed to Peking unless the Chinese Government ordered its troops to halt their advance in Tibet.

depend upon whether future incidents force a re-examination of our China policy.

**To C. Rajagopajachari<sup>15</sup>**

New Delhi

November 1, 1950

My dear Rajaji,

Thank you for your note<sup>16</sup> of today.

I have been going through our own telegrams and other papers and examining with K.P.S. Menon<sup>17</sup> some of those papers in regard to Tibet.

Legally our position seems to be a weak one in regard to Tibet. Morally I find it difficult to say that the Chinese Government has deliberately deceived us at any stage. We may have deceived ourselves, and they may have done wrong in the action they took, as I think they did.

For the last year they have been talking about "liberating" Tibet as a part of the Chinese fatherland. From the 15th of July of this year there has been a great deal of talk on this, and even some Chinese troops' movements were reported to us on the Tibetan border of China. Early in August the Chinese Government issued a text of a proclamation<sup>18</sup> by the Head of their Southern Command, who was "assigned to liberate Tibet." This proclamation stated that the People's Liberation Army will soon march towards Tibet, etc. We sent a telegram<sup>19</sup> to our Ambassador asking him to point out that any such move will be most unfortunate and that this should be settled by peaceful

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<sup>15</sup> J.N. Collection.

<sup>16</sup> Not available.

<sup>17</sup> He was the Foreign Secretary at this time.

<sup>18</sup> A statement to this effect by General Liu Po-chen, Chairman of the South West Chin' Military Affair Commission and commander of the Communist Second Field Army, was quoted by the New China News Agency on 5 August 1950.

<sup>19</sup> See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol. IS Part 1, pp. 430-43 I.

means. In this way telegrams have been exchanged repeatedly. At no stage did the Chinese Government say to us that they would not take any military steps. They did say that they were always prepared for peaceful negotiations and that they had waited for a long time, but the Tibetan Delegation did not come. According to them, the Tibetan Delegation could not come because of imperialist manoeuvres. However that may be, the point is that there was no assurance given to us which can be said to have been broken except that they said repeatedly that they were always prepared for peaceful negotiations. When we informed them that the Tibetan Delegation was actually going to start, Chinese troops' movement had already taken place some days before.

I think that the Chinese Government has taken a very wrong step, but I do not see how they can be accused of deception. They have been perfectly clear from the beginning.

We have to remember also that the Chinese Government and people are living in constant fear of attack by the U.S.A. That fear may not be justified but it is not wholly groundless. Prominent men in the U.S. have repeatedly stated that this attack should be made. General MacArthur's views about this are well known and he is in command in the Far East. The Korean war brought war very near to China. The crossing of the 38th parallel made them feel that that was the last step before they themselves might be attacked. There have been, it is stated, ten bombing incidents in Manchurian territory by U.S. bombers. If we can put ourselves in China and see Chiang Kai-shek with a powerful army sitting nearby to attack China, supported by the U.S.; and war coming ever nearer and their own territories being bombed, then we can perhaps appreciate the temper and apprehension of the Chinese Government and people.

Of course, all this does not justify military operations against Tibet, but it does explain many things. Tibet for many years has been under British

influence and the British Agent there was violently anti-Chinese. He tried his best to incite Tibetans against China. Previous Chinese Governments have protested against this, and indeed I have myself been told by their representatives. Tibet was thus looked upon as a place which was under British influence. That influence is now gone, but only six months ago the same British Agent<sup>20</sup> was there representing us.

I am writing this to you just to point out certain considerations which have to be borne in mind to understand why the Chinese Government may have developed a state of mind bordering on fear of what is going to happen, and fear leads to wrong action. I am quite sure that the Chinese Government did not intend to deceive us or to insult us deliberately.

I thought you might like to see some of these papers and so I am asking K.P.S. Menon to visit you and show them to you. -

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

**To C. Rajagopalachari<sup>21</sup>**

New Delhi  
November 1, 1950

My dear Rajaji,

I have received your third note<sup>22</sup> about China. You will forgive me for thinking that this would not be appropriate and this would not add either to the strength or dignity of our note, apart from the fact that the note has gone and we cannot easily make large additions to it. We are trying to make

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<sup>20</sup> Hugh Edward Richardson (b. 1905); joined I.C.S., British Trade Agent, Gyantse, and Officer-in-Charge. British Mission, Lhasa, 1936-40 and 1946-47; Indian Trade Agent. Gyantse, and Officer-in-Charge, Indian Mission, Lhasa, 1947-50.

<sup>21</sup> J.N. Collection. Extracts.

<sup>22</sup> Not available.

some minor verbal corrections if they reach in time. Those corrections can even be made after the note is handed. But a major paragraph cannot be added later.

I feel that our deleting "large-scale", as suggested by you, weakens the argument. But, in view of your wishes, we are using the word "such" military operations.<sup>23</sup>

I feel there is some danger of our going too far in our condemnation of China and making it inevitable that a break should take place. As it is, rather fantastic and, I think, highly objectionable suggestions have been made by the U.S. We may be driven step by step to a decision from which we cannot withdraw and which compels us, in the wider world context, to take up an attitude which, thus far, we have consistently refused to do.

I am calling a meeting of the Cabinet tomorrow at 11 in the morning. I think we should inform it of these developments. After that we can publish this correspondence in the morning papers of the 3rd November....

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

### **Cable to B.N. Rau<sup>24</sup>**

Your telegram 395 dated October 30th. Chinese military operations against Tibet have undoubtedly affected our friendly relations with China. We hope

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<sup>23</sup> The Indian note handed to the Chinese authorities on 1 November 1950 stated that in view of repeated assurances by the Government of China of their aim of a peaceful settlement in Tibet "the surprise of the Government of India was all the greater when they learnt that military operations had been undertaken by the Chinese Government against a peaceful people". There was "no justification whatever for such military Operations" against the Tibetans, when there had been no allegation of provocation or resort to non-peaceful methods on their part.

<sup>24</sup> New Delhi. 1 November 1950. J.N. Collection.

to publish correspondence with China on November 3rd morning. Last night we sent a further communication to Chinese Government.

But these developments do not affect our general policy or even our policy regarding admission of new China in United Nations. Naturally we shall have to consider every step carefully and in context of existing conditions.

### **Cable to B.N. Rau<sup>25</sup>**

We understand that Tibetan Government has forwarded appeal to United Nations through their representative in Kalimpong. Copy has been sent to us. Please keep us informed of what action Secretary-General intends to take in regard to it. Meanwhile, our general instructions sent to you previously stand. We cannot sponsor appeal. Our attitude is that Tibetan problem should have been settled by peaceful negotiations and not by force. Further instructions will be sent to you on receipt of information as to developments at Lake Success.

### **Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>26</sup>**

Your telegram 6604<sup>27</sup>. We understand that Tibetan Government's appeal has been forwarded to UN by their representative at present in Kalimpong. We informed B.N. Rau sometime back that in case such appeal came we could not sponsor it but we would generally support it on grounds that the Tibetan problem should have been settled by peaceful means and not by force.

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<sup>25</sup> New Delhi. 1 November 1950. J.N. Collection.

<sup>26</sup> New Delhi. 11 November 1950. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

<sup>27</sup> Krishna Menon telegraphed that the evening papers of 10 November in London had slated that the Tibetan Government had sent an appeal to the UN "for intervention and help" and that India would be one of the countries sponsoring it.

We have no information about Chinese forces moving towards Burma.<sup>28</sup>

**To B.C. Roy<sup>29</sup>**

New Delhi

November 15, 1950

My dear Bidhan,

Thank you for your letter of the 14th November.<sup>30</sup> The report in the *Hindusthan Standard* is rather exaggerated and dramatised. The story of the secret map has no significance. These maps have been in use in China continuously for the last fifty years. We know them quite well. Every Government in China has used them.

But the fact remains that the approach of a Great Power like China to our frontier makes a great difference and we have to make our arrangements accordingly. We have in fact been considering this matter carefully with our Defence people.

The main frontier is the Assam frontier. The Darjeeling bit is also important. In Assam, those tribal areas are directly under External Affairs, who function through the Governor. The Governor has, at his disposal, the Assam Rifles. We should be examining all these matters fully soon. We can hardly take the whole of Assam under the Centre.

Yours, Jawahar

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<sup>28</sup> Krishna Menon stated that according to the newspaper report. Chinese forces were moving south from Chamdo and heading for Burma instead of eastwards towards Lhasa.'

<sup>29</sup> J.N. Collection.

<sup>30</sup> Not available.

**To B.C. Roy<sup>31</sup>**

New Delhi

November 16, 1950

My dear Bidhan,

Thank you for your letter<sup>32</sup> of the 14th November, sending me a copy of your intelligence report about the Tibet border. As I have already written to you, we are giving full consideration to this matter. Your report will be considered in that connection.

It is, of course, necessary that we should keep a close watch on our border and ensure it against any possible incident that might happen. There appears to me, however, a tendency among our officers to get greatly excited and take an alarmist view of all kinds of dangers, some real, others imaginary.

Yours,  
Jawahar

### **Policy regarding China and Tibet<sup>33</sup>**

1- The Chinese Government having replied to our last note,<sup>34</sup> we have to consider what further steps we should take in this matter. There is no immediate hurry about sending a reply to the Chinese Government. But we have to send immediate instructions to Shri B.N. Rau as to what he should do in' the event of Tibet's appeal being brought up before the Security Council or the General Assembly.

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<sup>31</sup> J.N. Collection.

<sup>32</sup> Not available.

<sup>33</sup> Note, 18 November 1950. J.N. Collection.

<sup>34</sup> In response to the note of the Government of India of 1 November, the Chinese Government sent a reply on 16 November.

2. The content - of the Chinese reply is much the same as their previous notes, but there does appear to be a toning down and an attempt at some kind of a friendly approach.

3. It is interesting to note that they have not referred specifically to our mission at Lhasa or to our trade agents or military escort at Yangtse, etc. We had mentioned these especially in our last note.<sup>35</sup> There is an indirect reference, however, in China's note. At the end, this note says that "as long as our two sides adhere strictly to the principle of mutual respect for territory, sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, we are convinced that the friendship between China and India should be developed in a normal way, and that problems relating to Sino-Indian diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with respect to Tibet may be solved properly and to our mutual benefit through normal diplomatic channels." This clearly refers to our trade agents and others in Tibet. We had expected a demand from them for the withdrawal of these agents, etc. The fact that they have not done so has some significance.

4- Stress is laid in China's note on Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, which, we are reminded, we have acknowledged, on Tibet being an integral part of China's territory and therefore a domestic problem. It is however again repeated that outside influences have been at play obstructing China's mission in Tibet:<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The Government of India in their note of 1 November stated that the Agent of the Government of India in Lhasa the Indian trade agencies at Gyantse and Yatung the post and telegraph officers at the trade route up to Gyantse and the military escort there should continue.

<sup>36</sup> The Chinese note of 16 November declared: "However when the Chinese Government actually exercised its sovereignty rights and began to liberate the Tibetan people and drive out foreign forces and influences to ensure that the Tibetan people will be free, from aggression and will realise regional autonomy and religious freedom, the Indian Government attempted to influence and obstruct the exercise of its sovereignty rights in

In *fact*, it is stated that liberation of Changtu proves that foreign forces and influences were inciting Tibetan troops to resist. It is again repeated that no foreign intervention will be permitted and that the Chinese Army will proceed.

5. All this is much the same as has been said before, but it is said in somewhat different way and there are repeated references in the note to China desiring the friendship of India.

6. It is true that in one of our messages to the Chinese Government we used "sovereignty" of China in relation to Tibet. In our last message we used the word, "suzerainty". After receipt of China's last note, we have pointed out to our Ambassador that suzerainty was the right word and that "sovereignty" had been used by error.<sup>37</sup>

7. It is easy to draft a reply to the Chinese note, pressing our viewpoint and countering some of the arguments raised in the Chinese note. But, before we do so, we should be clear in our own mind as to what we are aiming at, not only in the immediate future but from a long-term view. It is important that we keep both these viewpoints before us. In all probability China, that is, present-day China is going to be our close neighbour for a long time to come. We are going to have a tremendously long common frontier. It is unlikely, and it would be unwise to expect that the present Chinese Government will collapse, giving place to another. Therefore, it is important to pursue a policy which will be in keeping with this long-term view.

8. I think it may be taken for granted that China will take possession, in a political sense at least, of the whole of Tibet. There is no likelihood whatever of Tibet being able to resist this or stop it. It is equally unlikely that any

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Tibet by the Chinese Government."

<sup>37</sup> On 17 November, Panikkar was advised "to draw the attention immediately of the Chinese Foreign Office to the use by oversight" in the *aide memoir* of 26 August of Chinese "sovereignty" and that the correct phrase was "suzerainty" as used in the latest message to China on 1 November.

foreign Power can prevent it. We cannot do so. If so, what can we do to help in the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy and at the same time avoiding continuous tension and apprehension on our frontiers?

9. The Chinese note has repeated that they wish the Tibetan people to have, what they call, "regional autonomy and religious freedom". This autonomy can obviously not be anything like the autonomy, verging on independence, which Tibet has enjoyed during the last forty years or so. But it is reasonable to assume from the very nature of Tibetan geography, refrain and climate, that a large measure of autonomy is almost inevitable. It may of course be that this autonomous Tibet is controlled by communist elements in Tibet. I imagine however that it is, on the whole, more likely that what will be attempted will be a pro-Communist China administration rather than a communist one.

10. If world war comes, then all kinds of difficult and intricate problems arise and each one of these problems will be inter-related with others. Even the question of defence of India assumes a different shape and cannot be isolated from other world factors. I think that it is exceedingly unlikely that we may have to face any real military invasion from the Chinese side, whether in peace or in war, in the foreseeable future. I base this conclusion on a consideration of various world factors. In peace, such an invasion would undoubtedly lead to world war. China, though internally big, is in a way amorphous and easily capable of being attacked, on its sea coasts and by air. In such a war, China would have its main front in the south and east and it will be fighting for its very existence against powerful enemies. It is inconceivable that it should divert its forces and its strength across the inhospitable terrain of Tibet and undertake a wild adventure across the Himalayas. Any such attempt will greatly weaken its capacity to meet its real enemies on other fronts. Thus I rule out any major attack on India by China. I think these considerations should be borne in mind, because there is far

too much loose talk about China attacking and overrunning India. If we lose our sense of perspective and world strategy and give way to unreasoning fears, then any policy that we might have is likely to fail.

11. While there is, in my opinion, practically no chance of a major attack on India by China, there are certainly chances of gradual infiltration across our border and possibly of entering and taking possession of disputed territory, if there is no obstruction to this happening. We must therefore take all necessary precautions to prevent this. But, again, we must differentiate between these precautions and those that might be necessary to meet a real attack.

12. If we really feared an attack and had to make full provision for it, this would cast an intolerable burden on us, financial and otherwise, and it would weaken our general defence position. There are limits beyond which we cannot go at least for some years, and a spreading out of our -army in distant frontiers would be bad from every military or strategic point of view.

13. In spite of our desire to settle any points at issue between us and Pakistan, and developing peaceful relations with it, the fact remains that our major possible enemy is Pakistan. This has compelled us to think of our defence mainly in terms of Pakistan's aggression. If we begin to think of and prepare for China's aggression in the same way, we would weaken considerably on the Pakistan side. We might well be got in a pincer movement. It is interesting to note that Pakistan is taking a great' deal of interest, from this Point of view in developments In Tibet. Indeed it has been discussed in the Pakistan press that the new danger from Tibet to India might help them to settle the Kashmir problem according to their wishes.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> For example, *Dawn* of 12 November published a poem. Tibet and Kashmir', and commented.' The passion which has inspired his (poet's) more to sing a poem of praise to liberators of Tibet" and to let his despairing mind dwell wistfully on thoughts of some such "liberation" for his own overrun and beleaguered motherland cannot but touch one's heart..."

Pakistan has absolutely nothing in common with China or Tibet. But if we fall out completely with China, Pakistan will undoubtedly try to take advantage of this, politically or otherwise. The position of India thus will be bad from a defence point of view. We cannot have all the -time two possible enemies on either side of India. This danger will not be got over, even if we increase our defence forces or even if other foreign countries help us in arming. The measure of safety that one gets by increasing the defence apparatus is limited by many factors. But whatever that measure of safety might be, strategically we would be in an unsound position and the burden of this will be very great on us. As it is, we are facing enormous difficulties, financial, economic, etc.

14. The idea that communism inevitably means expansion and war, or, to -; put it more precisely, that Chinese communism means inevitably an expansion towards India, is rather naive. It may mean that in certain circumstances. Those circumstances would depend upon many factors, which I need not go into here. The danger really is not from military invasion but from infiltration of men and ideas. The ideas are there already -and can only be countered by other ideas. Communism is an important element in the situation. But, by our attaching too great importance to it in this context, we are likely to misjudge of the situation from other and more important angles.

15. In a long-term view, India and China are two of the biggest countries of Asia bordering on each other and both with certain expansive tendencies, because of their vitality. If their relations are bad, this will have a serious effect not only on both of them but on Asia as a whole. It would affect our future for a long time. If a position arises in which China and India are inveterately hostile to each other, like France and Germany, then there will be repeated. It is interesting to note that both the U.K. and the U.S.A. appear to be anxious to add to the unfriendliness of India and China towards

each other. It is also interesting to find that the USSR does not view with favour any friendly relations between India and China. These are long-term reactions which one can fully understand because India and China at peace with each other would make a vast difference to the whole set-up and balance of the world. Much of course depends upon the development of either country and how far communism in China will mould the Chinese people. Even so, these processes are long-range ones and in the long run it is fairly safe to assume that hundreds of millions of people will not change their essential characteristics.

16. These arguments lead to the conclusion that while we should be prepared, to the best of our ability, for all contingencies, the real protection that we should seek is some kind of understanding of China. If we have not got that, then both our present and our future are imperilled and no distant Power can save us. I think on the whole that China desires this too for obvious reasons. If this is so, then we should fashion our present policy accordingly.

17. We cannot save Tibet, as we should have liked to do, and our very attempts to save it might well bring greater trouble to it. It would be unfair to Tibet for us to bring this trouble upon her without having the capacity to help her effectively. It may be possible, however, that we might be able to help Tibet to retain a large measure of her autonomy. That would be good for Tibet and good for India. As far as I can see, this can only be done on the diplomatic level and by avoidance of making the present tension between India and China worse.

18. What then should be our instructions to B.N. Rau? From the messages he has sent us, it appears that no member of the Security Council shows any inclination to sponsor Tibet's appeal and that there is little likelihood of the matter being considered by the Council. We have said that we are not going to sponsor this appeal, but if it comes up, we shall state our viewpoint. This

viewpoint cannot be one of full support of the Tibetan appeal, because that goes far and claims full independence. We may say that whatever might have been acknowledged in the past about China's sovereignty or suzerainty, recent events have deprived China of the right to claim that. There may be some moral basis for this argument. But it will not take us or Tibet very far. It will only hasten the downfall of Tibet. No outsider will be able to help her and China, suspicious and apprehensive of these tactics, will make sure of much speedier and fuller possession of Tibet than she might otherwise have done. We shall thus not only fail in our endeavour but at the same time have really a hostile China on our door-step.

19. I think that in no event should we sponsor Tibet's appeal. I would personally think that it would be a good thing if that appeal is not heard in the Security Council or the General Assembly. If it is considered 'there, there is bound to be a great deal of bitter speaking and accusation, which will worsen the situation as regards Tibet, as well as the possibility of widespread war, without helping it in the least. It must be remembered that neither the U.K. nor the U.S.A., nor indeed any other Power, is particularly interested in Tibet or the future of that country. What they are interested in is embarrassing China. Our interest, on the other hand, is Tibet, and if we cannot serve that interest, we fail.

20. Therefore, it will be better not to discuss Tibet's appeal in the UN. Suppose, however, that it comes up for discussion, in spite of our not wishing this, what then? I would suggest that our representative should state our case as moderately as possible and ask the Security Council or the Assembly to give expression to their desire that the Sino-Tibetan question should be settled peacefully and that Tibet's autonomy should be respected and maintained. Any particular reference to an Article of the Charter of the UN might tie us up in difficulties and lead to certain consequences later which may prove highly embarrassing for us. Or a resolution of the UN might

just be a dead letter, which also will be bad.

21. If my general argument is approved then we can frame our reply to China's note accordingly.

### **Cable to B.N. Rau<sup>39</sup>**

Your telegram 445 dated 17th November.<sup>40</sup> We doubt whether a discussion of Tibetan problem in General Assembly or in Security Council will yield any useful result. We therefore advised Tibetan Government against it when they first proposed appeal to UN. Subsequently, when Chinese troops marched into Tibet proper, we told Tibetan Government that if they so chose, they could prefer appeal to UN. We could not, however, sponsor such an appeal, though we might support it generally. We cannot go back on our assurance and have, therefore, to support inclusion of proposal for consideration by UN. We are anxious to avoid recrimination or strong language which might come in the way of peaceful settlement. Last note to us from China, though same in content as previous one, was more friendly in tone.

2. We have already sent you a copy of Tibetan Precis which gives background of problem and have indicated our general lines of approach. We cannot, consistently with previous declarations, support Tibetan claim to independence, though we can and should favour recognition of Tibetan autonomy. We should support appeal on broad ground that problem of Sino-Tibetan relations should be solved peacefully and not by resort to arms. Chinese Government have repeatedly expressed themselves in favour of Tibetan autonomy, but of course we do not know what their idea of

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<sup>39</sup> New Delhi, 19 November 1950. J.N. Collection.

<sup>40</sup> Rau stated that no member of the Security Council appeared to be inclined to Sponsor the Tibetan appeal mainly on grounds of the doubtful status of Tibet and a general lack of knowledge about the problem, and asked for instructions in case the matter was brought up.

autonomy is.

3. As soon as you know for certain that matter will come up in Assembly, please let us know and we shall send you fuller brief. We do not think that legal arguments will be helpful or that Assembly should attempt more than appeal to two parties to come to a peaceful settlement. Condemnation of China will not help Tibet: and neither Security Council nor Assembly is in any position to render physical aid to Tibet.

### **The Indo-Tibetan Boundary<sup>41</sup>**

Tibet is contiguous to India from the region of Ladakh to the boundary of Nepal and from Bhutan to the Irriwady, Salween divide in Assam. The frontier from Bhutan eastwards has been clearly defined by the McMahon line which was fixed by the Simla Convention of 1914. The frontier from Ladakh to Nepal is delimited chiefly by long usage and custom....

That is what the honourable Member is suggesting.<sup>42</sup> Our maps show that the McMahon line is our boundary and that is our boundary-map or no map. That fact remains and we stand by that boundary and we will not allow anybody to come across that boundary.

### **Cable to B.N. Rau<sup>43</sup>**

Your telegram No. 17-DGA dated 11th November: Tibet.

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<sup>41</sup> Answer to a question in Parliament whether India had any well-defined boundary with Tibet. 20 November 1910. *Parliamentary Debates. Official Report*. 1950. Vol. V, Part I, cols 155-156. Extracts.

<sup>42</sup> In a supplementary question, Mahavir Tyagi had asked whether it was a fact that the Survey of India maps showed India's boundary beyond the boundaries shown in the latest Chinese map, namely extending up to the Brahmaputra banks near Sadia."

<sup>43</sup> New Delhi, 20 November 1950. J.N. Collection.

2. Draft resolution<sup>44</sup> of El Salvador completely ignores realities of situation and overlooks fact that only result of passing such a resolution will be to precipitate conquest of Tibet and destruction of Tibetan independence and perhaps even autonomy. We cannot possibly support it or even adopt merely negative attitude. We would therefore suggest that delegate of El Salvador should be induced to modify his resolution so as to limit it to expression of concern of General Assembly at recent developments in Tibet and call upon parties to come to a settlement by peaceful means and not by force. If he is unwilling to do so, you should try to have amendment moved on line suggested.

**Cable to K.M. Panikkar<sup>45</sup>**

Your telegram 303 of 19th November. I quite appreciate considerations which you have put before us.<sup>46</sup> I also understand, though I do not agree with Chinese Government's fears and apprehensions.<sup>47</sup> . I want to make it-

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<sup>44</sup> El Salvador in a resolution presented on 18 November asked the General Assembly to condemn the unprovoked aggression against Tibet by Chinese forces and to establish a committee to decide what measures could be taken by the Assembly.

<sup>45</sup> New Delhi. 20 November 1950. J.N. Collection.

<sup>46</sup> Panikkar stated that the controversy with China over Tibet - was a "result of misunderstanding on both sides. On their side based on our acceptance of their sovereignty and our side by a feeling that China brushed aside discourteously our friendly advice." He added that in view of the threatening international situation. Any further straining of relations with China on the issue of Tibetan appeal in the United Nations was to be avoided.

<sup>47</sup> Panikkar wrote that the Chinese perception about India going back on her assurances of recognising the territorial integrity of China should be seen in the context of their "genuine fear" of a threat to their security stemming from military survey of Formosa by the U.S. during the last war; existence of an American air base in Bangkok; and denial by Lhasa even of Chinese suzerainty and its approaches to foreign Powers for recognition of Tibet's sovereignty.

clear that I am convinced of importance of Indo-Chinese friendship both from short-term and long-term points of view. We have labored to that end, but military operations against Tibet came as shock to us and to Indian opinion. During past two years or more we have consistently adopted policy in Asian matters, such as Indonesia, Indo-China, China, which has been opposed to Anglo-American policy. We would have thought that this was evidence enough of our independent policy. In regard to Tibet no country has influenced us in the slightest. But, of course, India has special feelings towards Tibet.

2. Even now we are anxious to continue friendly relations with China. We did not desire Tibetan issue to be argued before the United Nations, but when it comes up we have to say something. We do not agree with El Salvador resolution of condemnation. We cannot support fully Tibetan appeal. Hence our instructions to Rau of which we have informed you.

3. Regarding use of word "sovereignty" or "suzerainty", question is rather academic.<sup>48</sup> We have always laid Stress on autonomy of Tibet. Autonomy plus sovereignty leads to suzerainty. Words are not important. What we do attach value to is autonomy of Tibet. We feel that as this matter may come up before the United Nations or might be otherwise raised, it is desirable to make position clear to Chinese Government lest they may accuse us of misleading them later.

4. We realise importance of McMahon line by which we are going to stand anyhow. We are taking necessary steps on border.

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<sup>48</sup> Panikkar stated that the Indian *aide memoire* of 26 August 1950, defining India's policy as "Tibetan autonomy within framework or Chinese sovereignty" and his own discussions with the Chinese authorities based on the same phraseology, had helped China justify its military action in Tibet. The Indian note of 1 November 1950, substituting "suzerainty" for "sovereignty", however, led Peking to attribute the modification to outside influence. He wondered whether subsequent explanation by India that the earlier use of the word sovereignty was by oversight would serve any purpose.

5. Our present policy is primarily based on avoidance of world war, and secondly on maintenance of honourable and peaceful relations with China. These relations inevitably will depend, to some extent, upon Chinese policy in Tibet. If peaceful settlement is arrived at there and Tibet's autonomy recognised, this should meet Chinese demands and satisfy, more or less, both Tibet and India.

6. As you informed us, Chinese policy underwent vital change after collapse of North Korean forces. We supported Chinese contention that the 38th parallel should not be crossed. Now China appears to have made up her mind about war. This realisation has made Western Powers appreciate dangers of situation and U.K. is trying hard to find way out.<sup>49</sup> We have indicated to you U.K. approach which seems to us reasonable. Bevin has sent special message to Chou En-lai through their Charge d'Affaires.<sup>50</sup> He has also addressed me and asked for our support. U.K. are anxious to have frank talks with Chinese delegation going to U.N.<sup>51</sup> and have deputed special officer Lamb<sup>52</sup> to New York for this purpose. Proposal for demilitarisation of part of North Korea above the 4th parallel is strictly temporary. This should not be mentioned at present to Chinese authorities, but that is main basis of approach. Also it is hoped to associate China with discussions on future of Korea.

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<sup>49</sup> On 20 November a British Foreign Office statement said that the British Government had been in consultation with the U.S. French and Commonwealth Governments to find a solution to the Korean problem.

<sup>50</sup> The British Charge d'Affaires handed over the message to the Chinese Foreign Office on 22 November. The message reaffirmed that the UN action in Korea was not a threat to Chinese security and in no way endangered legitimate Chinese interests in that area.

<sup>51</sup> A Chinese delegation arrived in New York on 24 November to appear before the Security Council to support its Government's charges of U.S. aggression against Formosa.

<sup>52</sup> Sir Lionel Henry Lamb; served in British consular service in China, 1921-38; British Counsellor, Chungking. 1945; Minister, Nanking, 1947-49; Charge d'Affaires, Peking, 1951-53; Ambassador to Switzerland, 1953-58.

7. Details apart, this appears to be an earnest and hopeful attempt at peaceful settlement and avoidance of war. We suggest to you to support this approach generally in best way you can. In view of dangers of present situation and drift to war, any attempt which prevents war and safeguards interests of China should be welcomed by Chinese Government. We think that U.K. proposal aims at this and also leads to settlement of Korean problem in co-operation with parties concerned.

8. We suggest to you to clarify our position to Chinese Government both in regard to Tibet and wider issues in as friendly a manner as possible.

### **Cable to B.N. Rau<sup>53</sup>**

Your telegram 455 dated 21st November. We are entirely in favour of deferring consideration of Tibet question because of various developments, more particularly arrival of Peking representatives. It is of vital importance that every effort be made to lessen war tension, more especially in Far East where situation is dangerous. We understand that U.K. and U.S.A. are also exploring methods of dealing with Korean situation so as to remove Chinese fears and relieve tension. In this context any step taken in United Nations which adds to bitterness and worsens situation is to be avoided. Debate on Tibet at this stage is likely to be an occasion for strong language and condemnation which will make possibility of settlement by negotiations of both Tibetan and wider problem much more difficult, if not impossible. We still cling to faint hope of such settlement. Therefore our policy and procedure should be based on this approach.

2. We are committed to giving qualified support to Tibet in United Nations in terms already indicated to you and when occasion arises this has to be done. But we do not approve of El Salvador's resolution and cannot support Tibet's

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<sup>53</sup> New Delhi. 23 November 1950. J.N. Collection.

appeal in regard to independence. We can only press both parties to settle by peaceful negotiation. You should therefore support move for postponement and make clear our attitude to entire problem.<sup>54</sup>

3. You should certainly meet the Chinese delegation. I should like Vijayalakshmi also to see them<sup>55</sup>. Please repeat this telegram to her;

### **Cable to K.M. Panikkar<sup>56</sup>**

Your telegram 304 of 20th November.<sup>57</sup> As we have informed you, U.K. and possibly U.S.A. are trying to find some way out of deadlock in Korea and making proposals to that end. We do not know if this will succeed: But every effort should be made to lessen war tension in wider interests of world peace.

Much depends upon talks which will take place with Chinese delegation at Lake Success. We understand that U.K. and U.S.A. are trying to defer consideration of Tibet in UN because of pending arrival of Peking

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<sup>54</sup> On 24 November, the General Committee of the General Assembly agreed to postpone action indefinitely on the Tibetan Government's appeal after the Indian delegate had told the Committee that India was convinced that a peaceful settlement could be reached between Tibet and the People's Republic of China.

<sup>55</sup> Rau met the Chinese delegation on 1 December. Vijayalakshmi Pandit called on the leader of the delegation on 7 December.

<sup>56</sup> New Delhi, 23 November 1950. J.N. Collection.

<sup>57</sup> Panikkar responded that the official Chinese newspaper: the Kwanming Daily had in a recent article pleaded for Sino-Indian understanding saying that India should carry on negotiations with China through diplomatic channels if she desired to retain her "normal commercial and diplomatic relations with Tibet." He suggested that since China had in principle recognised India's interests in Tibet and had left the door open for direct negotiations, the opportunity should not be missed, as a settlement with China would not only be in the interests of India but "those Tibetans who have in the past been friendly to us."

representatives. In these circumstances we are strongly of opinion that any discussion in UN which raises passion and increases tension should be avoided. We feel that if Chinese Government could state clearly that they have every intention of settling problem of Tibet by negotiation and not by force and are prepared to have such negotiations with Tibetan representatives, keeping in view both Tibet's autonomy and her historical connection with China, this would go long way in easing tension and clearing the atmosphere. We do not know if Chinese Government, in their present frame of mind, are likely to agree. If you see no objection, you can put this forward entirely as a personal suggestion from you and not as proposal from Government of India.

2. We have asked Rau and Vijayalakshmi to contact Chinese delegation soon after arrival in New York.