

SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Volume 56

(January 1-25, 1960)

China & Tibet

112. To Jayaprakash Narayan: Afro-Asian Convention on Tibet a Nuisance¹

Bangalore

January 12, 1960

My dear Jayaprakash,

I wrote to you some days ago about the proposed Afro-Asian Convention on Tibet which you intended holding about the middle of February.² As I have told you, this is likely to create further difficulties for us without helping in any way the people of Tibet.

Now another development has taken place, or rather is very likely to take place. Khrushchev, Prime Minister of the Soviet Union, is expected to spend a few days in India on his way to Indonesia. I do not yet know the exact date. He will probably reach Indonesia about the 18th February. Therefore, he is likely to be in Delhi for a few days before that date. It would be unfortunate from our point of view if your convention took place about that time. I want to draw your attention to this.

Yours affectionately,

Jawaharlal Nehru

¹ Letter to Sarvodaya leader and a member of the PSP.

² See SWJ.N/SS/57/pp. 359-361

* * *

113. To V. K. Krishna Menon: Indian Vessels in Chinese Waters³

Please see the attached telegram which conveys a message from the Chinese Government about the alleged violation of Chinese waters by INS Magar. Some kind of correspondence has been going on about this between our Government and the Chinese Government for months past. We have denied any such violation. The Chinese Government now makes specific statements in this present message about the international navigation route. Surely this route must be fully known as Hong Kong is visited by many ships. Either the Chinese Government is right about this route and we are wrong, or we are right. This matter ought not to be difficult to clear up in our own minds. It does not depend entirely on the Chinese Government as to where the international route is, as this is used by innumerable ships.⁴

2. Will you ask your Naval Headquarters to give us clear information on this subject which can be treated as unimpeachable?

* * *

127. To V. K. Krishna Menon: Current on Asses for the Army⁵

I see that in the Current weekly of Bombay of the 30th December 1959, there are big headlines about the proposed purchases of asses for the army. The statements made there appear to me to be highly defamatory and, so far as I know, entirely devoid of truth. I know that the Current is an utterly irresponsible paper with no reputation and little circulation. It is

³ Note to the Defence Minister, 24 January 1960. File No. 15(33)-EA/59, p. 25, MEA

⁴ See Appendix 13

⁵ Note to the Defence Minister, 1 January 1960.

chiefly known for its personal attacks. Many such attacks have been made/upon me and I have taken no notice of them. But in the present article the honour of the army and of our officers is concerned and I do not think we can allow this to rest where it is.

I remember some other articles in Current. One was on the 26th August and the other on the 18th November. I have not got them by me, but in one of them at least another charge was brought about the purchase of bran by the army. Some reference, I think, was also made to the Amar project at Ambala⁶ which seemed to me quite untrue. The Chief of the Army Staff mentioned one of these articles in Current to me some time ago. I said then that it is seldom worthwhile taking these matters to a court of law, but it is always necessary, when a specific charge is made, to deny it in clear terms. Otherwise the public are misled and it is said that there is no denial. As far as I remember, I suggested to the Chief of Staff, Army,⁷ that some kind of a statement of denial should be issued. I did not see any such statement.

It appears that the Current is carrying on a systematic campaign against the army and its senior officers and serious charges are made which appear to me to have no substance. This kind of thing cannot be allowed to continue in this manner and some steps have to be taken. We may even have to consider the desirability of taking action in a court of law for defamation.

But, before we do this, we should have the facts. I suggest to you to have an immediate enquiry made into these charges of the contract for the purchases of asses and the other deal in regard to purchase of bran for the army. Also about the Amar project. I take it this can be done adequately

⁶ Inaugurated by Nehru on 16 January 1959, it entailed the construction of 1,450 dwelling units for troops. See also SWJN/SS/46/pp. 626-636

⁷ K. S. Thimayya

within a few days. Thereafter we shall consider what other steps should be taken. One such step appears to be to issue an authoritative and clear denial of the allegations. Perhaps the Chief of Staff, Anny, could then issue such a denial, but I rather doubt if this will be enough. We can consider future steps later.⁸

* * *

128. To Manubhai Shah: Coordinating Defence and Civil Industries⁹

January 5, 1960

My dear Manubhai,

Your letter of the 5th January. I have read the note attached to it.¹⁰ This covers a large field. I am not quite sure how far all the articles you have mentioned in this list can be or should be entrusted to private industry. But some certainly can be. In any event, it is certainly desirable to have a full consideration of these matters between the Defence and the other Ministries concerned.

The Defence Ministry is, I believe, preparing a note on what it can do. As soon as that is ready, we can consider that together with the suggestions you might make.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

* * *

⁸ See also item 119.

⁹ Letter to the Minister of Industry. File No. 17(381)/60-66-PMS. Also available in JN Collection

¹⁰ It referred to the need to coordinate defence production between the ordnance factories and the public and private sectors. One issue was to prevent duplication; the other was to prepare the civil sector to switch to defence equipment production when required.

129. To V. K. Krishna Menon: Border Roads¹¹

You will remember that the question of our border areas came up before the Cabinet sometime ago. There were two aspects of it: One was the building of roads and the other was the development of those areas in other ways. So far as the development is concerned, certain tentative proposals have been made for a reorganisation of the administrative apparatus there so that some good and experienced officers may be put in charge of smaller areas than at present and should be given a good deal of authority and latitude to proceed with the development. Naturally, funds for this development will largely come from the Centre. This matter will come up before the Cabinet soon.

2. The Cabinet Secretary was put in charge of a committee to deal with these border areas and report to the Cabinet. He is reporting soon about the development of the border areas. When C asked him about the roads and communications, he said that the paper had been sent to the Defence Ministry about two weeks ago and it was still there. Will you please look into this matter and have it expedited so that Cabinet might consider any proposals that are being made?

3. To name the roads required in some order of priority can of course be done without much difficulty. The question, however, is how we can expedite the building of these roads. The normal PWD methods are very slow and we cannot afford to wait for several years before these roads are completed. I had a talk with you about this matter sometime ago. You had then suggested that it would be desirable, in order to expedite the building

¹¹ Note to the Defence Minister, 20 January 1960; copied to Vishnu Sahay, the Cabinet Secretary

of these roads, to divide them up into three categories: (1) the Central PWD; (2) State PWD; and (3) some other agency¹² to be created for the purpose. I am not taking into consideration here those roads which might be called operational and which inevitably will be under the charge of the army engineers.

4. About the third category, i.e. some other agency, to build these roads, it is for us to consider what kind of an agency we can create. Probably it will not be wholly desirable to put them regularly under the army engineers, although army engineers may well be used for the purpose. Possibly, a separate labour corps might be recruited, and some army engineers attached to it. This method would probably be cheaper. Also, some of our old machinery for building or levelling etc. which we have with us at present might be used after some reconditioning.

5. This will have to be considered by the Cabinet. I should like your Ministry to give thought to this and prepare a paper on the subject as soon as possible.

* * *

13. V. K. Krishna Menon to Nehru¹³

[Refer to item 113]

Subject: Alleged violation of Chinese Territorial Water by INS MAGAR

I have examined the latest memorandum submitted by the Government of the People's Republic of China regarding the alleged violation of Chinese

¹² The Border Roads Organisation was formed in July 1960.

¹³ Note, 1 April 1960. File No. 15(33)-EA/59, p. 32. MEA

Territorial Water by INS MAGAR in September 1959. With regard to the points made by the Chinese Government, the following are the facts.

2. On her way into Hong Kong, the MAGAR took the route from the direction of the South-West which, it is understood, is taken by other ships. The Chinese Government has protested about this (Please see our Embassy's telegram No. 171 of 7.9.59 and No. 19 of 23.1.60). On her way out of Hong Kong, INS MAGAR took the route south-east of Hong Kong and east of Tanka Islands as suggested by the Chinese Government themselves in the aforesaid protests.

3. The track actually taken by the ship on the 16th September 1959 has been obtained from the relevant log book and navigational data of INS MAGAR and is plotted and shown in red on the tracing which is attached.

4. It may be mentioned that as far as we know, the route taken by INS MAGAR was an internationally accepted one and there has never been any objection to merchant ships of all nations using this channel. In fact, war ships of the British and, we believe, the American Navies, have also been using this route. It was suggested informally to the Commanding Officer of INS MAGAR by the British Naval authorities in Hong Kong.

5. It is alleged by the Chinese Government that on the 16th September 1959 at 1510 hours, INS MAGAR cut as deep as 5.5 nautical miles into Chinese territorial waters. The point at which INS MAGAR is alleged to have been, as stated by the Chinese Government, has also been marked on the tracing which is attached. Taking that point as the centre, a circle has been drawn round that point with a 12 mile radius. It will be seen that at no point does the circumference touch any part of Chinese territory. The

position of INS MAGAR, however, was not that as stated by the Chinese Government, but was about half a mile outside that position.

6. The Commanding Officer of INS MAGAR, in all consciousness, took the only international route out of Hong Kong, namely, to the south-east, that we know; nor did he, nor intend to, violate the Chinese territorial waters.