

January-May 1951

Dispatches from Delhi, Gangtok and Lhasa

(Source: JN Collection, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library)

January 4, 1951

The ministry in Delhi cautions the Government of West Bengal about the security issues brought by the presence of Dalai Lama in Yatung: “[It] has increased interest of foreigners in Sikkim. We consider presence of many foreigners in Sikkim embarrassing. Kindly issue instructions to Darjeeling authorities to refuse Frontier passes for entering into Sikkim to all foreigners except those having official business with Darbar or with Political Officer. It should NOT be disclosed to applicants that Government have imposed a ban but some other plausible excuse should be given for refusing passes.”

It is true that more and more foreigners, whether journalists or diplomats are keen to get a close encounter with the Tibetan leader. This brings a serious security risk for India.

January 5, 1951

It is worth reading some extracts of the Annual Political Report from Indian Embassy in Beijing.

Panikkar first asserts that China is not a police State: “Though the Chinese Government is a New Democracy under Communist leadership, it has so far shown a great sense of tolerance and non-interference with people’s lives. Apart from the fact that people are denied certain types of amusement, literature etc. (e.g. American films, foreign (non-Russian) literature there are no positive prohibitions.”

The Tibetans will learn the hard way about the Communist 'tolerance', but Panikkar will not.

The Ambassador adds: "Of course there is no freedom of the press. There is also no freedom of expression. But no one is interfered with if he does not actively go against government policies."

In a section consecrated to the relations with India, the Report states: "India recognized the new Government on the 31st December, 1949. Since then relations between the two countries have been cordial. The Ambassador [Panikkar] arrived in China on the 15th of May and the Chinese Ambassador reached India in September. The exchange of Notes on Tibet, following the Chinese attack on Chamdo gave a temporary setback to our relations, but the reaction of the Chinese Government to the Indian protests was restrained and neither country permitted this incident to have more than a temporary effect."

In other words, Delhi has managed to keep the invasion of Tibet under the carpet and Panikkar is proud of it. This is rather shocking.

The Reports adds: "India consistently supported Chinese claims in the United Nations and her sustained efforts to settle the Korean issue have been fully appreciated in China. There is every reason to hope that the next year will see even better relations established between the two countries."

It is surrealist. More than 6 decades after the invasion of Tibet, one can still see the profound implications for the security of India, but in 1951, it was brushed aside by the Ambassador.

January 6, 1951.

The next day, the Ambassador in Beijing, fully in love with China, writes to the Indian Prime Minister: "During the last month we have been able to repair the damage which had been done to Sino-Indian relations by the

Tibetan controversy. After taking Chamdo (which they claim is within their territory) they have deliberately refrained from further military action and are hoping to 'liberate' Tibet peacefully."

The great *durbari* then praises Nehru: "In your speech in Parliament you asked the question from whom the Tibetans are being liberated. The Chinese word for 'liberation' is 'Chieh fang' which is one of the key words here. It means really liberation from 'feudalism', economic misery etc. in fact the new life of freedom. Liberation is equated here with new-democratic life and is not a military word at all."

It is not sure if the Tibetans lived the experience in the sameway.

Panikkar continues: "Anyway, the Chinese have fully realised the strength of our reaction to military operations in Tibet and are now anxious to proceed by peaceful means. The significant point was that they never allowed the Tibetan issue to cloud our relations and they made it clear to me after a week or so."

How could such report be accepted by Delhi is beyond normal comprehension.

January 20, 1951

After a long gap, Tibet appears again in the dispatches.

Panikkar writes to K.P.S. Menon, the Foreign Secretary: "In regard to Tibet, I cannot help feeling that the Lhasa plenipotentiaries who wasted so much of their time in India failed to utilise an excellent opportunity to secure a settlement suitable to the Dalai Lama."

Though Panikkar has been told by the Prime Minister that his contention was not correct, the Ambassador continues to put the blame on the Tibetans for the invasion of their own country.

He affirms in the same tone: "The Peking Government has always been in favour of a peaceful and negotiated settlement and even after taking

Chamdo their activities were all directed towards negotiations with friendly groups. There was nothing to stand in the way of their marching on Lhasa if they so desired. But as Chou En-lai told me more than once their desire has been to see that a Government friendly to Peking was established in Lhasa and the intrigues which the Tibetan authorities have been carrying on outside were effectively stopped."

He further pleads the Chinese cause: "You will see from the copy of an article in a Magazine which has wide circulation in China, which I sent by post last week, that the Hyderabad parallel has been very much in the Chinese mind."

Then Panikkar criticizes the upsetness of the people of India: "In any case I cannot help feeling that the public reaction in India about Tibet was out of all proportion to the realities of the situation. I am glad, however, that things have now straightened themselves out."

Later in the Report, he branches off on Nepal: "In regard to Nepal you will be interested to know that the Chinese have shown not the least concern about happenings there. ...I consider this an extremely good sign, for in the past, even under the Kuomintang, there have been some pretensions to suzerainty which the Chinese authorities trotted out at different times."

The great historian turned-Ambassador has however a small doubt: "The only question, therefore, is with regard to the McMohan [sic] line. There have been some statements in our Parliament about Chinese maps marking boundaries of China well inside the McMohan line. But our own maps, as you know, have not consistently shown the area as a part of India. Also, the Chinese have explained to me that the maps, which they are now using are all Kuomintang maps and no inference need be drawn from the boundaries marked on them. In fact they have indirectly indicated that they do not attach any great importance to this question and would no doubt be willing

to meet our point of view when the whole question of India's future relations with Tibet comes up for discussion."

The future will show the importance that Beijing attached to the area. As we are writing these lines, China still claims Arunachal Pradesh as its territory. To conclude Panikkar tells the Foreign Secretary: "On the whole, therefore, I am inclined to consider that there is nothing which need cause trouble between India and China, if we handle the situation with reasonable tact, friendliness and firmness. There is no doubt that the Chinese desire to build up friendship with India on a firm basis and they are anxious that small things should not come in the way of such relationship. Generally speaking, they have no interest in territorial claims or expansion and even in regard to Burma they have assured both me and the Burmese Ambassador more than once that they will be prepared to negotiate on a friendly basis at the proper time for a determination of their boundary."

This will change very soon.

January 23, 1951

The Mission in Lhasa takes up with Delhi the cases of some White Russians who have reached Lhasa "and have asked for American assistance for their evacuation and resettlement" Their names given as GREGORI SHAREFOV 48 years; his wife, GOOSHA SHAREFOV 42 years and their children, TANYA SHAREFOV 11 years and VASILI HE DIAKALIN 13 years.

The cable continues: "Their leader VASILI BUROGIN and 18 other White Russians are in NAGCHUOW¹. They appear to have been induced by MCKEIRNAN² to leave Sinkiang. They are destitute and are finding it difficult

¹ Probably Nagchuka, today, Nagchu.

² Douglas Seymour Mackiernan (April 25, 1913 – April 29, 1950) was an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). He killed in Tibet. He had worked as a cryptographer for the United States Army Air Forces and was then posted to China as an Air Force

to maintain themselves in Lhasa. Remember International Refugee Organisation Geneva offering to help them. Grateful if enquires are made from Geneva and result communicated urgently at an early date."

Later the day, Prime Minister Nehru sends a message to his Chinese counterpart Zhou Enlai. Nehru writes: "I have just come back from Europe after spending some days at the Commonwealth Conference in London and later a few days in Paris. ... I feel that I must share my thoughts with President MAO TSE-TUNG and you and I am taking the liberty of sending this personal message as between friends."

Nehru then gives Zhou a lecture on Europe: "I found among all classes of people that I met an overwhelming desire for peace. At the same time there was widespread fear of war and its consequences and this fear led them to think of rearmament in order to protect themselves if war actually came. This was a vicious circle from which they wanted to get out if they could find an honourable way to do so and they were anxious to find a way by negotiation for settlement NOT only of the Far-Eastern problem but also of many other International problems."

The Prime Minister goes on New Asia: "There was everywhere a recognition of the new role of Asia in world affairs and, more particularly, of the emergence of the new China as a great Power. There was an increasing desire, even among many countries that have so far NOT had diplomatic relations with China, to have such relations with her, if an opportunity offered itself. It was recognized that colonialism in Asia was dead and even the remnants of it were bound to disappear soon. In spite of this, fear of a coming war made them hesitate to take many steps which they might otherwise have taken."

meteorologist during World War II. He was assigned the position of Vice-Consul for the U.S. State Department at its consulate in Urumqi in today's Xinjiang.

Once again it sounds surrealist, especially at a time when a peace-loving country has been crushed and the world is doing his best to ignore it. Nehru concludes about one of his favorite topic, neo-colonialism: "I am convinced that the People's Government of China is earnestly desirous of peace and therefore eager to have negotiations in order to reach a settlement. Indeed NO responsible people can possibly desire war, for such a war is likely to become world-wide and bring infinite ruin to all peoples and countries. Whether victory comes or defeat to any party, there will be a common disaster for mankind and our hopes of progress and of building a new order in society will be dashed to pieces."

January 24, 1951

The Political Officer informs DELHI and the Mission in Lhasa: "On instructions given to them at Yatung by DALAI LAMA and National Assembly SURKHANG DZASA and KHENTRUNG CHOPHEL THUPTEN of Tibetan Delegation to U.N. left KALIMPONG for Delhi on 23rd January to deliver a message to Chinese Ambassador. It is possible that they may contact Government of India also." With messages crossing each others, Delhi has already been informed of the arrival of the Tibetan officials.

January 27, 1951

Panikkar sends a personal message to the Prime Minister: "I saw Chou En Lai today at 3-30 p.m. and had an hour's discussion with him about your message. I explained to him at some length the necessity of consolidating world opinion by an affirmation of China's desire for peace and her adherence to principle of settlement through negotiations. This was already known to friendly countries but needed to be emphasized in order to reach

as wide a circle as possible and that a conciliatory statement made in a proper way would rouse popular enthusiasm and produce favourable results in neutral and friendly countries".

Panikkar tells Nehru that Zhou expressed his appreciation of the Indian Prime Minister's sentiment and determination for a peaceful settlement: "As to Premier Nehru's suggestion that we make a statement to mobilize world opinion, we believe it is correct. At the proper time we shall do so. But we must NOT allow such a statement to be taken as a sign of weakness by opponents to peaceful settlement."

January 28, 1951

The next day, Panikkar writes again to Delhi to say that he has met Chairman Mao on the occasion of the Republic Day Party: "Two or three times during the conversation he alluded to Pandit Nehru's efforts in the cause of peace and expressed appreciation of India's general attitude." Nothing could please more the Indian Prime Minister.

February 1, 1951

The Indian Embassy in Beijing cables the ministry that "the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Eastern Tibet are NOT confirmed here [in Lhasa]. There has been lull in military operations for sometime as Chinese Government anxious for peaceful liberation."

According to the information received by Panikkar: "Indeed Chinese-Government's attitude has been that there have been no military operations in Tibet itself as they claim CHAMDO to be in West SIKANG and NOT Tibet. Chinese Army in Tibet doing its best to obtain popular support."

There is of course no truth in this.

Delhi is further informed: "Tibetan Government has recently been established in autonomous Tibetan region in SIKANG Province and powerful propaganda campaign for liberation of Tibet is being carried on. Chinese Government probably feels that such measures may lead to internal developments in Tibet for peaceful liberation making large scale military operations unnecessary."

The powerful Chinese propaganda machine is indeed working.

February 3, 1951

Delhi repeats the information received from Beijing and tells the PO in Sikkim and the Indian Mission in Lhasa about the "lull in military operations for sometime as Chinese Government anxious for peaceful liberation."

February 27, 1951

For the first time, Panikkar mentions an agreement which would have been signed between Beijing and the Tibetans: "Impossible to obtain confirmation immediately of terms of agreement reported to have been reached with Tibet. But such negotiations were known to be taking place and the terms reported are in general CONFORMITY with General LIU PO-CHENG's³ proclamation to Tibetans [in August]. This undoubtedly effects a change in previous position of Tibet. I do NOT think we can take any reasonable exception. So far as stationing troops on Tibetan frontier is concerned we can only make representation if there is undue concentration of military forces along our borders. In regard to external relations if terms are accepted by Tibetan authorities we can have but little say in the matter."

³ Liu Bocheng

That is the conclusion of the Ambassador of India, who continues: "As for our trade and other interests Chinese have repeatedly expressed willingness to discuss and settle them by normal diplomatic channels which we should take up at earliest opportunity after position becomes clear.

Have already written to you [about] SINHA's position in LHASA in changed circumstances. Would suggest that confidential political records should be urgently removed to India."

It was pure wishful thinking.

March 21, 1951

Delhi is informed by its Ambassador in Beijing that the previous night for over one hour, he had an informal conversation with Zhou Enlai regarding situation in Tibet: "He began by stating that two Delegates from DALAI LAMA were on way to Peking and had reached CHENGTU⁴ repeat CHENGTU and that two others were coming via India; that the terms which had been offered them provided firstly for temporal and SPIRITUAL leader of Tibet, secondly for protection of LAMA church and thirdly for autonomy of Tibet subject to Central Government's control of frontiers and foreign policy. He emphasized that Chinese Government recognized India's friendly interest and their decision NOT to advance on Lhasa or undertake military operations within Tibet but to carry on peaceful discussions was in conformity with India's view."

The Indian Ambassador was once again charmed by the suave Premier: "Chou added that MAO TSE-TUNG had written through Ambassador YUAN⁵ in Delhi to congratulate DALAI LAMA on his assumption of powers and had offered these terms to him including recognition of DALAI LAMA as temporal

⁴ Chamdo

⁵ General Yuan Zhongxian

and spiritual leader. He hoped India would recognize the moderation of Chinese policy."

Then Zhou Enlai gave its reading of the situation in Tibet. He told the Ambassador that "the ex-Regent [Taktra Rinpoche] and a group of old LAMAS were still against agreement with China as they feared that their wealth and property will be confiscated."

The Premier also remarked that the Central Government [Beijing]: "had NO such intentions and had already guaranteed PANCHEN LAMA of his possessions. This group desired to send DALAI LAMA to India and such a development CHOU said it would bring a dark cloud between our good relations of friendship. He added that [China] was anxious to settle Tibetan affairs in a way acceptable to all sections and wished therefore the DALAI LAMA to remain. Even if he went away an agreement will now be reached but it may lead to minor unpleasant incidents in Tibet and troops will have to enter by force. CHOU also thinks that as India's interests were that peace of her frontiers should NOT be disturbed leading to unsettled conditions he hoped that Indian Government will NOT encourage DALAI LAMA to leave the country."

It was p[robably the reason behind the meeting, to make sure that the Dalai Lama does not take refuge in India.

Panikkar told Zhou that he "was glad that China had decided to promote negotiations and NOT to settle issues by force. So far as Tibetan Representatives travel via India was concerned I did NOT feel that there will be any serious difficulty. In regard to DALAI LAMA I said I had No instructions but our general policy was that we gave asylum to refugees but on condition that such refugees did NOT engage in political activities that actually even KUOMINTANG Generals from Sinkiang had reached India and that if DALAI LAMA desired to come to India it would be difficult for us to refuse him asylum."

The Indian Ambassador says that he was speaking in his 'personal view': "if [the Dalai Lama] so arrived he will be received only as a SPIRITUAL personality who had sought refuge and Chinese Government would have NO reason to complain about hostile activities directed from India."

According to Panikkar Zhou "did NOT press the point that we should NOT receive the DALAI LAMA if he was 'foolish enough in spite of their solemn assurances to maintain his authority to desire to leave Tibet' but he hoped that in interests of peace in Tibet we would NOT encourage the Regent Group's plans to get him out of the country. I promised to convey his view to Government," writes Panikkar.

Zhou later speaks of the situation in Nepal. Was it now settled, he asked. Had the King had assumed authority? When Panikkar answers in the informative, Zhou replied that India: "did well to put down 'British intrigues' there and asked whether there were any Americans in Nepal." Zhou further commented that neither India nor China would want Americans there. Panikkar's analysis is that Zhou's allusion to King of Nepal "was indicative of apprehensions in his mind regarding similar support to DALAI LAMA. I calmed his suspicions in this matter by claiming that Prime Minister's statement about DALAI LAMA mentioned only about asylum. A clear showing on this point ...in view of suggested peace settlement we shall NOT encourage DALAI LAMA to leave Tibet would seem to be indicated and would be welcomed here."

The Chinese Premier is clearly testing the waters; he assured the Ambassador "all Indian interests in Tibet could be safeguarded by negotiation."

In a separate cable, Panikkar personally informs Nehru that during his dinner with Zhou Enlai: "...Chou's doubts about DALAI LAMA seemed to arise from a feeling that those interested may use him for political purposes. I assured him that our interests in Tibet were peaceful with autonomy for Tibetans and

we have NO desire to carry on Political intrigues. He indicated that it was your firm advice which persuaded them to try peaceful methods to the end and to stop military action and that in view of generous terms now offered he hoped that you personally will use your influence for peaceful settlement with DALAI LAMA whose Temporal and SPIRITUAL position he assured will be fully safeguarded."

Later on March 23, Delhi acknowledges the cable from the embassy in Beijing: "We are glad to hear that a peaceful settlement with Tibet is within sight. We have never encouraged the Dalai Lama to leave Tibet and in fact were uneasy at his departure even from Lhasa. We shall be glad to use our good offices with him through our agent in Tibet to dissuade him from coming to India."

But it clarifies that "If, however, Dalai Lama does decide to come, we shall have NO alternative but to give him asylum in accordance with international practice. His decision will of course rest on the actual terms to be offered to Tibet. We note that these will include full autonomy with Dalai Lama as Head of the State. We hope that China's control of Frontier will NOT mean incursion of armed Chinese."

It would soon be the case. The cable concludes: "We are particularly glad to note Chou En Lai's assurance regarding India's interests in Tibet."

The same day, G.S. Bajpai, Secretary General, Ministry of External Affairs comments on the Ambassador's two telegrams on Tibet and on the possibility of a visit by the Indian Prime Minister to China next summer.

Bajpai writes: "As regards Tibet, the Ambassador has explained our position correctly. We have never encouraged, either the Dalai Lama, or anyone else in Tibet, to adopt an unfriendly attitude towards China; certainly we have not encouraged the Dalai Lama to seek refuge in India. Equally, we have no intention, if the Dalai Lama should decide to seek asylum in this country, to let him become the focus of an anti-Chinese intrigue."

Bajpai elaborates on India's position: "Our attitude, therefore, to Peking has, throughout this Tibetan episode, been understanding and friendly. When the two Tibetans, who are now on their way to Peking to negotiate a settlement, come to Delhi, our advice to them would be to accept China's suzerainty, and to work only for local autonomy which, realistically speaking, is all that they are likely to secure."

He then notes: "As regards Foreign Affairs and Defence, such information as we have tends to show that, in the last resort, the Tibetans would be willing to give up control of their foreign relations to China but would not like to see Chinese troops stationed in Lhasa. Our own view, both as regards Defence and External Affairs, is that, while Tibetans should strive hard to gain their point, they should break on neither for the simple reason that the alternative would be an invasion of Tibet, which they would not be able to resist, and which neither we nor any other outside power would be able to help them to resist."

The diplomat is however not ready to take a decision "whether we should give any diplomatic support to the Tibetans when they start negotiations with China is a question on which judgement ought to be reserved, until the two negotiators who are coming to Delhi have given us a clear and authoritative idea of what the Tibetans want."

The Secretary General further notes: "While, in certain circumstances, and on certain points, e.g., the largest possible measure of autonomy for Tibet, we might be able to give friendly support, the Chinese are hardly likely to give in on any point that they regard as essential to their own interests."

Bajpai's conclusion "we must be prepared to face the outcome that, as regards Foreign Affairs and Defence, control of both may pass into the hands of the Chinese. We would then have to negotiate separately with China, -- after the conclusion of a Sino-Tibetan agreement -- regarding our Mission in

Lhasa, and the two⁶ Trade Posts.”

What bothers him more is the issue of defence, “we are already having the needs of our common frontier with Tibet and China investigated.⁷ With Chinese troops in Tibet along our border, we shall have to take greater precaution about the sanctity of our frontier as well as the possibility of infiltration than was necessary in the case of a priestly government, directing affairs from Lhasa.”

Regarding the analogy with the King of Nepal, Bajpai notes: “The Ambassador has suggested that we should disabuse the Chinese about their apprehensions regarding our support to Dalai Lama similar to the support given to the King of Nepal. This is implicit in what we have done so far. I see no objection, however, to the Ambassador mentioning this to Chou En-lai when he sees him next.”

However, he says that he would “not advise the submission to the Chinese Government of a written note or of any public statement on the subject in India or elsewhere. I think the Ambassador can also inform Chou En-lai that we have not, and we do not propose to encourage the Dalai Lama to leave Tibet; that what we desire is a friendly settlement between the Dalai Lama and the Peking Government on the basis of Tibetan autonomy; that this is the advice is sought, but that, if, nevertheless the Dalai Lama should seek asylum in India, then consistently with international practice, asylum would be given to him.”

This is what will happen in March 1959.

March 24, 1951

⁶ Three Trade Agencies

⁷ By the Border Defense Committee

Delhi writes to Harishwar Dayal and Sinha in Lhasa about the encounter between Zhou and Panikkar: "Chinese Foreign Minister [and Premier] had a long conversation with our Ambassador in Peking regarding Tibet. He explained terms which have been offered to Tibet, viz., recognition of Dalai Lama as temporal and spiritual leader, protection of Lama Church and autonomy for Tibet, subject to Central Government's control of frontiers and foreign policy. He emphasized that cessation of military operations and determination to secure Tibet's status by peaceful means were in accordance with views of Government of India, whose friendly interest in Tibet was recognized by China. He also gave an assurance that all Indian interests in Tibet could be safeguarded by negotiations."

Gangtok and Lhasa are told that the Chinese Premier remarked that "ex-Regent and a group of old Lamas were working against settlement as they feared that their wealth and property might be confiscated. Chinese Government had NO such intention. This recalcitrant group was also pressing Dalai Lama to take refuge in India. Unfortunate development which might affect relations between India and China."

The PO and the Head of the Mission in Tibet are informed that if Dalai Lama decided to come to India, Delhi is bound to give asylum under international practice: "We had, however, never encouraged Dalai Lama to come to India, we feel that the flight of Dalai Lama to India will leave Tibet leaderless and will serve NO useful purpose. Please communicate this view informally and tactfully to Tibetan Government," the cables concludes.

As for the proposed Chinese control of frontier, we have expressed hope that this will NOT mean appreciable incursion of Chinese troops into Tibet and that such incursion will be regarded with alarm by Tibetans. We have pointed out that the Himalayas and a friendly India are best protection for Tibet's Southern frontiers.

Delhi still dreams.

March 25, 1951

Dayal cables Delhi and Lhasa on the possible escape of the Dalai Lama from Tibet: “[our view] has already been communicated to Tibetan Government and I shall probably have an opportunity of restating them to Monk Foreign Secretary who is coming down from Yatung to see me on other matters. However there is no repeat no talk at present of DALAI LAMA’s leaving Tibet and it does NOT seem advisable for our officers in Tibet to reopen this question without specific occasion arising for doing so.”

The PO then advises: “Fact that Chinese have taken us into their confidence appears to provide Government of India with an opportunity of displaying a friendly interest in forthcoming negotiations at Peking with the object of securing a satisfactory settlement without undue intimidation of Tibetans by Chinese.”

In the weeks to come, Delhi will never be informed of the course of the so-called negotiations.

April 2, 1951

Harish Dayal provides Delhi with a clarification on the relations between Tibet and Nepal: “Nepal has been represented in Tibet for a CENTURY or more and her right to such representation was confirmed in her treaty with Tibet of 1856. It would NOT therefore be correct to say that India is the only country with which Tibet has direct foreign relations.

Panikkar was probably not aware of this important factor.

April 5, 1951

The India Prime Minister in a note to the Foreign Secretary writes: "I think we have had some news from time to time about Robert Ford, who is referred to in the attached letter. I should like to have that news and perhaps we might make some enquiry again about him."

Ford will spend 5 years in Chinese jails.

May 1, 1951

Apparently referring to the Tawang issue, Sinha informs Delhi from Lhasa:

"What you have suggested was done at our last meeting on 27th April.

However when we were informally informed on the possibility of a change in frontier we had to say that as we had NO authority to discuss the subject Tibetan Government could take the matter up on a higher level, we also gave it as our view that time was NOT opportune for discussions on the subject. We shall if required repeat the move as before though we would rather NOT leave Tibetans with the impression that we are being insolent."

May 29, 1951

Five days after the 17-Point agreement is signed, Delhi is finally informed of the development. In turn, the ministry sends Gangtok the full text of Sino-Tibetan Agreement, received from Panikkar in Beijing.

Delhi starts realizing the consequences of the 17-Point Agreement. It brings to the notice of Gangtok and Lhasa that in a Memorandum to Chinese Government dated November 1, 1950: "we have enumerated Lhasa Mission amongst our interests in Tibet which we would like to maintain. Our present intention is to leave it to the Chinese to raise the question of status of our Mission."

Sinha is further told: "Subject to your comments, mission in Lhasa may destroy secret files, as previously instructed. No useful purpose will be served by attempting to collect arms and ammunition supplied to Tibetan government or to recover their cost."

May 30, 1951

Dayal cables Delhi and the Mission in Lhasa: "I understand you have some original documents relating to 1914 Convention which are not repeat not available here. These and other selected old records of exceptional value may be sent down in sealed package with military party shortly leaving Lhasa. Other secret records may be destroyed and it would probably be best to begin with the more recent ones."

The same day, the embassy in Delhi quotes a long editorial published the previous day in The People's Daily about the Sino Tibetan Agreement: "After tracing history of British and American imperialist aggression and suppression of Tibetan minority by Manchu Government, Peiyang warlords and Kuomintang, it warned 'Tibet and Taiwan are indivisible parts of Chinese territory. If any aggressor dares to harbor intentions of annexing and invading Tibet and Taiwan, he will certainly break his head against the mailed fist of the great Chinese People's Liberation Army'".

The Party organ stresses on Article 14 of Agreement: "We do NOT invade any country but seek to live in peace with neighbouring countries".

It then blames "the small pro imperialist clique in Tibet but absolved the overwhelming majority of the Tibetan monks and laymen" from any responsibility."

The article praises the 10th PANCHEN NGOERHTEHNT⁸ [sic] and the 14th DALAI LAMA for their cooperation and stresses "China's determination to

⁸ The Panchen Lama

safeguard the unification of China's territory and sovereignty". It also praises the 'magnanimous measures' in the agreement for maintaining the 'existing local political system of Tibet'.

It will never be respected, but it is another issue.

The People's Daily editorial asserts that China will "the status functions and powers of the DALAI LAMA, the protection of monasteries and their income", further it will be the financial responsibility of Central Government to meet all expenses of its Army in Tibet.

It was one of the greatest defeats for the Tibetans and India.

The article also announces: "unavoidable necessity for reforms to be carried out step by step by the Tibetans themselves and NOT by compulsion of Central authorities or working personnel of Han origin".

This too will not be respected.

The Party hopes that "the staffs of DALAI LAMA and PANCHEN NGOERHTEHNT will fully understand and sincerely carry out the agreement-unite forever and strive to build up the new Tibet".

The Communist regime recognizes that "Buddhism has very high prestige among the Tibetan people. The people's faith in DALAI LAMA and PANCHEN NGOERHTEHNI is very high".

It also speaks of the future organization "the Military and Administrative Committee in Tibet will represent Central People's Government while Military Area Headquarters will represent the People's Revolutionary Military Council. The Committee shall "direct the carrying out of the entire agreement in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet".

As for the Military Area Headquarters, it will "unify the leadership and command of all armed forces in Tibet to safeguard national defence and stabilize internal order".

The Tibetans are exhorted to "take earnest steps to assist the People's Liberation Army in its peaceful march into Tibet".

That is it. Mao can continue its march towards Lhasa.

The People's Daily in the meantime affirms: "we believe that the local Government of Tibet under the leadership of DALAI LAMA certainly can carry out the responsibility that falls upon it."

While pointing out "the natural causes giving rise to doubts and apprehensions in the minds of Tibetan nationality", it admits that they "can only be eliminated after a considerable time by means of factual proof."

To conclude, the article says that armed personnel and the local administrative workers entering Tibet have been to "strictly abide by the policies relating to nationalities and religion and the agreement and preventive and correct inclinations to greater nationalism and greater Hanism – the local Government of Tibet and Tibetan people have the right to criticize, inform and report to the People's Government at the higher levels and to the Central People's Government."

Some 12 years later, the Panchen Lama's 70,000 character petition would detail how the Agreement was never followed in the letter or spirit.

May 31, 1951

Sinha writes Delhi that according to "sources close to the Chinese Officer in Lhasa say Chinese troops are already on the move from Pembago and Kante⁹. Troops from Pembago are moving towards Lhasa."

The cable also answer a telegram from the earlier day: "There are NO original documents relating to 1914 convention with us. We have however photostatic copies a map showing MCMAHON Line and a copy each of a note in Tibetan repudiating rights that accrued to China from 1914 Convention and the Tibetan version of the Convention. We also have printed copies of

⁹ Kantze?

the Tibetan series 1913-14 and 1935-37. The latter will be useful here for reference. We shall only destroy recent papers from 1947 onwards."

June 1, 1951

Coming back on historical documents, Delhi instructs Gangtok and Lhasa: "Photostatic copies of the map showing McMahon line and copies of other two documents relating to 1914 Convention may usefully be sent on to you." Some officers in Delhi have understood that the border could soon become a source of contention with China.

June 1, 1951

The Adviser to the Governor of Assam in Shillong forwards to Delhi a message received from Assistant Political Officer (APO) in Tawang¹⁰: "It is strongly rumoured 5 high ranking officers from Lhasa coming to Tawang [Tawang] and that villages of Tsona District have been ordered to prepare their staging camp ration etc. if they do actually try to enter into our territory forcibly without permits from us can they be detained in check post and sent back across border."

The Naga APO has already replied: "Check post may allow officer to enter our territory after nothing from them their names and other particulars such as place of normal residence and occupation. If they refuse to furnish particulars as above you should report to me by most immediate W/T and meanwhile refuse entry. Military personnel should not (repeat not) be permitted to enter without prior reference to Adviser. Officials should however be treated with all whether officers referred to are monasterial secular or military."

¹⁰ Maj Bob Khathing.

The Governor also suggests to contact the Tibetan Government in Lhasa 'to avoid conflict'.