

Letters to Chief Ministers

a statement in the Lok Sabha.³ It is obvious that large number of people in Tibet have not been happy with the state of affairs that exist there today.

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19. In 1951, an agreement was arrived at between the Chinese Government and the Tibetan authorities. This is called the 17-Point Agreement.⁴ Broadly speaking, it was based on the sovereignty of

or fact object because India had always considered China as the

suzerain power. We were anxious,

China proper and not in Tibet. But later the Khampas spread out in

and at a low level of occasional conflict between the Khampas and the Chinese. Nothing much happened in Lhasa itself except a slowly

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9. In my last letter to you I wrote something about the Tibetan developments. Since then much has happened. The Dalai Lama is in our country,¹⁰ and so are more than twelve thousand refugees from Tibet. Possibly some more might come. We have been heavily occupied with making arrangements for these refugees. The immediate problem was to give them shelter and rest, food and medical treatment. Camps have been made for them in the foothills of Assam and West Bengal. But(wron)6.2()J18.925 0 TD-0.0006 Tc-0.0002 Tw(w)-6(e)

countries, through long periods of history, had a certain vitality and expansiveness. On the whole, India's expansiveness stopped at the Himalayas and our forefathers crossed the mountains or the seas on cultural and religious missions. As is well known, they went all over the south-eastern seas, carrying their art forms. There is hardly any evidence of any major military adventure outside the confines of India. It is true that during the Kushan period and later under the early Mauryas, these empires spread to a large part of Central Asia. The Chinese' spread much more both in Central Asia and in the South-East. India and China came into close touch with each other in the islands and mainland of South-East Asia. But there are no records of any major conflict. Both of them have left their strong impress over this vast area in South-East Asia; probably the Indian impress is the greander in the islands and part of the mainland.

11. Tibet was never looked upon by India as a political appendage or sphere of influence, except to some extent ' during British times, following the Younghusband Expedition in 1904. In those days, the British were apprehensive of the designs of Czarist Russia. China, on the other hand, was ` frequently trying to impose its domination or suzerainty over Tibet. In the early years, the Tibetans were tough

independence. It was only after the new Communist Government came into existence in China that China decided to revert to its old rule and enforced its overlordship of Tibet. This was eight or nine years ago.

not always be right and often it is narrow-minded and may become

and issued some statements on Tibet.¹⁸ I am afraid we do not agree

4. What a multitude of important events have taken place during these two months. There as the Kerala situation and the President's Proclamation in regard to that State²⁰ , there were tremendous floods in various parts of the country;

disturbing developments on our borders with Tibet-China.²⁶

alarmed ~in the present or fear any serious consequences. I do not think any such development is likely in the foreseeable future. But the basic fact remains that India and China have fallen out and, even though relative peace may continue at the frontier, it is some kind of

shall have to be vigilant all the time and balance firmness with a continuation of our policy.

8. Behind all this frontier trouble, there appears to me to be a basic

come down on this side of the Himalayan barrier. This has two vitally important aspects: one that if a foreign Power comes down on this side of the Himalayas, our basic security is greatly endangered; the other that a sentiment which has been the life-blood of India through past ages is shattered. That sentiment appertains to the Himalayas.

of our attempts or our policy, but we have no doubt helped a little in

generally speaking, its attitude implies, although it does not say so

to place the responsibility for the protection of the entire Northern and North-Eastern border on our army.⁴⁴ The Army thereafter took over the N.E.F.A. border and round about. As regards some of the areas, they decided to leave there for the present as they were, but it is clear that there should be the closest co-ordination and the general directions of the army authorities should be carried out.

In Ladakh our outposts were in charge of our border police force. It was in fact difficult for the army to take direct charge in the near

with by the Army authorities who can take a broad picture of the situation and decide accordingly.

This involves not only the frontier in N.E.F.A. and Sikkim, but also the

insofar as we know now, in nine deaths of the Indian police force and ten of our policemen were captured by the Chinese. One person has not been accounted for. The Chinese have offered to arrange to send back the ten persons they hold a strong reaction in the country. The Chinese have offered to arrange to send back the ten persons they hold a strong reaction in the country. The Chinese have offered to arrange to send back the ten persons they hold a strong reaction in the country.

5. Our Army Headquarters decided for the time being to leave the other frontier areas in charge of the various police forces that were functioning there, intending gradually to change over later. This applied to the Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab border forces. It also applied largely to the Ladakh area, although our Army had one or two important check-posts directly under its charge there.

mountains and the plateau of Tibet and the highlands of the Chinese Turkestan lie there. Even that is by no means easy going, but it is far easier and more accessible from the other side. We hear of Chinese roads being built in Tibet and near and across our border. These roads are of the simplest type. All that is done there is to level them to some extent and to place some kind of road marks. The ground is so hard because of the cold that it is almost like stone or cement. It requires little treatment. These roads are of course hard going, but they can be used by trucks or lorries.

8 Before the recent Tibet rebellion which began in the spring of this year, the number of Chinese troops in Tibet was not very large and most of them were concentrated in Central and Eastern Tibet.

some distance away from each other, in the gas phase (see 2.8(e) 7.7(e) JJ

established. It was with this purpose in view that a firly strong party of our border police went eastwards in Ladakh and established a firm check-post, at Tsogtsalu. They then went forward to a temporary post which is called Hot Springs. This was about six or seven miles further east. From the eastward

12. As a result of this tragic incident, we have naturally given the most earnest thought to this situation and are evolving plans as how best to deal with it. The Army authorities have been put directly in charge of every kind of operational or other activity in this area as in other areas: The police will continue to function there, but under the Army's authority and direction. There appears to be no immediate danger to our existing check-posts. What we shall do in the future will depend on many factors. We shall try to strengthen our check-posts and to send them farther wherever this is considered feasible. In war or in any situation which is of the nature of war, the Chinese have established their check-post there and must have had orders to hold it if there was a conflict. When did the Chinese get there? It is difficult to say, but it is clear that they were there before the British arrived. It is possible that they were there before the British arrived. It is possible that they were there before the British arrived.

incident at Ladakh, the Chinese Government informed us that they had changed their mind again and would take a big part in our Agricultural Exhibition in December

countries.

19. We have to face a fairly difficult situation in the present. But what

the United States and the Soviet Union. Of course, there are many other factors. But we have helped a little. That is of great

world war and the vast destruction and even annihilation which that entails. That is a poor kind of help that we would get.

22. We are naturally full of our own troubles on the frontier and angry at the aggressive policy of China. That is a major development for us, and yet the really big thing that is happening in the world is the gradual change in the relations between the Western nations and the Soviet Union. After all, in the present the two big countries that count are the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. Any coming nearer to each other of these two countries is a matter of vast significance for the future of the world. What will happen I do not know.

All I can say is that the trends are hopeful, and we should not do

which upsets this work will be bad for the world. So far as we are concerned in India, we have had consistent goodwill from the Soviet Union and even in our recent conflicts with China, the

order to discuss the details of this proposal, the Home Secretary⁵² is arranging a meeting with the Chief v Secretaries of U.P.,⁵³ Punjab⁵⁴ and Himachal Pradesh⁵⁵ within the next two or three days.

As I wrote to you previously, in view of the situation we have to face at the border, it is considered essential that our Army authorities should have general control over a

it. But that by itself does not help us much and we have to give the most careful thought to every step that we take.

them, but I have been unable to discover any major error of ours during all this period. So far as our broad policy in foreign affairs is concerned, it has brought rich results and enhanced India's prestige and the respect others have for what is often referred to as our wise, consistent and restrained approach. Indeed, the major development of recent months, that is, the great change that appears to have

shape as between India and China³ This is going to be a testing time for us: how to remain firm and to hold to our principles and major interests and yet how to avoid, as far as possible, the attitudes of cold war.

63 Did we do anything in regard to China which precipitated this crisis or left us unprepared to meet it? This can be judged from the policy

rather heavy expenditure on defence⁴ That was partly conditioned by our unfortunate relations with Pakistan. We could not avoid it. Also much of this expenditure, especially lately, has been on building up our defence industries and scientific apparatus. This was the

threw large forces into Tibet and improved their communications. It may be said that we should not have been so complacent when all this was taking place. I do not think we were complacent at any time. But it is true that we did not expect a crisis to arise in this way and with such rapidity.

12. Coming to the present situation, some of our friends and critics tell us to march our armies in large numbers on the frontier and drive out the Chinese wherever they might have crossed it. Even a gallant ex-Commander-in-Chief -6.our Army has made certain proposals to this effect.⁶²With all respect to him, these proposals are singularly inane. Our present military advisers, who are in full charge -6.the situation, take a completely different view. In such matters military advice must normally prevail and we are accepting it and taking all the steps and precautions that they have recommended as being

invasion takes place, the balance of advantage progressively tilts in our favour.

the validity of those policies,

discussion appear to move slowly but definitely towards an agreement.⁶⁸ All this is to the good, and we must welcome it for it has always been our basic policy to have friendly relations with Pakistan. Some of our critics today who strike belligerent attitudes in

seem to be singularly ignorant of the basic facts of life. If we

