

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Series II, Volume 19

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Making India Strong¹

...I came here ten months ago or so in the course of an election campaign just for a day² and I wandered about all over India with a speed, well, of the aeroplane and in the course of two or three months, I covered large parts of India, right from the eastern frontier of India which joins Burma and Tibet to the northern Himalayas, to the west, in far away Kutch adjoining Pakistan, and down south to Kanyakumari. I came to Madras city and I toured in some of the Andhra parts of this state, the Tamil parts or to Malabar. It was difficult for me to go everywhere. Even so, I think, I created some kind of a record in travelling, at least on election business.

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India Relations With Kashmir

First of all, I would like the House just to form a mental picture of the geography -the geographical situation. From the southern tip of India, Kanyakumari, Kashmir is just about or a little over two thousand miles. It is a far cry. Roughly speaking, Kashmir is about a thousand miles from the sea. While a part of India, it is, in fact, the heart of Asia, geographically speaking, and for countless ages great caravans have passed from India right up to Central Asia through this State. It

¹ Speech at a public meeting, 9 October 1952, AIR tapes, NMML. Extracts.

² On 27 November 1951

is essentially , and it has been for two thousand years or more, very closely connected with India culturally and politically often enough. It is also connected in various ways with Central Asia. Even now I wonder how many people realize that Kashmir is further north than Tibet. So one has to think of Kashmir in that peculiar geographical position apart from the other factors in the case.

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Constitutional Changes in Kashmir³

Question: Since the constitutional position has been made clear, is the demand for regional autonomy for the people of Ladakh⁴ and Jammu to be left to the Kashmir Government or will it come up to the Centre?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Ladakh and Jammu are parts of the Jammu and Kashmir State. Are they not.

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Increase Employment Opportunities⁵

You may remember that we sent such a team of Assam last month with very good results.⁶ Assam again is one of our difficult States. It is

³ Remark at a press Conference. New Delhi, 24 July 1952. Shaikh Abdullah was also present at the conference. From Press Information Bureau.

⁴ The Buddhist of Ladakh at this time expressed preference to union with India and Tibet rather than to being treated as "second class citizens" by the Kashmir Government.

⁵ Talk with the newsmen at the Madras railway station before leaving on his tour of some parts of Mysore and of Rayalaseema, 5 October 1952. From the Hindu, 8 October 1952.

⁶ A committee of Enquiry headed by H.V.R. Ienger, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, was appointed by the Prime Minister on 29 July 1952 to make a study on the

not only a border State having frontiers with Pakistan, Burma, Tibet and China, but it has also vast tribal areas. There are all kinds of difficult problems, communications are very limited, it had an earthquake, it has periodical floods and it has been badly affected by Partition. It was difficult to deal with all these matters separately by correspondence. So, we sent a team there of competent senior officials to examine things on the spot and make recommendations on how to remove the difficulties. They were there, studied the conditions and presented a report. Practically speaking, we accepted all their recommendations and we are trying to give effect to them. We want to do that in the case of Rayalaseema and other scarcity areas instead of correspondence with the State concerned.

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On The Truce Talks⁷

I have read through all these papers, though not with the care that they deserve. I entirely agree with your comments. It does appear that the Chinese have gone back on what they told our Ambassador⁸

spot and report to the Government on the problems created by the floods in Assam in the second week of July. Due to continuous heavy rains, the Brahmaputra and most of its tributaries had risen flooding 10,000 square miles. There had been disruption of rail and road communications.

⁷ Note to Foreign secretary, New Delhi, 25 July 1952. JN Collection.

⁸ On 14 June 1952, K.M. Panikkar discussed with Chou En-lai a proposal for a neutral commission to take charge of the prisoners with an offer to the Chinese and their north Korean allies that their representatives should have the opportunity to freely interview the prisoners. The impression Chou En-lai gave him was that on principle the proposal was acceptable to the Chinese, though there would have to be close negotiations about the modalities of control over prisoners during the period and the

do not know what more we can do in this matter. It hardly appears necessary for us to send a note on the subject of Korean truce talks. However, Kaul seems to be doubtful about this. Will you discuss this matter with Panikkar when he comes here?

Tibet. I am inclined to think that in our future talks or notes about Tibet, we should mention the frontier. I appreciate the reasons which Panikkar advanced and it is because of these reasons that we have not brought up this subject.⁹ But I am beginning to feel that our attempt at being clever might overreach itself. I think it is better to be absolutely straight and frank.

You might discuss this matter also with Panikkar and perhaps get notes drafted.

I think that you should send copies of all the papers relating to the Korean truce talks that Kaul has sent to our High Commissioner in London. You might ask him to show them to Krishna Menon. The Tibet papers need not be sent.

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To Mohan Sinha Mehta¹⁰

My Dear Mohan Sinhaji,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 6th September which reached me just before I went to Indore. In this letter you refer

method of interview. But suddenly in July 1952, following the bombing of power plants in North Korea by the United States, the Chinese denounced the proposal.

⁹ In a cable to Nehru on 17 June 1952, K.M.Panikkar argued that India's position on the frontier with Tibet was well known to China, and as Chou En-lai had not raised the border issue in his interviews with him, his silence should be presumed to be acquiescence, if not acceptance, and it was wisest to ignore the subject.

¹⁰ Jawaharlal Nehru

to your meeting General Ayub Khan¹¹, the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Land Forces...

...Pakistan's policy has largely revolved round Kashmir. For us Kashmir is an issue and nothing more, although it is an important issue. Our foreign policy does not depend upon Kashmir. It is obvious that there can hardly be any effective talk about common defense so long as the Kashmir issue remains unsolved and in fact so long as there is Indo-Pakistan tension. The Kashmir issue itself is part of that tension and is not sole cause of it.

Thus there are many difficulties in the way. Nevertheless, even a approach of this kind is a hopeful sign and should not be repulsed. There is another aspect of defense .In effect India is not really threatened by any country, except Pakistan. I am not at all nervous about what Russia or China can do to India. Indeed, Russia cannot act directly and China is hardly in a position to act across Tibet and Himalayas, apart from our general friendly relations with her. The case of Pakistan is somewhat different. They might legitimately fear trouble on their north west frontier. A common defense policy would, therefore, involve us into underwriting Pakistan.

¹¹ Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan (1907-1974); commissioned, 1928; commanded a battalion of British 14th Punjab Regiment in Burma during World War II and a brigade in NWFP in 1947; C-in-C , Pakistan, 17 January 1951-1954; Minister of Defense , Pakistan Government, 24 October 1954-August 1955; appointed Chief Martial Law Administrator, 8 August 1958; sworn in as Prime Minister on 27 October 1958 and immediately took over as President of Pakistan and Supreme Commander of Armed Forces; became Field Marshal, October 1959; defeated Fatima Jinnah in January 1965 in Presidential elections; led Pakistan in an armed attack on India, 1965; handed over power to Yahya Khan on 25 March 1969; wrote an autobiography entitled Friends Not Masters (1967).

Border Issue With China¹²

On reconsideration, I accept Shri Panikkar's advice¹³ that we should not make specific mention about the frontiers. I think, however, that this point should be made clear to Kaul, so that he may know exactly how our mind is working in regard to it.

I hope that the Bombay Government has been informed about the Chinese proposal to open a Consulate General in Bombay and that we are agreeing to this.¹⁴ The position should be explained to them briefly and they should be told that this is part of a larger settlement and it was not feasible for us to reject this claim as this would have affected our position in Tibet.

Cable to Indian Mission , Lhasa¹⁵

¹² Note to Foreign Secretary and K.M. Panikkar, New Delhi, 19 July 1952. JN Collection. Extracts

¹³ See ante.p.585

¹⁴ In a letter to Nehru of 28 July, Chou En-lai recognized the legitimacy of India's trade and cultural interests in Tibet and suggested that the political agency at Lhasa should be regularized by its transformation into an Indian Consulate-General in exchange for the opening of a similar Chinese Consulate in Bombay.

¹⁵ New Delhi, 6 September 1952. JN Collection. This cable was repeated to Political Officer, Sikkim.

Your telegram 90¹⁶ dated 5th September is rather disturbing as it indicates that our policy is not fully understood. That policy is to recognize that Tibet is under Chinese suzerainty and, subject to that, to protect our own interests in Tibet. Otherwise, we do not wish to interfere in internal affairs of Tibet and we can certainly be no parties to any secret or other activities against the Chinese. That would be both practically and morally wrong. It is for Tibetans and Chinese to settle their problems. Our interests now within Tibet are limited and our chief concern is proper maintenance of our frontier line. This we have made quite clear to the Chinese Government and on that there can be no yielding. We have already agreed to convert our representative in Tibet into a Consul General. That itself indicates what future position is going to be. It would be improper and unwise for our representative to get involved in Tibetan domestic affairs or intrigues. We are naturally friendly towards Tibetans, as we have been in the past, but we must not give them any impression of possibility of interference or help. Therefore, any question of loan as suggested is completely out of the question. We have to judge these matters from larger world point of view which probably our Tibetan friends have no means of appreciating.

¹⁶ The telegram stated that the Chinese occupation of Tibet had led to the emergence of three political groups-(1) a pro-Chinese group which supported Chinese expansion in Tibet; (2) a neutral group which was not aligned with any major political group nor was it unfriendly to the Chinese; and (3) a third group claiming to be the champions of Tibetan freedom and culture. This group was in need of funds to build up its units in Tibetan villages and amongst the middle classes. Funds were available from foreign countries particularly from the USA, but the group did not wish to receive help from the countries which had nothing in common with Tibet. It looked upon India for help and sought a loan of Rs .2 lakhs.

Any appraisal of Tibetan situation is helpful, but the appraisal by one particular party can hardly be objective. What we could like is objective appraisal having regard not only to internal but also external factors.

Our own appraisal is that owing to geography and climate and other factors, it is difficult for Chinese Government to exercise full control over Tibet. But if any challenge to their authority takes place, they will easily crush it ruthlessly and this will result in ending of such autonomy as Tibet might otherwise have.

We are particularly concerned with our border State like Sikkim, Bhutan, and Nepal and in no event will we tolerate any intrusion into these States. We can be of greater assistance not only to ourselves but to others by maintaining friendly and straight forward relations with China and, at the same time, showing firmness where our vital interests are concerned. It is necessary, therefore, to avoid any activities which might endanger those friendly relations and embarrass.

Boundary Problem With Tibet¹⁷

7. Mr. Munshi¹⁸ points out that the boundary between Tehri and Tibet is not clearly defined. That is perhaps so. The matter might be looked into. My own impression is that we are clear about the boundary. But Tibetans have regularly come across it here as well as in Assam and collected rent or revenue. When news of this has come to us (and it used to take a long time for news to travel), we have taken action. Of

¹⁷ Note to the Foreign Secretary, New Delhi, 9 September 1952. JN Collection. Extracts.

¹⁸ K.M. Munshi, Governor of Uttar Pradesh at this time.

course, by that time the Tibetans had usually gone. That is to say, we have never accepted the fact there is a dispute about the boundary.

8. Some time ago, Shri Sampurnanand, Minister ,UP, drew my attention to the possibility of Tibetans coming across the UP border to make some collections in the nearby villages. ¹⁹I told him definitely and precisely that they should not be allowed to come and they should be pushed back if they cross over. What happened later, I do not know.

9. Shri Sampurnanand also told me that while they were prepared to keep their armed police at the border there, it was necessary to put up some buildings for them to live in. The climate was inhospitable and it was not fair to expect them to remain in tents or in the open. This was a reasonable suggestion. I do not know what has been done about it.

To U Nu²⁰

New Delhi

September 17, 1952

My dear U Nu,

Thank you for your letter of the 6th September²¹

¹⁹ See Selected Works (Second Series), Vol 16 Part II, p.541

²⁰ JN collection. A copy of this letter was sent to the Foreign Secretary.

²¹ In his letter of 6th September, U Nu had informed Nehru that he had, in a conversation with the Chinese Ambassador in Rangoon, suggested a visit by Chou En-lai to Burma. Such a visit would serve two purposes. It would counteract the charge of the opposition in Burma that the Government was aligning itself with the Anglo-Americans. Further, it would discourage extremists among the Communist in Burma from staging an insurrection with Chinese support. U Nu asked Nehru for his reaction to the suggestion he had placed before the Chinese Ambassador.

If Chou En-lai or the Foreign Minister of China visit India, they would be very welcome here. I rather doubt, however, if they will at this stage agree to visit Burma or India.

Both Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai informally suggested to our Ambassador there and to my sister, when she went there, that I might visit China. I would like to do so. But I have felt that it would be better to go there after a cease-fire in Korea. Unfortunately the cease-fire does not come off at all and is far off now as ever.

Your Ambassador here told me today that there was every chance of your coming here for the Sanchi ceremony at the end of November. I am very happy to learn this.

You write about your visit to the Naga Hills areas²². As a matter of fact I am thinking of going to some of the Naga areas in India next month. If it is easily possible to go over to the other areas in Burma, I would like to do it. But I fear December and January are terribly heavy months for me.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely
Jawaharlal Nehru.

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Letters to Chief Ministers²³

²²U Nu had written about his trip to the Naga Hills areas in Burma and the need for improvement in conditions there and the Burmese Government's scheme called "New Life in Backward Areas" He invited Nehru to accompany him to the Naga Hills in the coming winter.

²³ The letters in this section have also been printed in G. Parthasarathi (ed.), Jawaharlal Nehru: letters to Chief Ministers 1847-1964, Vol 3 pp 134.

18. The situation in Nepal is causing us grave anxiety. The nationalist movement there is disintegrating and, as a result, the Government is also disintegrating. For the moment it is difficult to say how a stable ministry can be established there in the near future. It might well happen that the King decides to function without a Ministry and with the help of advisers only for a while. If so, that will only be a temporary solution. Nepal demonstrates to us that we cannot make progress by pure theory or by wishful thinking. We have to have the material for progress, the human material more than anything else.

19. Assam has again been devastated by floods. That attractive but very unfortunate province has had a succession of calamities year after year. Apart from this it has very special problems and is almost surrounded by international frontiers-Tibet-China, Burma and Pakistan. In addition, it has large tribal areas which contain a great variety of different tribal folk. Some of these tribes are highly advanced in their own way and very attractive; others are exceedingly primitive and indulge in head-hunting. The resources of the State are very limited and yet much has to be done. We are sending a team of senior officers to Assam very soon to examine these various problems on the spot and to advise us as to what should be done by the Central Government.

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Letters to Chief Ministers

20-I might add that at no time did I think that there was the slightest reason to expect any aggression on our north-eastern frontier. A little clear thinking will show that it is frightfully difficult task for any army to cross Tibet and the Himalayas and invade India. Tibet is one of the

most difficult and inhospitable of countries. An army may possibly cross it, but the problem of logistics and feeding it becomes increasingly difficult. The climate is itself an enemy of any large-scale movement. Apart from this, there was no particular reason why China should think in terms of aggression in this direction. If world war unfortunately comes, the principal theatres of that war will be elsewhere-in Europe, in the Middle East, and in the Far East. No country is going to be foolish enough to get caught in the icy wilderness of Tibet and thus waste its resources and energy. Nevertheless, we had to be on our guard, not so much for an invasion but for some kind of gradual spreading out or infiltration. We have taken steps accordingly.

21. Our basic policy, however, remains to maintain friendly relations with China, subject always to protecting our interests with firmness. I believe the Chinese Government recognize both aspects of this policy and appreciate it. I think also that there is a definite feeling of friendliness towards India in China. That is due partly to historical reasons, partly to an Asian outlook and partly no doubt to their appraisal of the world situation. We have recently had some talks with the Chinese Government regarding our position in Tibet. With the Chinese overlordship of Tibet, certain consequences flow. We cannot for long maintain some garrisons in Tibetan towns, like Gyanste and Yatung.²⁴ These garrisons were placed there to protect our trade routes, because Tibet was weak and could not give protection. Our representative in Lhasa will in course of time become a Consul-

²⁴ Nehru said at a press conference on 21 June 1952 that India when asked would withdraw the garrisons as provided in the treaty with Tibet. See Selected Works (second series), Vol 18, p.476.

General, as Tibet is no longer an independent country. There will be no difficulty in fixing these and like matters up.

22. But, however much we may think of these neighbourly relations and apprehensions, the fact remains that the world situation is governed by what happens in the unhappy and ruined country of Korea. If settlement is reached there in the truce talks, there will be a feeling of tremendous relief all over the world. If not, the present tensions will continue and if war spreads, other disasters come in its train. That is why we were anxious to do our little bit in the cause of peace. We have not succeeded thus far and the situation continues to be tense. I cannot say what the future holds, but if an opportunity offers itself to us, we shall take advantage of it again.