

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Series II, Volume 15

To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

New Delhi

August 18, 1950

My dear Krishna,

A minor sensation has been caused here by Reuter's report of what you are supposed to have said at a press conference in regard to Tibet.²

From your telegram it appears that there was no press conference but an informal talk after lunch which was off the record. Also that the text as sent to us by Reuter's is not a correct version of the answers given. I hope you will send us a correct report.

Tibet is a very ticklish issue. We have to proceed rather cautiously in regard to it and we did not want it stated in public that we have been addressing the Chinese Government on this subject. They are sensitive and this itself might create an undesirable reaction in them.

On the other hand, our own position in Tibet can hardly be described in the terms that the press report stated.³ It is true that we recognise Chinese suzerainty but at the same time we recognise Tibetan autonomy and the two went together so far as we were concerned. What happens in the future, I do not know,' but we do wish Tibetan autonomy to continue under some kind of

¹ J.N. Collection.

² Krishna Menon was quoted as saying that "our views have been made known to the Chinese Government but it would not be correct to say that there have been *démarches* from the Indian side. Whatever advice we give to China on the Tibetan question would be in the direction of moderation irrespective of legal rights."

³ The report stated that 'India's position in Tibet was rather peculiar. She was the only country represented at the Tibetan capital. But the Indian representative was there in an 'undefined capacity' and was more or less the successor of the original British representative.' It added that India, like Britain, recognised Chinese suzerainty.

Chinese suzerainty. Tibet is very different from China proper and there is some dislike between the two. The right solution appears, therefore, to be Tibetan autonomy. What happens in Tibet immediately affects some of our border States, like Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. As it is, there is tension in these States.

For some time past, I have been asked questions about Tibet at press conferences. I have answered them rather vaguely and tried to avoid any direct commitment. Now, since the publication of the Reuter's message from London, press correspondents are pestering us or rather embarrassing us for a clear declaration of our policy in regard to Tibet. We do not intend any such clear declaration because whatever we may say may be embarrassing either from a Chinese or a Tibetan point of view. Anything that we might say to the Chinese loses its effect to some extent if any public reference is made to it. In any event, please send us a correct report of what you said so that we may deal with this matter when it arises.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Cable to K.M. Panikkar⁴

As you know, it has been our earnest desire to prevent any spread of hostilities beyond Korea and; if possible, to help in ending Korean war. How this can be done and whether anything effective can be done at present moment is another matter. But we are continually exploring situation and trying to do our best. Because we have taken up a somewhat independent attitude large numbers of people all over the world look up to India to save them from the horrors of world war.

2. We have based our policy on the full recognition of the People's Government of China and her admission in the United Nations. We have

⁴ New Delhi, 19 August 1950. J.N. Collection.

disapproved of the American declaration in regard to Formosa and, to some extent because of our efforts, the American State Department has moderated its position regarding Formosa.⁵ We recognise China's claim to Formosa and the strong desire of the Chinese Government and people to take some steps in regard to Formosa.

3. Apart from the merits, however; it is clear that any attempt on the part of China to invade Formosa in near future is likely to lead to a major war and possibly even world war. That would be a very serious development, which will ultimately do no good to any party concerned, including China. Out of world war, no good is going to emerge. Therefore, with all our friendly sentiments for China, we feel that any development leading to war on a big scale would be exceedingly unwise. For the present, fear of world war has receded, except for the Formosa question. It would be a tragedy if the Chinese Government, in an attempt even to advance what it considers its just claims, should precipitate this catastrophe. We earnestly trust therefore that People's Government of China will show its strength and wisdom in restraining itself at present. World opinion is now considering this matter more objectively and will undoubtedly appreciate any restraint on the part of China.

4. In regard to Tibet, you know that we want to help in a friendly settlement, which should aim at the autonomy of Tibet being recognised together with Chinese suzerainty. But apart from this, this invasion of Tibet⁶ might well upset the present unstable equilibrium and let loose dangerous forces. Some of our border States will be affected. But I am more concerned with the larger issues which this involves. Again, for the sake of preserving peace

⁵ Truman stated on 19 July that the U.S.A. had "no territorial ambition whatsoever" concerning Formosa and its military neutralization during the Korean war was without prejudice to political questions affecting it which should be settled by peaceful means as envisaged in the UN Charter.

⁶ According to unconfirmed reports reaching Hong Kong on 15 August, Chinese forces had begun advancing towards the borders of Tibet.

generally. it seems to me path of wisdom for Chinese Government not to precipitate conflict when especially the Tibetan Government is eager to discuss matters with China with view to settlement.⁷ It is perfectly clear that no external power, and certainly not the U.S. or the U.K., is interfering or can interfere in Tibet. They have not even a representative there and no means of direct contact. The position therefore is quite safe from this point of view and nothing harmful can possibly occur. Delay in any positive action may lead to a much more enduring settlement with goodwill and will redound to China's credit.

5. I have fully appreciated what you have said about the situation in China. But I feel that I should let you know how we view this matter. We are anxious to proceed in a manner friendly to China and to cooperate with her as far as possible. You have informed us that President Mao has strong feeling for Asia. It is from this point of view especially that I have tried to consider this question. We should like a number['] of, Asian countries to cooperate with us in our attempts to maintain peace and to prevent the conflicts of the major Powers from pushing the world towards destruction. China can play a vital role in this.

It is for you to decide in what manner you can best put forward these viewpoints to the Chinese Government.⁸ In view of urgency and possibility of events overtaking us delay is undesirable.

⁷ The Tibetan Government proposed to send a delegation for talks with the Chinese authorities on the future political status of Tibet.

⁸ After his meeting with Chou En-lai on 22 August 1950. Panikkar telegraphed that Chou appreciated Nehru's efforts but thought that the United States was determined to enlarge the field of conflict. Panikkar felt that China would not take extreme action on Formosa unless she was directly threatened. Chou seemed greatly concerned about reports that Nepalese military units had gone to the assistance of Tibet, and expected India to prevent them "from entering on such an adventure." While China would welcome a Tibetan delegation to Peking, she would not agree to any solution limiting Chinese sovereignty. Panikkar was convinced that China would not take military action unless the Tibetans proved too obdurate.

To K.M. Panikkar⁹

New Delhi

September 2, 1950

My dear Panikkar,

We have received several very interesting reports from you. The last of these came with your letter of the 2nd August. I have not written to you myself because I did not know that courier service had been established. So I contented myself with sending you telegrams.

Your letters as well as your reports have been extraordinarily interesting and instructive. It is obvious that what is happening in China, whether we like it or not, is of the highest significance. I have been sending some of your reports to all the members of the Cabinet and sometimes to our Chief Ministers of States.

The situation changes so rapidly that one can only deal with it by telegram, and anything one may write might well be out of date. You must have received copies of the speeches I delivered in Parliament¹⁰ here during the foreign affairs debate last month. I tried to explain and clarify what our foreign policy has been and is. On the whole, I created an impression on most people. There are, of course, some who just cannot understand anything but a crude lining up with this or that Power.

It is obviously a difficult situation for all of us. I think, on the whole, that India's prestige has gone up during the last two months. That does not mean that we are liked greatly, but, at any rate, we are respected and our integrity is to some extent recognised. This casts a special burden upon us.

I have been repeatedly suggesting to you to point out to the Chinese Government that it would be most unfortunate if they indulged in any warlike operation either against Formosa or Tibet. I can well understand their feelings in these matters, but I am convinced that it is to their advantage as

9 J.N. Collection.

10 See *ante*, pp.333-360.

well as to the advantage of the world that they should bide their time a little and not give cause to their enemies to say that China has aggressive and expansionist ideas. It is immaterial whether that charge is true or not and there can be no doubt that China has particular rights in Formosa and Tibet. But it is clear to me that in the delicate world situation today it would be disadvantageous to China to take any such step. On the whole opinion is veering round all over the world in favour of China, and more especially in favour of China's entry into the UN. Whether this can take place or not soon depends upon many factors and notably the attitude of the U.S.A. I believe that even in the U.S.A. there is a growing feeling that it might be harmful to their own interests to prevent China from coming into the UN. But if China takes any aggressive action, however justified, there is no doubt that the question of entry into the UN will for the moment be decided against her and other far-reaching consequences will follow. The militarist element in the U.S. will play this up for all it is worth and seek to make it a further pretext for any action that they may wish to take. Future historians will decide as to who is the guilty party and who is the aggressor. But, for the moment, this question will have little value for, if world war comes, these minor pre-war episodes will sink into insignificance. Therefore it is not much good to have legal and constitutional arguments to justify a particular course of action which, in effect, leads to a worsening of the international situation and probably to war'. The ultimate test should be the preservation of peace in the world as a whole. That of course does not mean that we should surrender any legitimate claim. Time is very much in favour of China and I do not see why they should not take advantage of this fact. The Chinese are a wise and far-seeing race and not liable to hysteria. Therefore we feel that this approach should be clearly placed before them.

So far as Tibet is concerned, we know our position. We claim no special political or other rights. We recognise the suzerainty of China. But we certainly feel that for the good of all concerned Tibet should retain autonomy. Also, naturally, that our interests there, which are in no way

adverse to China, should continue.

I attach great importance to India and China being friends. I think the future of Asia and to some extent of the world depends upon this. I am looking forward to meeting the Chinese Ambassador who will be here within a week or so.

India has had a succession of very grave calamities during the last few months.

There have been many serious floods. But the biggest disaster of all has been the Assam earthquake. I imagine that this earthquake must have shaken up a bit of Tibet also. I am going to Assam day after tomorrow for a few days for an aerial survey of the affected area.

You will remember writing to me about your visit to Madame Sun Yat-sen. You mentioned that she had suggested my going to China.¹¹ You also said that you had thrown out a hint that she might come to India. In my reply to you I said that perhaps the present moment might not be a suitable one for her to come. But if she really wants to come here, we would welcome her.

The best time would be the next winter.

A British MP was here the other day and in the course of my talk with him I mentioned this fact of Madame Sun having suggested my visit to China. I forgot at the time that he was a newspaper correspondent also representing Reynolds. To my surprise and embarrassment, two days later, I found our talk reproduced in the form of an interview,¹² and this led to all kinds of speculations about my going to China almost immediately. We had to announce that I have no such present intention. Of course, I would like to go to China, but I do not see when that can come about. There was some talk of my going to Lake Success, but I discouraged the idea. It may be that if some special crisis arises there and I feel that my presence might be helpful, then I might think of going. But it is difficult to leave India when we have a large

¹¹ Madame Sun Yat-sen had suggested this when Panikkar met her in Shanghai on 8 August 1950.

¹² For Nehru's interview with Tom Driberg, See *ante*, pp. 370-372.

number of serious political and economic problems facing us.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Conversation with the Tibetan Delegation¹³

Mr Shakabpa, the leader of the Tibetan delegation, referred to the importance of Tibet to both India and China and said that his Government wished to maintain their friendship with both these countries. Tibetans wish to continue their present religious way of life. Like every race, they had a right to their independence and they looked to the Prime Minister for help. The Prime Minister said that India could only give friendly advice to China. She had already done so by asking China that the problem of Tibet should be settled in a peaceful manner. India has also advised China of her interest in the autonomy of Tibet and of her desire that her interests in Tibet, which are cultural and commercial but not political domination, should be maintained. The Chinese have expressed their willingness for a peaceful solution and to that end have invited Tibetans to send a delegation to Peking. On the question of the venue of the talks, there was a long discussion. Mr Shakabpa said that they were afraid that, if they went to Peking, they would not have much freedom to negotiate and that the talks would be a one-sided affair. They had, therefore, no desire to go to Peking. They had said so to the Chinese Charge d'Affaires¹⁴ and they proposed saying it to the Chinese Ambassador too when they meet him. Mr Shakabpa asked for India's help. in this direction. The Prime Minister enquired why they should be reluctant to go to Peking now when they were willing to go there three or four months ago. Mr .Shakabpa explained that they had instructions then to go to Hong Kong only and not to Peking. The Chinese had agreed to send a

¹³ Record of conversation with the Tibetan delegation, New Delhi, 8 September 1950. J.N. Collection.

¹⁴ New Delhi. 19 October 1950. J.N. Collection.

representative to Hong Kong to talk to them, with the understanding that all important questions would be referred by him to Peking. The Prime Minister told them that although India was perfectly agreeable to Delhi being the venue, it was not for him to suggest this to the Chinese. As the parties to the proposed talks, it was for China and Tibet to settle where the talks should be held. In this connection the Prime Minister referred to the refusal of the British to give visas for talks in Hong Kong. This was because they did not like to give the impression that they were taking part in the talks.

Mr Shakabpa stated that his Government had written to the Chinese Government suggesting Delhi as the venue. This letter had been returned from Hong Kong, probably by the post office. Similarly, a telegram containing the same suggestion had failed to reach Peking. The message had, however, been given to the 'guide' who had been sent by the Chinese Government to Hong Kong to meet them.

Mr Shakabpa pointed out that on a previous occasion talks on Tibet were held on Indian territory-the reference was clearly to the Simla Convention-and wondered why this could not be arranged now. The Prime Minister repeated that it was not possible for India to urge Peking to hold the talks in Delhi. This would mean that India had a dominant position over China and Tibet. It was different thirty or forty years ago when China was weak. The Prime Minister explained that the Tibetans were perfectly free to insist on talks being held in Delhi but if as was likely, the Chinese did not agree, there would be no talks and the chance of a peaceful settlement of the Tibetan problem would disappear. The possible alternative would be an armed invasion of Tibet by China. In a peaceful settlement we can give Tibet diplomatic support but we cannot give any help in the even of an invasion. Nor can any other country. It is for the Tibetans to make their choice between war and a peaceful settlement but in doing so they should clearly understand the consequences of their choice.

The Prime Minister told the delegation that his own advice would be that when they meet the Ambassador they should not refuse his invitation to go to

Pekin₁ but should ask for some preliminary talks in Delhi as a prelude to their visit to Peking. If the preliminary talks are not agreed to, the Prime Minister advised, the delegation should go to Peking making it clear that they will have to refer to the Government for instructions from time to time and asking for assurance from the Chinese Government of personal safety and facilities to return to Tibet,

The Prime Minister also advised the delegation that, wherever the talks might be held, it would not be much use talking to the Chinese in terms of complete independence; talks could proceed only on the basis of Tibetan autonomy under the suzerainty of China. The leader of the delegation replied that they had no authority from their Government even to accept Chinese suzerainty. He said that the Chinese Charge d'Affaires had told them that Tibet is under China and that China intended stationing troops in Tibet and taking over her foreign relations. This disclosed that the Chinese views are diametrically opposed to the views of the Tibetans. Only if the differences could be narrowed down in Delhi, Mr Shakabpa said, he would not mind going to Peking. The Prime Minister repeated his advice that they should not be afraid to go to Peking and with this the interview ended.¹⁵

Cable to K.M. Panikkar¹⁶

Your telegram 260 dated 18th October.¹⁷ While we appreciate the reasons

¹⁵ The Tibetan delegation, when it called on the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi on 30 September 1950, was advised to proceed to Peking for further negotiations. The Chinese Ambassador declined to discuss with it the question of future relations between Tibet and China as he was not empowered to conclude any agreement.

¹⁶ New Delhi. 19 October 1950. J.N. Collection,

¹⁷ Panikkar thought that a fresh representation to China was not called for in view of lack of confirmation of presence of Chinese troops in Tibet. Interference to India's efforts on behalf of China in the UN during discussion on the Tibetan matter would suggest "ulterior considerations" as he had so far supported China's case on merits. China would be prepared for negotiators in deference to India's wishes to settle the question peacefully and the

that you have given, we still feel that our position should be clarified before the Chinese Government. Foreign Secretary has spoken to Chinese Ambassador here on lines we suggested to you. We know very well what China's claims have been in Tibet in the past. We are not entering into their merits. It is quite clear to us that any invasion of Tibet by Chinese troops will have serious consequences in regard to their position in the United Nations. It will strengthen the hands of the enemies of China and weaken those who are supporting China's cause there. Easy success in Tibet, which can be had at any time later, will not counterbalance loss in international sphere. We have no ulterior considerations in this matter as we have pointed out Our primary consideration is maintenance of world peace and reducing tensions so that all questions can be. considered in a more normal atmosphere. Recent developments in Korea have not strengthened China's position which will be further weakened by any aggressive action in Tibet.

We might remind you of our position in regard to French and Portuguese possessions in India. Their legal position is, we know, different from that of Tibet, but, to the world at large, Tibetan autonomy is a reality not to be swept aside by force of arms. We are convinced that Goa and Pondicherry must come to us and it is easy for us to seize them by military means. But we have deliberately refrained from doing so because of larger considerations. We do not understand the occasion for urgency and immediate military action in Tibet, when international situation is so delicate and no harm can result by delay in an attempt to seek settlement by negotiation.

What the actual position on the borders is appears doubtful and you can find out. According to Lhasa report, Chamdo is not yet in Chinese hands, but threatened, though Chinese troops are reported to have entered what, according to our maps, is Tibetan territory. But, in any event, it seems necessary that our position should be clarified to the Chinese Government.

We cannot afford to have our world policy injuriously affected without at least trying our best to inform the Chinese Government in a friendly way of what we think is right and what is wrong. That world policy is based, apart from preservation of peace, on friendly relations between China and India as well as between China and other countries and United Nations.

We feel therefore that you should draw attention of Chinese Government in a suitable manner to the various considerations we have mentioned here and in previous telegram on the lines that we have indicated.

Cable to K.M. Panikkar¹⁸

Your telegram 263 dated 21st October.¹⁹ Our information from Lhasa is that Chinese forces are still advancing and Riwoche, Dzokangdzong, Markhan and Chamdo have fallen. Also that Lhodzong is expected to fall soon. Unless it is clear that these forces are halted and there is no imminent danger of invasion of Tibet, there is little chance of Tibetan delegation proceeding to Peking. We have been pressing them to go but cannot continue doing so in view of military movements threatening invasion.

I confess I am completely unable to understand urgency behind Chinese desire to "liberate" when delay cannot possibly change Situation to her disadvantage. Anglo-Americans, no doubt, dislike idea of China spreading out right up to Indian frontier but they are not in a position to do anything about it. Everyone, including Tibetan delegation knows that. It seems to me that

¹⁸ New Delhi. 22 October 1950. J.N. Collection.

¹⁹ Panikkar reported that he had conveyed to Chang Han-fu, the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister, the views of the Indian Government. Chang reiterated his Government's resolve to "liberate" Tibet and said that they were still waiting for the Tibetan delegation to arrive. though some interested party was "opposing and obstructing" a negotiated settlement. Panikkar felt that if the Chinese suspicions regarding American or British influence on the delegation were confirmed, they would act with "lightning rapidity." He also said that the point about Chins losing international goodwill was not well taken.

aggressive elements in United States would welcome Chinese military action against Tibet, as this would enable them to justify their policy regarding China in the UN and elsewhere. Such a development would undoubtedly play into the hands of war-mongers In every country

It is quite easy to understand Tibetan hesitation and delay because they are afraid of China, and latter dictating terms which will amount to complete surrender of autonomy which Tibet has enjoyed during last four decades. They have no knowledge how to deal with other countries. Nevertheless, they were prepared to 'go to China when fresh news of invasion frightened them. Tibetan National Assembly, which is summoned on occasions of national emergency,' has been in session in Lhasa since 19th October. Chinese' Ambassador here has fully appreciated our viewpoint. I can only express my regret that Chinese Government has not done so and attaches more importance to solutions by force and lightning strokes than to slower but more enduring methods of peaceful approach. More particularly, in present context of world events, Chinese invasion of Tibet would be deplorable and, we are convinced, not in the interest of China or of peace. Unless Chinese Government halt progress of their forces and give assurance for peaceful negotiations we cannot help in this matter any further.

To K.M. Panikkar²⁰

New Delhi

October 25, 1950

My dear Panikkar,

I have received your letter of the 27th September together with your note on Soviet influence in China. I have read this note, as I have read your other notes, with great interest. We are anxious to make a correct appraisal of the developing situation in China, not only from the point of view of, the present

²⁰ J.N. Collection.

crisis, but also from long-term point of view. Your notes have helped us greatly in doing this.

We are wrapped up at present in day to day developments. Nevertheless, the major fact in my mind is the future relationship of India and China. even apart from the present crisis. There can be no doubt that the future of Asia and to some extent of other parts of the world also depends upon this relationship. In the distant past India and China spread out in various cultural activities in South East Asia. Each exercised a powerful influence and had left its influence on the countries of South East Asia. They did not come into conflict with each other but there was, I suppose, some kind of rivalry, even though unconsciously, between the two over this wide area.

Then came the period of colonialism and both, India and China, in their different ways, shrunk into their respective shells in self-protection. Now that that colonial era has passed, the old tendencies assert themselves and the vital energies and populations of these two countries lend to spread out. Whether this can be done in a peaceful and co-operative way or whether it will lead to some kind of conflict, the future alone can show.

It becomes important thus for us to keep this perspective in view in shaping our policies. China is undoubtedly going to count in this future. So, I think, is India. How do we look at each other? Most people seem to think in tern's of the present crisis only. That is important but, I think, that even to understand the present crisis one must look at the past and the future. It is our desire to develop as friendly and co-operative relations with China as is possible in the circumstances. These are necessary from the point of view of the present crisis, and even more so from the point of view of the future. We have shaped our policies accordingly and thereby often offended the Western Powers. Your reports and communications have helped us greatly and I think it may well be said that what we have done has, to some extent, even affected world policy. It is conceivable that but for India world war would have been much nearer.

I have tried to understand Chinese policy with every sympathy and with the

background that you have provided us. It was intelligible to me but I must confess that latterly I have been unable to appreciate it fully.

Your urgent and important messages, conveying the views of the Chinese Government sent after the collapse of the North Korean armies, were communicated by us in a somewhat altered form to the U.K. and the U.S.A. These messages said clearly and categorically that any crossing of the 38th parallel by the U.S.A. troops would inevitably bring about a conflict with China. The U.K. and the U.S.A. said that China was bluffing. We said that to us China appears to be deadly serious and in any event the risk should not be taken. Finally, China did not act up to its threat, and the U.K. and the U.S.A. took pleasure in informing us that they had been right when they considered China's warning as mere bluff. I am glad that China did not intervene at that stage and thus prevented the Korean war from assuming huge dimensions. Still, I must confess that this episode has weakened China's prestige to some extent and made people think that she indulges in empty threats. That is not a good thing; when a like crisis arises again, her warning might not be seriously taken.

China's attitude to Tibet again becomes more and more incomprehensible to me. I know Chinese feelings in the matter of Tibet. This has been continuous for the last thirty or forty years and one can very well understand the new China, full of vitality and vigour, not desiring to wait before giving effect to her wishes in regard to Tibet. Nevertheless, if military operations are started in the near future, it is quite clear to me that they will injure China's interests considerably. It is easy enough for China to overrun Tibet. Indeed, Tibet is hers for the asking at any time almost. When she is in such a favourable position, the need for military action seems to be very remote. In the context of the world today any such action is bound to create a great deal of prejudice against China. It will put an end to our efforts to bring her into the United Nations. It will give a tremendous handle to her enemies, and Korea and Formosa will be affected. If China is aiming at a big conflict, then of course it does not matter much, but if she aims at the preservation of

peace with honour, then this does matter. It is no good saying that China does not attach much importance to international opinion. No country, however great or big it might be, can afford to think so.

To repeat that Anglo-American intrigues are taking place in Tibet is to say something which has no foundation in fact. I have no doubt that both, U.K. and the U.S.A., would like Tibet to keep outside the Chinese orbit, but liking is one thing and the capacity to do something about it is another. It is clear that neither the U.K. nor the U.S.A. can influence Tibet policy to any extent. The mention in your last telegram about Nepal possibly taking action in Tibet is still more fantastic. At no time could Nepal have done so effectively. At the present moment, the Nepalese Government is in grave trouble internally and they could not possibly, even if they - wished, embark upon an adventure abroad.

If the Chinese Government distrust India and think that we are intriguing against it with Western Powers, then all I can say is that they are less intelligent than I thought them to be. The whole corner-stone of our policy during the past few months has been friendly relations with China-and we have almost fallen out with other countries because of this policy that we have pursued.

You tell us that the foreign policy of China is independent and is not influenced by the USSR²¹. That may be so, but whether it is independent or not, there is an identity in foreign policy between China and the USSR. This is not surprising. Your own note shows that the Chinese Government have adopted the techniques and methods of the Soviets.²² Their sources of

²¹ Panikkar had noted that while China had the assurance of the Soviet support, there was no evidence that the Soviet Union was encouraging her to adopt a more hostile attitude towards the United States. According to Panikkar, China's foreign policy might approximate to what the U.S.S.R. desired to see pursued in Asia, but it was based on an appreciation --of her own national interests. -

²² Panikkar wrote that China had adopted most of the Soviet political methods, especially those relating to control of the press and radio, propaganda, extreme secrecy in regard to all activities, treatment of foreigners and diplomatic missions, labour and education.

information must largely be the Soviet sources,²³ They are cut off from the rest of the world; so it is not surprising that unconsciously at least they are influenced greatly by the Soviet policy. The prospect of war throws China still more into the lap of the USSR If war came then this association will become complete.

If China has taken the decision not to make any further attempt to reach an agreement with the Western Powers, this is unfortunate and in our opinion wrong. No one asks China to barter away any of her rights or her self-respect, but at any moment to say that we do not wish to make any further attempts at an agreement cannot be right. This simply means that China has given up the idea of a peaceful solution of any major problems.

There is a great deal in the U.S.A. policy which I think is wrong. There is much wild talk there and at present there is a full-blooded preparation for war. Nevertheless, I do not think that China is justified in thinking that the U.S. aim at some kind of military campaign against China. There are some elements in the U.S.A. who would like this, but a great majority are opposed to it, or rather it would be truer to say that the great majority can be influenced in either direction. Much would depend on what China herself does. If she has made up her mind for war and if she invades Tibet or takes any other action which is in the nature of an aggression, then that great majority of people will themselves think that China is in the wrong and there is no way out except war. On the other hand, if China acts reasonably, without sacrificing her interests, then vast numbers of peoples in the world, including the U.S.A. and the U.K., will sympathise with her.

I have no doubt in my mind that in the long run China is going to be completely independent and not receptive to Soviet pressure. China cannot become just a satellite country to the Soviet. But for the present what is important is the immediate future. There is the danger of China feeling

²³ Panikkar wrote that all newspapers in China were strictly controlled. Such external news as was published would be from the New China News Agency, which took its foreign news from Tass.

isolated and convinced of war and therefore, plunging into all kinds of warlike adventures. That is too grave a risk, for any great nation to take.

You have yourself come to the conclusion that a conflict between China and America cannot long be avoided.²⁴ I do not think that is inevitable and it would be wrong to consider it inevitable till the last step has been taken. North Korea has been smashed and at this stage for China to help her directly, or to start an invasion of Formosa, would be foolish in the extreme from a military or a political point of view. So far as we are concerned, we have laid stress repeatedly on the fact that there can be no proper Solution of the Korean problem or of any other in the Far East without China's concurrence.

I have been disappointed to read in your report about the introduction of Soviet pattern in many things in China. This may give some immediate strength, but ultimately it will go a long way towards weakening the country. You ask in your letter about having a direct wireless service between your Embassy and the Government here.²⁵ We are examining this point, but such a service will probably cease automatically if war comes.

I do not expect war in the near future, though there will be plenty of cold war. We must not let our imaginations run away with us. The Chinese especially are not swept off their feet easily.

About Tibet, our position is first of all that our frontiers with Tibet, that is, the McMahon Line, must stand as they are. There is no room for controversy over that issue. Internally in Tibet we earnestly hope that Tibetan autonomy will be recognised under Chinese suzerainty and that we will be allowed to

²⁴ In his letter of 27 September 1950, Panikkar was inclined to think that before the U.S. force reached the 35th parallel, the Chinese army would probably have moved into North Korea. He did not think that there was anything much that India could do to avert the impending crisis.

²⁵ Panikkar suggested the establishment of direct wireless links between the Embassy and New Delhi on a reciprocal basis with China, as a flare up in the Pacific might cut off communications with India which were then routed via Hong Kong.

keep our representatives for trade and other purposes in Tibet Our own advice would be that Tibetan autonomy should not be interfered with. In course of time, Tibet will certainly come nearer to China. A military invasion would not result in such a process of integration and foreign reactions will certainly be most unfavourable.

If unfortunately there is war on a large scale, it will be our earnest endeavour to keep out of it. I cannot guarantee what will happen in the distant future, but our whole policy is to keep Out of such a war. I think Burma and Indonesia are likely to do the same. It will be something to have a 'no-war' area in South and Southeast Asia.

I believe the Sino-Burmese border in some places has not been clearly defined. This might give rise to trouble between Burma and China. We would strongly urge that this matter may not be taken up now. It can be considered later when dangers of war have passed away. The Burmese Foreign Minister²⁶ is here now and I have been discussing these various matters with him. We largely agree. Any attempt to create trouble on the Burmese border would make Thakin Nu's Government completely hostile to China.

Thus whether it is Tibet or any other place our activities can only be diplomatic. There is no reason why we should be apologetic about our policy. By what we have done for China, we have earned the right to be frank. Our viewpoint should, therefore, be put before the Chinese Government fully whenever an occasion arises. If they disagree, we cannot help it, but it should not be said that we did not make our position clear.

I am not writing to you about our internal troubles, which are many. I want to tell you that you have done a fine job in Peking and I want you to continue in the difficult and responsible position which you occupy.

I do not know how far you get information in Peking about the rest of the world. I suppose you have a good deal of information about the Soviets.

²⁶ U Sao Hkun Hkio.

Possibly, some information may trickle in from the United Kingdom. This is unfortunate, because it prevents you from knowing all the facts and all the currents of opinion that are passing through the world.

It may interest you to know that after a period of an attempt at courting me as "the great leader of Asia", those in authority in the United States, and this includes the State Department and the press, and the radio, have decided to "debunk" me. Word has gone out to do so and, in the course of the last two or three weeks, there has been a succession of virulent attacks on me all over the States. Some of these attacks are quite hysterical. It appears to be a well-organised campaign. Primarily, these attacks are due to our China and Korea policy. With American thoroughness, it is sought to be made out that I have no real influence in India and that in fact I stand rather alone in this policy, most of my colleagues being against it, that I am a kind of Hamlet in Indian politics. that I am an ambitious politician and not a statesman, and so on and so forth. A week or two before this, I was supposed to be one of the topmost men of the age, a man whose goodwill was more important than any number of armies, whose influence was predominant in Asia, and so On and so forth. it is interesting, from the psychological point of view, to study this phenomenon in America.

All this, of course, does not affect our policy in the slightest. It only confirms it, and shows the immaturity of American judgement and also the lack of stability in it. I am informing you of this as it will help you to realise what the reactions of our policy are in the rest of the world. I am supposed to have 'sold out' to Mao through your bad influence. Panikkar is referred to as "Panicky". It really is amazing how great nations are governed by very small people.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Cable to KM. Panikkar²⁷

Your telegram 264 dated October 23rd.²⁸ It is difficult for us to understand, how any intelligent person can consider Chinese security to be threatened along Tibetan frontier, whatever might happen, including world conflict. Reference to Nepal intervention appears to us to be equally absurd. Nepal has troubles of its own and it is inconceivable to us that it could intervene in Tibet, whatever her sympathies or fears might be. Chinese policy might be independent of Soviet, but is clearly influenced by one-sided and distorted news coming from Moscow. If Chinese Government distrust and disbelieve us,²⁹ in spite of all that we have said and done, then there is nothing further that we can say. To us, any apprehensions of danger to Chinese security from side of Tibet which adjoins our frontiers are utterly devoid of foundation and cannot, in our view, be a justification for military action; nor do we appreciate how, even in event of world war, such military action against Tibet can be of being to China.

Tibetan delegation is leaving Delhi today on way to China.

²⁷ New Delhi, 25 October 1950. J.N. Collection.

²⁸ Panikkar stated that there were indications that the Chinese Government foresaw possibility of large-scale warfare and were gearing themselves up for it. The Chinese effort to extend their authority in Tibet seemed to be actuated by their concern to make their rear secure against Anglo-American influence in case of war. 'Recent attack by Moscow Radio on Nepal as an Anglo-American satellite and fear that Chou expressed of Nepal intervention add weight to these considerations."

²⁹ Panikkar stated "Chinese have been talking of security of their Tibetan frontier and whenever I have pointed out that we are the only State on that boundary. they have remained silent."