China's India war: Sino-Indian relations, 1945-64

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Table of Contents

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This piece of scholarship is dedicated to Li Sujun, although I wonder if my mother's English has become rusty after she moved to heaven.

Declaration

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Abstract

The Sino-Indian Border War of 1962 left a permanent scar on the relationship between the two largest Asian countries. In India, the "1962 War" is often referred to with terms such as "betrayal" and "humiliation," but in China, it always remembered as the "Sino-Indian Border War of Self-defensive Counter-attack." This difference suggests that what led China and India into war in 1962 continued to divide them in terms of how to understand this conflict. Among all scholarly attempts to explain the rise and significance of this war, Neville Maxwell's 1970 book *India's China War* is considered one of the most authoritative works, which heavily influenced Chinese discourse on this topic. He attributes the outbreak of the war mostly to factors from the Indian side, particularly Nehru's character and his border policy, arguing that India provoked the war.

This thesis, however, finds Maxwell's interpretation is one of the most misleading assessments about this conflict. By examining India's approach to China between 1945 and 1963, with a focus on Nehru's thinking and activities, as well as Communist China's approach to India between 1949 and 1963, this dissertation concludes that the war in 1962 was not so much *India's China War* than *China's India War*. It demonstrates that the vicissitudes of the Sino-Indian relationship since its establishment in 1950 were mainly subject to the Tibet Question, a prolonged disagreement over the rightful status of Tibet vis-à-vis China. The Indian society as a whole saw Tibet a country separate from China, with the latter possessing at most "suzerainty" over Tibet. The Chinese side, however, insisted on Tibet being part of China and on the concept of Chinese "sovereignty" in Tibet. This structural conflict first surfaced in 1950, when Communist China invaded Tibet, and was lurking in the background during the mid-1950s, a period of unprecedented Sino-Indian cooperation and friendship, but re-surfaced in 1959, when the Tibetan Uprising forced India and China to confront this problem again. The Sino-Indian border dispute, which became increasingly irreconcilable toward 1962, was largely the symptom of this stubborn issue. Indeed, the ideological difference between India and China, especially after the latter's radicalization toward the end of 1950s, was yet another factor in paving the road to the border war.

Abstraite

La guerre sino-indienne de 1962 a eu un impact durable sur la relation entre les deux principales puissances du continent asiatique. La guerre de 1962 évoque en Inde des termes tels que « trahison » et « humiliation » alors qu'en Chine on la commémore comme le « Conflit frontalier sino-indien d'auto-défense et de contre-attaque ». La différence suggère que les causes du conflit entre la Chine et l'Inde divisent toujors ces deux nations sur sa compréhension. De toutes les tentatives académiques por expliquer le sens de cette guerre, le livre *India's China War* de Neville Maxwell (1970) est considéré comme un incontornable et a fortement influencé le discors chinois sur le sujet. Il attribue la plupart des causes de la guerre au côté indien, en particulier à la personnalité de Nehru et à sa politique étrangère, établissant donc que l'Inde a provoqué le conflit.

Cette thèse vise à démontrer qu'il s'agit d'une mauvaise interprétation du conflit. En examinant l'attitude de l'Inde la Chine de 1945 à 1963, en accordant une attention particulière au discors et aux actions de Nehru, ainsi que l'attitude de la Chine communiste envers l'Inde de 1949 à 1963, cette étude conclut que la guerre de 1962 n'était pas la guerre de l'Inde contre la Chine, mais bien la guerre de la Chine contre l'Inde. Il est démontré que les vicissitudes des relations sino-indiennes depuis leur établissement en 1950 ont particulièrement été influencées par la question du Tibet, un désaccord de longue date sur le statut du Tibet par rapport à la Chine. La société indienne dans son ensemble considérait le Tibet comme un pays séparé de la Chine, cette dernière possédant au plus une « suzeraineté » par rapport au Tibet. La société chinoise, par contre, maintient que le Tibet fait partie de la Chine et défend la « souveraineté » de la Chine sur le Tibet. Ce conflit structurel apparaît por la première fois en 1950, lorsque la Chine communiste envahit le Tibet. Il est ignoré au cors de la décennie, qui voit se développer une coopération une collaboration sino-indienne sans précédent, mais réapparaît en 1959, lorsque le soulèvement tibétain force l'Inde et la Chine à adresser à nouveau cette question. Le conflit frontalier sino-indien, qui devient progressivement irréconciliable vers 1962, est principalement le symptôme de cette question. En effet, le différend idéologique entre l'Inde et la Chine, particulièrement après la radicalisation de cette dernière à la fin des années 1950, est un autre facteur pavant la route vers le conflit frontalier.

Introduction

This dissertation marks the ending of a quest, which commenced eight years ago, to better understand the Sino-Indian border war in 1962. This acute but intense military conflict contrasted sharply to the political harmony that China and India presented to the world in the mid-1950s. That harmony was once hailed as "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai" or the "Indo-China Brotherhood." However, the short-lived war, along with the border dispute, has proved to be a long-lasting wedge between the two countries since 1962. In the corresponding Chinese discourse, this conflict acquired the later widely used name "Zhongyin bianjie ziwei fanjizhan [Sino-Indian Border War of Self-defensive Counter-attack]." In India, it gradually assumed the name "the 1962 War" which is often accompanied with terms like "humiliation" or "betrayal." My interest in this contrast between the two countries' respective historiographies and collective memory, rather than the war *per se*, launched this dissertation project. For a substantial period of time, Neville Maxwell's *India's China War* served as the compass of this journey for knowledge, until the limitations of the book became apparent.[1]

Summary of Research Results

The dissertation concludes that the border war in 1962 was not so much *India's China War* than *China's India War*. The history of Sino-Indian relations during the early Cold War was essentially a long road toward this showdown. The disagreement between these two countries over the so-called "Tibet Question" proved to shape the vicissitudes of the bilateral relationship. Indian as a society saw Tibet as a country separate from China when the Cold War started. But Jawaharlal Nehru's government managed to convince the Indian people to accept China's occupation of Tibet in the name of allowing China to exercise "suzerainty" or indirect rule. The People's Republic of China (PRC), however, like the Republic of China, considered Tibet to have historically been part of China.[2] Thus, the communist regime was dedicated to establishing Chinese "sovereignty" or direct rule there, a goal that entailed Tibet's inevitable loss of autonomy or virtual independence. This was a substantive difference between two societies rather than just two individuals, however influential the latter might be.[3] It was due to this nature that the problem was deeply embedded in the Sino-

[1] Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1970).
[2] For the Republic of China's official position, see "Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Non-recognition of McMahon Line,' 29 October 1962, *Academia Historica* [hereafter: *AH*], 020-019906-0037, p. 9.
[3] Andrew B. Kennedy, *The International Ambitions of Mao and Nehru: National Efficacy Beliefs and The Making of Foreign Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Indian relationship and became intractable. And during the early years of the Cold War, this structural problem proved to power the repeated collisions between the two new Asian giants.

The short diplomatic crisis in the wake of China's invasion of Tibet in 1950 constituted the first point of conflict. India, however, accepted this geopolitical change created by China. Partly, this concession resulted from India's belief that Tibet's autonomy would be respected by China, despite it becoming part of the new Chinese state in the name of "Tibet Region of China" in 1951. The signing of a major treaty between China and India in 1954 – about matters "between Tibet Region of China and India" – stood for a balance point being found between Beijing's demand for Chinese sovereignty in Tibet and Delhi's wish for Tibet's autonomy being preserved. The second collision happened because of Beijing's heavy-handed response to the Tibetan Uprising of 1959. It resulted in the Fourteenth Dalai Lama seeking asylum in India, and the Kashag government of Tibet being dissolved and subsequently replaced by the so-called "Preparatory Committee of Tibet Autonomous Region." Both symbolized a further and significant degradation of Tibet's autonomy under Chinese rule. In consequence, the bilateral relationship between Delhi and Beijing deteriorated drastically, and toward the end of 1959, the Sino-Indian border dispute emerged in full. The third major clash arrived in the autumn of 1962. It took the form of a coordinated large-scale assault from China on India. This move, appearing to be about the lingering border dispute, was essentially a political move, through which Beijing re-asserted China's position on the Tibet Question. The border war in 1962, by its nature, was not about the border but Tibet.

Research Questions

With constant attention to China and India's polices toward one another at various times since 1945, my research explores the following questions concerning Sino-Indian relations: How did Independent India handle the Tibet Question before the birth of Communist China in 1949? What was the CCP leadership's first impression of India, and how did it influence the subsequent behaviour of the communist regime? What China policy did Nehru pursue, particularly in the early 1950s, and what was his rationale? Given the irreconcilable difference over the Tibet Question, how did the two states overcome the diplomatic crisis caused by China's invasion of Tibet in 1950? What was the nature of the Sino-Indian negotiations in Beijing in 1954 that produced the famous Five Principles of Peaceful

Coexistence?[4] What terminated the peaceful and cooperative state of the Sino-Indian relations in the mid-1950s? How did the Tibetan Uprising in the spring of 1959 evolve into a full-fledged Sino-Indian border dispute by the end of the year? Is Maxwell's claim — Nehru's personal "intransigence" was to blame for the futile Sino-Indian border negotiation in Delhi in 1960 — correct? Under what circumstance did Nehru move to adopt the so-called "Forward Policy" toward the end of 1961? Why did Communist China attack India in 1962? Did the war dispel or actually reinforce the misperceptions that Delhi and Beijing held toward one another? The answers to these questions, as shown by relevant chapters of this dissertation, all point to the observation that the border war in 1962 was *China's India War* with the *suzerainty vs. sovereignty* debate hidden at its core.

Literature Review

The ups and downs of Sino-Indian relations in the early Cold War period attracted scholarly attention from Indian and Western writers from the very beginning. The border war quickly produced a large body of literature in the 1960s, which altogether sketched a picture of a peace-loving India falling prey to the expansionist policy of a deceptive China. The dominant assessment of the Sino-Indian border dispute was that China's case was not at all justified.[5] Meanwhile, Nehru's government also received sharp criticism, especially from former Indian military officers, for leading the country into a "blunder" in the Himalayas.[6]

The 1970s, however, witnessed a turnaround in the scholarly debate.[7] Alastair Lamb demonstrated that China possessed at least some legitimate claim over a few small tracts of

[4] The Five Principles were: mutual respect of each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference of each other's internal affairs, equality and cooperation for mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence."

[5] For a summary of the "conventional wisdom" about the dispute before 1970s, see Neville Maxwell, "Review of A History of Sino-Indian Relations: A Hostile Co-existence, by John Rowland," *The China Quarterly*, no. 35 (September 1968), pp. 159-61; Margaret W. Fisher, L.E. Rose, and Robert A. Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground: Sino-Indian Rivalry in Ladakh* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1963); Prithwis C. Chakravarti, *India's China Policy,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962); Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers : A Political Review of British, Chinese, Indian and Russian Rivalries* (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1969); John Rowland, *A History of Sino-Indian Relations: Hostile Coexistence* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1967); Wim F.V. Eekelen, *Indian Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute with China,* 2nd ed. (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967); Shanti Prasad Varma, *Struggle for the Himalayas: A Study of Sino-Indian Relations,* 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Sterling Publication, 1971).

[6] Brij Mohan Kaul, *The Untold Story* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1967); D. R. Mankekar, *The Guilty Men of 1962* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1968); J.P. Dalvi, *Himalayan Blunder: The Curtain-Raiser to the Sino-Indian War of 1962* (Bombay: Thacker, 1969); S.R. Johri, *Chinese Invasion of Ladakh* (Lucknow: Himalaya Publication, 1969); B.N. Mullik, *My Years with Nehru: The Chinese Betrayal* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971).

[7] Alastair Lamb, *The Sino-Indian Border in Ladakh* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973); Karunakar Gupta, *The Hidden History of the Sino-Indian Frontier* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1974); Maxwell, *India's China War*.

disputed territory.[8] Meanwhile, India's case in the border dispute, according to Karunakar Gupta, rested on "spurious" evidence that the British appeared to falsify in the 1930s.[9] What altered the scholarly understanding on the border conflict to the point of resulting in India to be viewed as "largely responsible for provoking the conflict" was Maxwell's *India's China War*.[10] In 1971, the Australian journalist published an investigative report on the border dispute. It combined an in-depth discussion of the historical aspect of the dispute, and a riveting narrative of how an "intransigent" Indian Prime Minister foolishly provoked a "fair and reasonable" China.[11] His exclusive access to many classified Indian government documents, particularly the Henderson Brook Report, lent credence to his assessment about the border war. His view that India was the source of the Sino-Indian border conflict seemed to fit the facts on ground. The border had been tranquil since 1962, including those moments of crisis when India was at war with Pakistan. In 1973, Mohan Ram observed that "any suggestion that China has territorial designs on India lacks credibility [now]."[12]

But in fact, this swing in the scholarly debate was also owed to the Chinese communist regime. Beijing actively intervened in the process of knowledge production to promote views that echoed its stand vis-à-vis Delhi. Thanks to Zhou's direct instruction, Maxwell's *India's China War* was published in Chinese within just one year of its original publication.[13] He remains one of the very few researchers who have had this privilege in China. Indeed, these works happen to all be in favour of Beijing's position in the border dispute.[14] The party-state also had a general but consistent impact on the debate through being an authoritarian — during Mao's era, totalitarian — regime. By the end of the 1950s, party-led political movements had silenced virtually any individual who could raise views or facts that would cause embarrassment for the government. Meanwhile, the party imposed and maintained

[8] Alastair Lamb, *The China-India Border: The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries* (London: O.U.P., 1964), p. 175.
[9] Gupta, *The Hidden History,* p. ix.
[10] A.S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), p. xii.
[11] Maxwell, *India's China War*, p. 123, p. 248.
[12] Mohan Ram, *Politics of Sino-Indian Confrontation* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1973), p. vi.
[13] Neville Maxwell, *India's China War,* trans. Lu Ren (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1971); Dai Chaowu, "Zhongyin bianjie wenti xueshushi shuping 1956-2013 [A Review of the Historiography on the Sino-Indian Border Problem, 1956-2013]," *Shixue yuekan*, no.10 (2014), p. 96, footnote.
[14] In 1981, the regime re-published Maxwell's book, see Neville Maxwell, *India's China War,* trans. Lu Ren (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1981); the other were Karunakar Gupta, *The Hidden History of the Sino-Indian Frontier,* trans. Wang Zhiting and Wang Hongwei (Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 1990), and Alastair Lamb, *The China-India Border: The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries*, trans. Min Tong, (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1966); this practice of translating foreign studies with opinions in support of the regime continues today, see Alastair Lamb, *A Study in the Relations between India, China and Tibet, 1904 to 1914*, trans. Liang Junyan, (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2017).

strict control over the country's international exchange of personnel and information. This left outside researchers no choice but to rely on the "usual array of press, radio, and documentary materials," which often served the purpose of propaganda for Beijing.[15] In the name of reconstructing the inner process of the CCP, scholars — including Maxwell — were actually, as one historian admitted in 1975, "only infer[ring]" what was on the minds of Mao and his colleagues.[16] Therefore, the CCP regime successfully hid its own miscalculations and idiosyncrasies in foreign policy, which certainly included those concerning India.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the paucity of knowledge about China's decision-making process continued to shield the Chinese government from rigorous scholarly interrogation. Despite innovations in approaching the topic of the Sino-Indian border dispute, the scholarship in the West during this period mostly reinforced the stereotypes left in Maxwell's wake. Steven Hoffman's portrayal of the dispute, a work of political science as much as history, again emphasized Nehru's "failure" and "inability" in dealing with China.[17] Yaakov Vertzberger's exploration of the "dynamic of misperception" in the border conflict focused, as he himself clarified, on "one particular leader, India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru."[18] Featuring a content analysis of Chinese newspapers and an application of the "rational actor model," Allen Whiting's study concluded that "an important characteristic" of China's foreign policy was the "controlled use of force."[19] Levin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang systematically examined China's external behaviour in a series of crises that happened on its frontier since 1949, an approach that inspired many future researchers.[20] They argued that China was "misled" in 1962, and this misperception arose not from China itself, but the situation that China faced; or in their own words, from the "interplay between domestic weakness and external threats."[21] Rarely did these researchers confront the basic issues, particularly Tibet's status in history, that were not directly linked but still fundamental to the discussion of modern Sino-Indian relations. More often than not, they adopted the

[15] Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 2.
[16] Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus,* p. xxii; This situation did not change much in the 1980s, see Gurtov & Hwang, *China Under Threat*, p. 2, and John F. Copper, review of *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy*, by Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 41, no. 2 (1982), p. 326.
[17] Steven Hoffmann, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. xii.
[18] Yaacov Vertzberger, *Misperceptions in Foreign Policymaking: The Sino-Indian Conflict, 1959-1962* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), p. xix, p. 1.
[19] Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus*, p. xiv, p. 234.
[20] Gurtov and Hwang, *China Under Threat*; M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Eric A. Hyer, *The Pragmatic Dragon: Structural Imperatives and China's Boundary Settlements* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015).
[21] Gurtov and Hwang, *China under Threat*, p. 152; Vertzberger, *Misperceptions in Foreign Policymaking*, p. 289.

Chinese government's standpoint on these premises, repeating, for example, the "McMahon Line," the disputed but *de facto* border of India and China in the Himalayas being the "historical artifact" of "British and Russian expansion."[22]

Around the year 2000, a new trend in the English-language literature emerged in terms of re-discussing the Sino-Indian border dispute, primarily with respect to India. Indeed, Indian scholars never dropped their interest in this topic after the Cold War ended.[23] The nuclear crisis in South Asia in 1998 demonstrated that this topic had not become archaic, even with the approach of the new millennium. In May 1998, India justified its nuclear test by pointing primarily to China, which was "an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders" with the "armed aggression against India in 1962" and the "unresolved border problem."[24] This crisis reignited Western academia's interest in this "protracted contest" between China and India since the early Cold War.[25] The leading figures of this trend, however, were still mainly comprised of scholars of Indian background. Srinath Raghavan, for example, showed that Maxwell's depiction of Nehru's foreign policy was skewed, based on extensive archival evidence. Nehru's handling of the border dispute was far from stubborn as Maxwell sketched, and his China policy was in fact guided by liberal values as much as a realist understanding of international politics.[26] By comparison, Parshotam Mehra highlighted the sincerity and "feelings of moral righteousness" behind Nehru's efforts in approaching and cooperating with the newly established People's Republic of China.[27] A.G. Noorani is particularly worth noting for his monograph on the border dispute's evolution from 1846 to 1947. He convincingly explained why the British documentary forgery in the 1930s, as alleged by Gupta in his "hidden history," was "a belated setting-right of the record," a point that had in fact already been raised by Mehra decades ago.[28]

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[22] Liu Xuecheng, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), p. 2.
[23] Gyaneshwar Chaturvedi, *India-China Relations: 1947- President Day* (Agra: M.G. Publishers, 1991); Parshotam Mehra, *An "Agreed" Frontier: Ladakh and India's Northernmost Borders, 1846-1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992); Sahdev Vohra, *The Northern Frontier of India: the Border Dispute with China* (New Delhi: Intellectual Publishing House, 1993); Prasanta Sen Gupta, *China's Belief System and Sino-Indian Relations: The Maoist Era* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1998).
[24] A.B. Vajpayee, "Nuclear Anxiety; Indian's Letter to Clinton On the Nuclear Testing," *New York Times*, May 13, 1998.
[25] John Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[26] Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India: A Strategic History of the Nehru Years* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010).
[27] Parshotam Mehra, *Essays in Frontier History: India, China, and the Disputed Border* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 176.
[28] A.G. Noorani, India-China Boundary Problem 1846-1947: History and Diplomacy (London: Oxford University Press, 2011); Gupta, *The Hidden History;* Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After: A Study*

Compared to the English-language discourse, the Chinese scholarly or semi-governmental discussion at the same period still reflected the official view. During the Cold War, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, the output of scholarly works in China demonstrated the following pattern: it increased when the regime faced a diplomatic crisis with India, and dissipated when the crisis was gone.[29] Such timing suggests that knowledge production was likely manipulated by the regime for propaganda purposes. After the Cold War, this pattern became less visible. In terms of methodology, Chinese scholars began to discuss the conflict less from a class struggle perspective and to draw on disciplines other than history, such as social psychology and international relations.[30] However, the phantom of the long-established pattern remained. Chinese researchers tended to "explain and justify, not to criticize" the decisions made by the CCP in history.[31] Rarely did they think beyond a set of premises and conclusions that were sanctioned by the party-state; for example, that the McMahon Line was a British colonial legacy and China's resort to force was therefore justified and correct by all standards. Any maverick attempt of not departing from these understandings would have likely be considered "too absurd to be refuted" anyway.[32] Finally, it is worth adding that Maxwell's *India China War* continued to be the most influential non-Chinese reference in the 1990s and 2000s on topics related to the Sino-India border war. Chinese scholars cited it almost as a bible, with little attention to the extant reviews and criticisms to this book especially from Indian scholars.

The opening of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives in the mid-2000s affected both the Western-Indian and the Chinese sides on the discussion of the Sino-Indian border war in different ways. Particularly in the West, evaluations of China's India policy in the 1950s and 1960s had been influenced by kind of a rational actor model — using terms like "reasonable,"

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of the Triangular Contest on India's Northeastern Frontier between Britain, China and Tibet, 1904-47 (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 470.

[29] Deng Hongying, "Guonei zhongyin bianjie zhenzhengduan yanjiu zongshu [Review of the Chinese Studies on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute]," *Dongnanya nanya yanjiu*, no. 1 (2016), p.105, footnote.

[30] Shi Bo, *1962: Zhongying dazhan jishi* [*1962: A Documentation of China-India War*] (Beijing: Great Earth Press, 1993); Lv Zhaoyi, *Yingshu yindu yu zhongguo xinan bianjing 1774-1911*[*British India and China's Southwest Frontier*] (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1996); Wang Hongwei, *Ximalaya qingjie: zhongying guanxi yanjiu [The Himalayan Complex: A Study of Sino-Indian Relations*] (Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 1998); Dai Chaowu, "Yindu waijiao zhengce, daguo guanxi yu 1962nian zhongyin bianjie chongtu [India's Diplomacy, Great Power Relations, and the Sino-Indian Border Conflict in 1962]," in *Lenzhan yu zhongguo de zhoubian guanxi* [*Cold War and China's Relations with Its Peripheries*], ed. Niu Dayong and Shen Zhihua (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2004), pp. 487-556; Sui Xinmin, *Zhongyin guanxi yanjiu: Shehui renzhi shijiao* [*Sino-Indian Relations: A Social Cognition Perspective*] (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2007); Qiu Meirong, *1959-1962 de zhongyin guanxi: guoji weiji guanli de yanjiu shijiao* [*Sino-Indian Relations 1959-1962: A Perspective of Crisis Management]* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2014).

[31] John W. Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," in *New Direction in the Study of China's Foreign Policy,* ed. Alastair Iain Johnston (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2006), p. 91.

[32] Dai, "Zhongyin bianjie wenti xueshushi," p. 114.

"rationality," "calculation," or "pragmatic" in order to capture what was believed to be the dominant characters of the regime vis-à-vis Nehru's India.[33] But recent studies, which are based on declassified Chinese government records, amended — if not corrected — this orthodox treatment. These archive-based works show that the old general consensus is "concealing what was in fact" the CCP regime's deep-seated distrust and hostility toward India, despite its seemingly reasonable outward posture.[34]

In contrast, no comparable change appeared to happen on the Chinese side, despite the newly available primary sources in the form of declassified government archives. Overall, the entire field of the Chinese diplomatic history is "teem[ing] with micro-level studies" with "a severe deficit in micro-level reflections."[35] The knowledge acquired from those records, in other words, mostly only serves to enrich long-existing prejudices. The study on the topics related to the border war in 1962 is not immune to this problem. More often than not, Chinese scholars mix facts with opinions or interpretations.

A case in point is the so-called "India's trade embargo on Tibet Region of China." A Chinese scholar claimed that Nehru's India imposed a grain embargo on Tibet via Bhutan in November 1950, in order to undermine China's efforts to re-establish sovereignty in Tibet. The basis of this factual statement was a Chinese government record. It documented a Tibetan official's recollection of a conversation once with some "Bhutanese prince" who claimed that Bhutan's decision of ceasing exporting rice to Tibet resulted from an "Indian instruction."[36] But could this ambiguous, second-hand testimony be admitted by historians today as having revealed the whole truth at the time? What was that "instruction" specifically about? Could "India" in that prince's mouth refer to a government agency other than the

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[33] Fravel, *Strong Borders*; Hyer, *The Pragmatic Dragon*; Maxwell, *India's China War*; Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus.*

[34] Anton Harder, "*Defining Independence in Cold War Asia: Sino-Indian Relations, 1949-1962*" (PhD diss., LSE, 2015); Jonathan Ward, "*China-Indian Rivalry and the Border War of 1962: PRC Perspectives on the Collapse of China-India Relations, 1958-62*" (PhD diss., Oxford University, 2016), p. 4.

[35] Liang Zhi, "Daidai zhongguo waijiaoshi yanjiu de xianzhuang yu weilai xueshu zuotanhui zongshu [The Current State and Future of the Contemporary Chinese Diplomatic History]," *CPC History Studies*, no. 5 (2018), p. 125.

[36] Dai Chaowu, "Yindu dui xizang difang de maoyi guanzhi he jinyun yu zhongguo de fanyin he zhengce (1950-1962) shang [India's Trade Restriction and Embargo on Tibet Region and China's Reaction and Policy, 1950-1962, Part I]," *CPC History Studies*, no. 5 (2013), p. 24, p. 27; Dai Chaowu, "Zhongyang zhuzang daibiao Zhang Jingwu 1953nian 10yue 21ri dianbao tanxi [Analyzing the Central Government's Representative to Tibet Zhang Jingwu's Telegram on 21 October 1953]," *Journal of East China Normal University*, no. 5 (2015), p. 67; See also Dai Chaowu, "Yindu dui xizang difang de maoyi guanzhi he jinyun yu zhongguo de fanyin he zhengce (1950-1962) xia [India's Trade Restriction and Embargo on Tibet Region and China's Reaction and Policy, 1950-1962, Part II]," *CPC History Studies*, no. 7 (2013), pp. 57-70; Dai Chaowu, "From 'Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai' to 'International Class Struggle' against Nehru: China's India Policy and the Frontier Dispute, 1950-1962," in *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives*, ed. Amit Das Gupta and Lorenz M. Luthi (New Delhi, Routledge India, 2017), p. 72.

Union Government under Nehru's direct control? What role did the food crisis, which India faced in the crop year 1950-1951, play at this juncture?[37] Many questions remain, and further reasoning actually leads to the conclusion that this "embargo" was probably a product of Chinese imagination. Note that the Tibetans did not yield to Communist China until April 1951, when they signed a peace agreement in Beijing and accepted their country being henceforth called "Tibet Region of China." If there was such an "Indian embargo" in 1950, it would have been one directed at *Tibet* rather than "Tibet Region of *China*," and most importantly, aimed at pressuring the Tibetans to succumb to Beijing rather than the other way around.[38] Unfortunately, a multitude of such archive-based historical reconstructions exist in China. They have grown from, and have in turn reinforced, the general Chinese belief that the country was a victim of imperialism in the past, be it from Japan, the United States, Britain, or in the case of Tibet, even India.

Primary Sources

This study draws on extensive documents from an array of archives across the world. I visited the Library and Archives Canada, the National Archive and Record Administration (United States), Academia Historica (Taiwan), the National Archives of India, the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (India), Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives (China), Jiangsu Provincial Archives (China) and several other Chinese provincial/municipal archives. Through exchanges, I also managed to consult some archival institutions indirectly, including the National Archives Department of Myanmar and the National Archives of the United Kingdom. For the same reason, I was sometimes even fortunate enough to access the documents that had been re-classified due to policy change by the time I visited the hosting institution, as for example in the case of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives (CFMA). The declassified documents from this institution are particularly worth mentioning with respect to reconstructing the Chinese side of this history. Comprising intra-departmental

[37] "Moslem in India Pray for Rain," 1 November 1950, *New York Times*, p. 19; "New Group Urges Food Aid for India," 27 December 1950, *New York Times*, p. 6; Fredericka Cobren, "Food Crisis in India," *Middle East Journal* 5, no. 2(1951), pp. 217-22; "Fundamentals about India," 25 February 1956, *CFMA*, 102-00055-01, p. 60.

[38] Dai, "Yindu dui xizang difang, shang," p. 24, p. 27.

correspondence, situation analyses, and memoranda of conversations, they betrayed the hidden face of Communist China as being deeply suspicious toward India.

For the Chinese side of history, another category of primary sources consists of the published collections about the CCP leaders since the 1990s. These collections, which include leaders' speeches, writings, and activities during the Cold War, are great references in reconstructing the ways in which the highest echelon of the state apparatus dealt with India. The *nianpu* (chronological records) of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai are particularly useful, for example, in corroborating accounts from other sources surrounding Beijing's decision-making process on the eve of the border war. But again, these materials, produced by the relevant branches of the party-state, exist primarily to legitimize the policies and rule of the regime.[39]

The third major category of historical evidence is memoirs. Those high-ranking CCP officials sometimes left their recollections about Sino-Indian relations in the form of single-standing memoirs. For example, Yang Gongsu, serving as Beijing's principal watchdog for Tibet's external affairs in the 1950s, produced numerous pieces of writing of this kind, which release useful factual evidence as well as his own opinions.[40] This category also consists of the *wenshi ziliao*, a unique genre of historical materials in China.[41] They are, as one Chinese critic summarizes, outcomes of "official projects of producing unofficial history."[42] Nevertheless, these collections of mini memoirs by individuals do contain rich information about the past.

Regarding the Indian side of history, my dissertation uses primary sources from three main categories: declassified archives, published government documents, and published documents from Nehru. In the first group are the records from the National Archives of India and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. In the second category, the multi-volume *White Papers,* with coverage starting in 1954, is still a useful reference in tracking the development

[39] Chen Jian, "*Not Yet a Revolution: Reviewing China's Cold War Documentation*" (paper presented at the Conference on the Power of the Free Inquiry and Cold War International History, National Archives at College Park, Maryland, 1998).
[40] Yang Gongsu, *Cangsang jiushinian: yige waijiao teshi de huiyi* [*Ninety Years of Vicissitudes: A Diplomat's Recollection*] (Haikou: Hainan Press, 1999).
[41] National of Literature and History Materials of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, ed., *Wenshi Ziliao xuanji* [*Selected Materials of Materials of Literature and History*], 157 volumes (Beijing: China Literature and History Press, various years); Committee of Literature and History Studies of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference of Tibet Autonomous Region, ed., *Xizang wenshi ziliao xuanji* [*Selected Works of Materials of Literature and History about Tibet*], 24 volumes (Beijing: People's Publishing House, various years).
[42] Lei Ge, "Cong kuilei huangdi dao kuilei gongmin: jianlun shibaizhe de lishi jiyi yu lishi shuxie [From a Puppet Emperor to a Puppet Citizen: Discussing Loser's Memory and Historical Writing]," *Academic Journal of Jinyang*, no. 2, p. 86.

of the border dispute in the 1950s and 1960s.[43] A defining feature of this dissertation is a systematic examination of the *Essential Writings of Jawaharlal Nehru*, the *Letters to Chief Ministers*, and the *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru,* which has warranted a full revelation of Nehru's attitude toward China.[44]

Contribution

My dissertation intervenes in the existing debate on the Sino-Indian border war in three ways. First, my research is based on a systematic examination of first-hand materials about Nehru, particularly his writings and speeches, over a long span of time. Such an examination ensures a deeper grasp of Nehru's thinking about China, thereby enabling my study to distinguish between *intent* and *reception.* I argue that a gap existed between what was *intended* by Nehru and what was *received* by the CCP, which is supported by the Chinese primary and secondary sources. This is the first study of this kind done by a Chinese citizen. Second, this research uses recently available Chinese primary sources. It is among the very few doctoral-level studies so far that have effectively harnessed the bonanza of the declassified documents from the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives. These documents record a paranoid China vis-à-vis India, which the mainstream Western literature has largely overlooked because of the shortage of hard evidence. Third, this dissertation develops a number of premises to our existing common understanding about the Sino-Indian border dispute. They include that Tibet is treated as being historically part of an empire, known as the Qing, rather than "China," as the Chinese tend to believe; and that the McMahon Line is also viewed as a token of Tibet's struggle for independence. Here, I am heavily influenced by the so-called "New Qing History (NQH)."

The NQH is a loosely-organized school in the field of China Studies, emerging first in North America in the 1980s and maturing around the turn of the millennium.[45] It contains "a

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[43] *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged and Agreements Signed between the Governments of India and China or White Papers* [hereafter: *WP*] (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India); *Zhongyin laiwang wenjian huibian* (full name: *Zhongguo he yindu guanyu liangguo zai zhongguo xizang difang de guanxi wenti, zhonyin bianjie wenti he qita wenti laiwang wenjian huibian*) [*Collection of Documents Exchanged between China and India* (full name: *A Collection of Documents Exchanged between China and India regarding the Two Countries' Relations on Tibet Region of China, the Sino-Indian Border Question, and Other Questions*)] [hereafter: *ZLWH*] (Beijing: Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China).

[44] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Essential Writings of Jawaharlal Nehru* [hereafter: *EWJN*] (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003); Jawaharlal Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers, 1947-1964* [hereafter: *LCM*] (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985); Jawaharlal Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, 1st series [hereafter: *SWJN*1] (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972); Jawaharlal Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, 2nd series [hereafter: *SWJN*2] (New Delhi: Teen Murti House, 1984).

[45] Evelyn S. Rawski, "Presidential Address: Re-envisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (1996): pp. 829-50; Wu Guo "New Qing History:

series of perspectives and assumptions under the influence of post-modern historiography" that makes it possible to "re-envision" the Qing (1636-1912).[46] This was a period in Chinese history that defined the concept of China for people who sought to build modern China in the generations that followed the dynasty's disintegration in 1912.[47] One of the NQH's major accomplishments is demonstrating that the Qing was an Inner Asian empire as much as Chinese one. That this leviathan was accepted by the Chinese, who accounted for an overwhelming majority of the empire's subjects, owed much to the ruling skills and political power of the Manchus. These conquerors learned to wear a "Confucian face" which legitimize their conquest of China. Indeed, when dealing with other subjected peoples, such as the Tibetans, the Manchu rulers switched to new "faces." Just like the rulers of any other pre-modern empire, the Qing emperors also developed an "imperial repertoire," i.e., resorting to multiple sources of legitimacy, to glue together a multiethnic imperial edifice.[48] To treat this edifice as being another *Chinese* dynasty therefore oversimplifies past realities.

The significance of the NQH to this study is as follows. First, it unshackles the yoke imposed by the anti-colonialist perspective. This perspective, which commands most writings about the Sino-Indian border dispute, obscures what in fact was Asian imperialism. The Qing was no less an empire to Tibet than Britain was to India. As the NQH highlights, the Manchus' conquest of China in the 17th Century through "primarily a phenomenon of Chinese fighting Chinese," which mirrors how the British conquered South Asia in history by exploiting conflicts among South Asians.[49] Communist China's efforts to integrate Tibet, which had been once part of the Qing, therefore amounts to a Chinese endeavour to inherit the Manchu imperialist legacy. It differs little from the Republic of India's commitment to the so-called "McMahon Line." In terms of the concept of imperialist legacy, especially concerning Tibet, China and India were on the same footing. The NQH helps reveal the imperialist gene that was passed from the Qing — not from the West — through the Republic of China and finally to the People's Republic of China.

Dispute, Dialog, and Influence" *The Chinese Historical Review* 23, no. 1 (2016): pp. 47-69; see also Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Edward J.M. Rhoads, *Manchus & Han : Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000); P.K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Stanford: University of California Press, 2002).

[46] Wu, "New Qing History," p. 64.

[47] Rawski, "Presidential Address," p. 829.

[48] Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 347.

[49] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror,* p. 30.

The NQH not only re-conceptualizes Communist China's external behaviour, but also enables us to do justice to Tibet's agency in history. From an imperial dimension, thanks to the NQH, it is clear that the Lamaist society also sought to "resist, deflect, or twist in their favor the encroachment" of the empire based on China proper, be it the Qing, the Republic of China, or the People's Republic of China.[50] The name "McMahon Line," referring to the territorial arrangement produced at the Simla Conference in 1913/14 and later called a Western imperialist legacy by Communist China, underplays a vital truth: the Tibetans accepted it willingly. Previously, the British had used two wars — the so-called "Sikkim Expedition" of 1888 and the "Younghusband Expedition" of 1903 — to open Tibet by force. But between 1903 and 1913, the Qing had gradually replaced Britain as the principal threat to Tibet. It was because the Manchu court sought to convert Tibet into a province of the Qing Empire in the beginning of the 20th Century. This ambition constituted an irreconcilable conflict of interest with the Tibetan elites. The latter had only been willing to accept a nominal or indirect Qing rule. In 1910, with Lhasa being occupied by a Qing imperial force, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama fled to India. Fortunately for him and for the Lamaist state, the Qing collapsed two years later. Most importantly, its successor, the Republic of China, was too weak yet to pursue the ambitious project as started by the Qing. Against this background, a tripartite conference was convened in Simla, India, in 1913/14, involving Britain, Tibet, and the Republic of China. This time, Tibet needed Britain's backing to secure its core interest vis-à-vis China — self-rule — and the "McMahon Line" was the price that the British side demanded. In this sense, this particular border deserves an alternative name: "Shatra Line." Named after the Tibetan representative Lonchen Shatra on this occasion, this line was in fact a token of Tibetan struggle for independence from China as much as a British imperial legacy.

Structure of Dissertation

The dissertation has six chapters which are chronologically arranged. Each chapter consists of two major sections, one focusing on China and the other on India, except for the first. The first chapter deals with the post-WWII period from 1945 to 1949, when both China and India experienced internal transformations that redefined the very concepts of China and India. It focuses on understanding the logic behind India's China policy. By tracing the rise of India's China policy, this chapter illustrates Nehru's philosophy — "Idealism is the realism of tomorrow"— that underpinned his dedication to forging a Sino-Indian partnership. A

[50] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History, Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 3.

separate section discusses India's policy toward Tibet. The Indians largely saw it as a country independent, or at least separate, from China. This chapter also explores the CCP's approach to the outside world in its transformation from being a rebel party to a national government towards the end of 1940s.

The second chapter examines the inception of Sino-Indian relations from 1949 to 1953. The bilateral relationship withstood the impact of two crises: Communist China's annexation of Tibet, and its military intervention in Korea. It was largely because Nehru's India followed the line of being "a benevolent spectator" on the Tibet Question, and offered maximum understanding to Beijing throughout its mediation of the Korean War. Unfortunately, the *idée fixe* that India had "an ulterior motive" was embedded in the CCP's collective mindset from the very beginning. But an outwardly pragmatic approach led China to hide its grudges toward India, especially with respect to Tibet or the "Tibet Region of China" after 1951.

The third chapter investigates a golden period of Sino-Indian relations roughly from 1954 to 1957. The foundation of this period was the successful Sino-Indian negotiation of the Tibet agreement in Beijing in 1954. This treaty reconciled, to some extent, the differences between the two Asian giants with respect to the Tibet Question. As far as Nehru was concerned, the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954 was a grand swap deal. By conceding virtually all Indian interests in Tibet and recognizing the term "Tibet Region of China," he believed that India had received China's acquiescence on the existing Indo-Tibetan borders, including the McMahon Line, and a commitment to a peaceful code of conduct — "Panchsheel [Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence]." But Beijing saw everything about this negotiation in a different light, especially with regard to the McMahon Line. Yet, India's great value to China was in widening the PRC's contact with the non-communist world, thereby helping to build up an international United Front against China's archenemy, the United States, which prompted the CCP leaders to tango with India's Nehru — although not wholeheartedly.

The fourth chapter explores a period of transition. From the end of 1956 to the spring of 1959, the general Sino-Indian relationship, which appeared fine on the surface, was losing its internal glue. The existing and emerging border issues were hitting Nehru's nerve, although his meeting with Zhou at the turning of 1956/57 temporarily appeased him. After the mid-1958, for various reasons, Nehru lost his faith in the possibility that the CCP would follow a *bona fide* policy toward India. He concluded that Beijing had broken Panchsheel, which was not only the principal product of years of Nehru's diplomatic efforts in winning the goodwill of China, but also the primary foundation on which he was willing to continue a friendly and cooperative China policy. Meanwhile, with a persistent deficit of the trust toward Nehru's

government, the communist regime became increasingly dissatisfied with India's "right-drifting" foreign policy toward the West. What led Beijing to be consumed by the deep-seated suspicion toward Delhi, however, were the interactions between India and Tibet during these years. On the eve of Tibetan Rebellion of 1959, the belief that India was directly responsible for the deteriorating situation of China's rule in Tibet had become possessed the Chinese communist leaders.

The fifth chapter focuses on the path to the Sino-Indian border war from 1959 to 1962. Given the lack of mutual trust, this bilateral relationship quickly disintegrated, in the public eyes, in the aftermath of the Second Tibet Crisis — the rebellion or uprising in Lhasa in March 1959. The dynamic that was released from this crisis, especially because of the Dalai Lama's controversial speeches after he took exile in India, shifted the focus of trouble, on the surface, from the Tibet Question to the Sino-Indian Border Dispute. For Nehru, Beijing's forcible assertion of its authority in Tibet disillusioned Indian society, which until 1959 had believed that the Tibetans retained, at least, autonomy from China. Consequently, there was no more domestic support for him, as a democratically elected statesman, to proceed with the old China policy and to continue accommodating Beijing. The Nehru-Zhou meeting in April 1960 was therefore doomed from its very beginning, and its inconclusive ending was certainly not due to Nehru's personal "intransigence." As India and China attached distinct degrees of importance to this bilateral relationship — only Nehru set it as the cornerstone of foreign policy — the two governments gradually diverged in their handling of the border problem. By the turn of 1961/62, they were on completely different pages regarding this issue.

The final chapter addresses the Sino-Indian Border War in 1962 and the following period until Nehru's death in 1964. A close look at the decision-making process of Delhi and Beijing before the war indicates that Nehru's lament for India — "we were living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation" — actually applied to both countries. It is worth highlighting the significance of this war: for the CCP, it confirmed the regime's beliefs that Nehru's India had "an ulterior motive" in Tibet, and that China should handle India with both diplomatic/political and military struggles. For Delhi, Nehru finally arrived at the same conclusion that Sardar Patel drew twelve years ago: China should be dealt with as a long-term adversary of India. For the Sino-Indian border dispute, the bloodshed in the Himalayas was cut off from its deeper root — the Tibet Question. India and China had fundamentally different perceptions concerning this question, while other factors, such as different political systems, deepened this cleavage. The seeds of this conflict continue to exist today.

Chapter 1: The False Start, 1945-49

Introduction

From the ashes of World War II emerged two new Asian giants — the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China — each with its own unique character. The former, having separated from the British colonial empire in 1947 after a century of struggle, achieved independence comparatively peacefully. The latter, born from violent revolution and dedicated to the realization of Communism and the restoration of China's old glory, was founded by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949. The distinctive origins of these two new states inevitably affected their bilateral relationship, which did not officially begin until 1950. The position of the independent India toward Tibet, a land that the Chinese always saw as part of China, evolved from that of the British Indian Empire in history. This chapter therefore explores what precisely the new Indian state inherited from Britain regarding Tibet after 1947. Because Tibet had maintained its virtual independence from China in the period under discussion, this chapter discusses India's approach to China and that to Tibet separately. It also examines the CCP's general external policy as a ruling party towards 1950 and explores its connection with Communist China's later dealing with India.

India's Approach to China

In order to understand India's approach to Communist China, we begin with Jawaharlal Nehru's reflections on international relations in the aftermath of World War II. Nehru was convinced that the principle of self-determination was flawed and that many small states, resulting from the exercise of this principle after the First World War, were vulnerable to larger states. To check the ambitions of larger, more powerful states, Nehru envisaged the merging of smaller, weaker states into a few "federations" or "confederations." Nehru also assumed that India and China would eventually emerge as international powers. They, along with the United States and the Soviet Union, would be the four great powers in the long term and "there will be no fifth."[51]

Therefore, after achieving independence, Nehru's Congress Party made strengthening India's relationship with the Republic of China, led by Jiang Jieshi and his Nationalist Party, a focus of Indian foreign policy. Through various channels, Nehru sought to demonstrate his "firm faith in China's great destiny" and "earnest hope and belief in the abiding friendship

[51] "The Limits of Self-determination," 2 August 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, pp. 440-42.

and cooperation of China and India" which, as he he claimed, "is unfolding in Asia and the world."[52] Not everyone in Congress appreciated or even understood Nehru's grand design. Sarat Chandra Bose, brother of Subhas Chandra Bose and member of the All India Congress Committee, openly criticized Jiang in 1945, labeling him the "grand fascist of the East."[53] In response, Nehru painstakingly explained to his Chinese friends that Bose's attack was "entirely opposed to the Congress viewpoint" and "the feeling of the people of India."[54] Reflecting the importance Nehru attached to China, in October 1946 the Interim Government of India, merely one month after its own creation, established an ambassadorial relationship with China, making it the second country with a diplomatic relationship after the United States.

However, Nehru's desire for Sino-Indian friendship and cooperation soon stopped unfolding. In 1947 the Partition of India and the renewed civil war in China threw both countries into domestic chaos, and Nehru was forced to adopt a wait-and-see approach toward China. He spoke cautiously when asked questions by the press regarding the ever-intensifying conflict between the Chinese communists and the Nationalist Government.[55] Likewise, Nehru instructed the Indian ambassador to China not to become "a partisan" in that conflict; he should explain India's "general policy of friendship and non-interference" not just to Nanjing, but also to Yan'an if possible. "It seems clear that the Chinese communists have no bad case," Nehru wrote to Menon in early 1947.[56] This policy of non-interference reflected India's general approach to all Asian countries in domestic turmoil at the time. For Nehru, it was one thing to be the "torch-bearer" for the rising decolonization movement against the European powers. It was another to "trespass upon the domestic problems of particular states" in Asia.[57]

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[52] "China's Struggle," 8 July 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, p. 438; "Message to China," 25 June 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, pp. 436-37; "Cable to Chiang Kai-shek," 16 August 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, p. 444; "The End of the World War," 16 August 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, pp. 444-45; "To Tan Yun-shan," 29 September 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, pp. 445-46; "Cable to Chiang Kai-shek," 16 August 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, p. 433; "Scholarships to Students from Indonesia," 25 October 1946, *SWJN*2, vol. 1, p. 531.

[53] Bose criticized Jiang for refusing to reconcile with Mao Zedong the Chinese Communist Party. "Rejoinder to Sarat Chandra Bose," 29 September 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, pp. 446-47.

[54] "Rejoinder to Sarat Chandra Bose," *SWJN*1, vol. 14, pp. 446-47; "To Tan Yunshan," *SWJN*1, vol. 14, pp. 445-46; "Second Rejoinder to Sarat Bose," 1 October 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, p. 451; for Nehru's own feeling about Jiang Jieshi, see: "To Vallabhahai Patel," 1 October 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, p. 448.

[55] In one interview by *a New York Times* journalist who asked for Nehru's view on the conflict between the Communist and the Nationalists which had become an all-out civil war by the summer of 1946, Nehru merely replied that India would "welcome China's unification on a democratic basis." See: "Objectives of India's Foreign Policy," 30 August 1946, *SWJN*1, vol. 15, pp. 569-70.

[56] K.P.S. Menon, *Many Worlds: An Autobiography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 230.

[57] Nehru saw India as the "torch-bearer" for the unfolding decolonization movements in Asia and believed that the various sectors of Asia, be it Middle East, Middle West, Southeast Asia, or China, "all depend on India" as

Circumstances in both countries only became worse as they entered 1948. In India, the long-time leader of the Indian independence movement Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated in January. In China, the Nationalist Government that had survived the Japanese invasion was losing its war with the CCP. "The position in China is most distressing and yet it seems that nothing can be done about it except to watch the tragedy proceed to its final denouement," Nehru wrote to an Indian diplomat in Japan a week after Gandhi's death. "My job remains in India [,] and it is a difficult enough job."[58]

The Congress Party began to overhaul its China policy, which had previously been directed toward the Nationalist Government. In the summer of 1948, Delhi concluded that the decline of Jiang's government was nearly complete.[59] Near the end of the year, terms like "Communist Government" entered Delhi's internal discussion on China's future. As he watched the Guomindang regime fail in virtually every aspect of government, whether it be administration, economic management, or domestic popularity, Nehru prepared India for a major change in its China policy. "Following a tottering government is not a good policy," he told Menon in December 1948. The Indian Embassy in Nanjing was instructed not to evacuate with the losing Nationalist Government to Taiwan; instead, it should stay and try to establish contact with the CCP.[60] By early 1949, a series of decisive military defeats suffered by Nationalist forces convinced Nehru that the CCP was seeking "a victor's, not a negotiated, peace."[61] Delhi thus found it even more necessary to distance itself from the losing party. The many appeals for Indian mediation from the Nationalist Government and its sympathizers were politely declined.[62] "The less [that] outsiders meddle with China, the better," Nehru wrote.[63] In the summer of 1949, Nehru decided to sever India's diplomatic connection with Jiang's government and India's recognition of the Chinese communists became only a matter of timing.[64] "We cannot ignore facts," Nehru wrote to his sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit in July 1949, "merely because of the past."[65]

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well as "all impinge on India." See: "India's Lead in Asia Liberation," *SWJN*1, vol. 14, p. 459; "Inter-Asia Relations," 22 August 1946, *SWJN*1, vol. 15, p. 563.

[58] "To B. Rama Rau," 7 February 1948, *SWJN*2, vol. 5, p. 542.

[59] Menon, *Many Worlds,* p. 232.

[60] "The Situation in China," 5 December 1948, *SWJN*2, vol. 8, p. 416.

[61] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 7 February 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 9, p. 472.

[62] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 31 December 1948, *SWJN*2, vol. 9, p. 470; "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 7 February 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 9, p. 472; "To Li Tsun-jen," 15 February 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 9, p. 473.

[63] "To Li Tsun-jen,", *SWJN*2, vol. 9, p. 473.

[64] "Cable to B.N. Rau," 25 September 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 13, p. 269

[65] "To Vijayalakshmi Pandit," 1 July 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, p. 408; for the past, see: Yang Tianshi, "Chiang Kai-shek and Jawaharlal Nehru," in *Negotiating China's Destiny in World War II*, eds. Hans van de Ven, Diana Lary, and Stephen MacKinnon (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), pp. 128-24.

Nehru considered the emergence of a Chinese communist state "a fact of world significance,"[66] and he ultimately found more reasons to accept this fact than to resist it. That the CCP defeated the Nationalists "on their own feet," unlike the communists in Eastern Europe who had obtained power by leaning on Soviet tanks, proved to Nehru that the CCP was not "just a hanger-on" of Moscow.[67] He further believed that the new government of China was "some kind of a coalition government"[68] and the fact that some respectful non-communist figures assumed significant positions, such as Madam Sun Yat-sen as the Vice-President, suggested to Nehru that in practice, the regime would have "a relatively moderate program."[69] At the end of 1948, Nehru expected that the "moderate" communist Government would be eager to develop relations with China's neighbours, "notably India."[70] He was particularly impressed by the CCP's success in stabilizing the finances and supply of major Chinese cities like Shanghai toward the end of 1949. In a letter to the Prime Minister of Burma U Nu in early 1950, Nehru lavishly praised the CCP leaders, calling them "exceedingly able and experienced."[71]

In response to Chinese unification under the CCP, Nehru made several strategic moves along India's periphery. He was not satisfied with the report of "no communist trouble at all" on the Assam-Burma frontier. Nehru demanded that the Assam Government be prepared, by maintaining strategic connections with Burma, such as the Ledo Road, and working to strengthening Assam's relationship with people in Upper Burma.[72] Meanwhile, Nehru sought to build a closer bilateral relationship with Burma. As he highlighted in a message to the U Nu in early 1949, "with events shaping as they are in China and certain parts of Southeast Asia, the stability of Burma becomes all the more important." Nehru urged U Nu to accept Indian assistance, which would be given "as a friend," in any possible way.[73] Towards India's northern neighbour Nepal, Nehru expressed his position in a noticeably different tone: "Our attitude, though friendly, is a firm one. […] If she [Nepal] is not progressive and friendly to India, she will have to deal with a much more ruthless government in China."[74] However, this dissertation argues that these diplomatic manoeuvres made by Nehru did not reflect a desire

[66] "India and Indonesia," 28 June 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, p. 371.
[67] "The Situation in China," 5 December 1948, *SWJN*2, vol. 8, p. 416; "To Thakin Nu," 7 January 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 14, p. 503; "India and Indonesia," 28 June 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, p. 371.
[68] "The Situation in China," *SWJN*2, vol.8, p. 416; "To Thakin Nu," *SWJN*2, vol. 14, p. 503.
[69] "To Thakin Nu," *SWJN*2, vol. 14, p. 503.
[70]"The Situation in China," *SWJN*2, vol. 8, p. 416.
[71] "To Thakin Nu," *SWJN*2, vol. 14, p. 504.
[72] The Ledo road was built during the Second World War to link India and Burma but the Indian side of it largely abandoned after 1945. "To Gopinath Bardoloi," 25 January 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 9, p. 455.
[73] "Cable to M.A. Rauf," 10 February 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 9, p. 458.
[74] "To C.P.N Singh," 9 June 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 11, p. 376.

to "contain" China with the ultimate purpose of overthrowing the CCP's regime.[75] In a note to his Principal Foreign Affairs Advisor G.S. Bajpai, regarding the implications of the Lhasa Incident in July 1949, Nehru wrote: "Whatever may be the ultimate fate of Tibet in relation to China, I think there is practically no chance of any military danger to India arising from any possible change in Tibet."[76] In short, Nehru did not feel threatened by Communist China as long as the latter confined its influence to the north of the Himalayas. It meant that Nehru's India had no *intent* to contain or undermine China at this juncture. To better appreciate this point, we must closely examine Indian policy toward Tibet before 1950.

India's Approach to Tibet

The Indian view was that Tibet stood as a separate country from China. This view was best illustrated by what happened in the first Asian Relations Conference in Delhi in 1947. Not only was a Tibetan delegation invited separately from that of the Republic of China, but also a large map used by the conference depicted China and Tibet as divided by an international border. Although the Indian host "corrected" this "mistake" after the Chinese delegation protested and threatened to withdraw, an instinctive perception of India was clear: China and Tibet were two separate countries. Another example was a public speech of Nehru in March 1949. Enumerating India's "nearby *countries*," he said that "if you start from the left, [they are] Pakistan… Afghanistan… Tibet, China, Nepal, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and Ceylon."[77] One might also argue that Outer Mongolia's experience — detaching from the Qing Empire in 1911 and having ruled itself for decades until it was finally recognized by China as an independent country in 1946 — contributed to this Indian perception: Tibet had enjoyed "autonomy verging on independence."[78] This understanding of the reality formed the basis of India's commitment to "support[ing] the independence of Tibet, subject to the suzerainty of China" after 1947.[79]

But supporting Tibet's autonomy or independence was only part of India's approach to Tibet. According to the letter from Deputy Secretary L.A.C. Fry to A.J. Hopkinson, the Political Officer in Sikkim, on April 8th, 1947, Independent India's Tibet policy should be guided by three major goals. First, "aggressive support of unqualified Tibetan independence" at the expense of India's friendship with China was not advisable. To assure its own well-

[75] John L. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[76] "The Indian Mission at Lhasa," 9 July 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, p. 410.
[77] "India's Foreign Policy and World Peace," 22 March 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 10, p. 464.
[78] "Policy regarding China and Tibet," 18 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 343.
[79] Menon, *Many Worlds*, p. 270.

being after the transfer of power, it should strengthen its relationship with "so important a power as China." Second, India should welcome Tibetan autonomy but refrain from taking any initiative that might lead to Sino-Indian conflict. In other words, India should only be "a benevolent spectator" in the troubles between Tibet and China. Third, with regard to its boundary with Tibet, India should "stand by the McMahon Line." This meant that India would tolerate no incursion, although border adjustments could be made after friendly negotiations with China and Tibet.[80]

Little changed regarding India's approach to Tibet between 1947 and 1950. For example, the British officer Edward Richardson was retained as head of the Indian Mission in Lhasa and he held this position until the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950. This stasis was due to the chaos ignited by partition in 1947, which presented Nehru's government with graver and more urgent issues. "Our hands were full," said Nehru in 1959, explaining India's neglect of Tibet and the continuation of British imperial policy in India's early years.[81] He did not lie or exaggerate.[82] The Indian state apparatus therefore inherited the strategic principles underlying British Tibet policy: to support Tibetan autonomy as a "benevolent spectator" and to "stand by" the McMahon Line. Later, when responding to three issues related to Tibet—Lhasa's suggestion to reconsider the Indo-Tibet border in 1947, Nanjing's proposal to terminate a trade agreement concerning Tibet in 1948, and the Lhasa Incident in 1949—Nehru consistently followed the framework established by Fry.

The first challenge came from Lhasa. In May 1947, Richardson formally informed the Tibetan authorities that the obligations and rights of the Simla Convention of 1914, "before India and Tibet have negotiated a new agreement," would be inherited by independent India.[83] The Tibet Foreign Bureau's reply, however, emphasized change rather than continuation:

> Britain's presence in India has ceased; it follows that the agreements signed between Britain and Tibet cannot apply to the Indian Government and Tibet;

[80] Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem,* pp. 208-209.
[81] "In the Lok Sabha: Statement on Situation in Tibet," 27 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 507.
[82] "To B. Rama Rau," 7 February 1948, *SWJN*2, vol. 5, p. 542.
[83] Yang Gongsu, *Zhongguo fandui waiguo qinlue ganshe xizang difang douzheng shi* [The History of China's Struggle Against Foreign Invasion and Interference of the Tibet Region] (Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 2001), p. 225.

> and therefore, [we] are afraid that the issues like the border between the new government of India and Tibet would have to be renegotiated.[84]

Behind this reply was Tibet's dissatisfaction with Britain's failure to honour an age-old deal between them. During the Simla Conference of 1913-14, Britain and Tibet reached essentially a border-for-independence deal. The idea was for Tibet to concede a favourable Indo-Tibet border to Britain, and for Britain to ultimately help Tibet gain independence from Republican China in the tripartite conference at Simla. As a typical product of secret diplomacy at the time, the deal was first reached informally between the representatives of British India and Tibet in Delhi in February 1914; indeed, behind Republican China's back.[85] The open and formal conference at Simla, which involved Britain, Tibet, and China, became the vehicle for the first two parties to realize their informal agreement from this point onward. Tibet's wish was expressed in the draft convention as "the autonomy of Tibet" "under the suzerainty of China" with the latter "to abstain from the interference in the administration." Meanwhile, Britain's pursuit was embodied in a line "shown in red" on the attached map.[86] Naturally, neither party informed the Chinese that this particular line was only recently agreed upon.

Unfortunately, this border-for-independence deal did not close as expected. By the end of the Simla Conference in July 1914, the Chinese plenipotentiary Ivan Chen had still refused to sign the Simla Convention, which delineated a specific boundary between Tibet and China or the "boundary between Outer Tibet and Inner Tibet."[87] Therefore, one could find only the British and Tibetans signatures on the Simla Convention of July 3, 1914. However, the two parties managed to keep their agreement alive, which otherwise would have truly been "aborted."[88] They issued a separate statement, on the same day of the signing of the Simla Convention, declaring that this convention would still be "binding on the Governments of Great Britain and Tibet" regardless of China's signature. Furthermore, the wording of the declaration was crafted in a way to leave the door open for China to accept this convention. "So long as the Government of China withhold signature to the aforesaid convention she will

[84] Tibet Foreign Bureau archives, indirectly cited from Yang, *Zhongguo fandui waiguo*, p. 226.
[85] Maxwell, *India's China War*, pp. 41-2; Yang, *Zhongguo fandui waiguo*, pp. 193-94.
[86] Article 2, Article 9, "Convention between Great Britain, China and Tibet: Simla 1914," Central Tibetan Administration, *Political Treaties of Tibet 821 to 1951* [hereafter: *PTT 821-1951*], tibet.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/political-treaties-of-tibet...pdf, accessed on 10 December 2019.
[87] Article 9, "Convention between Great Britain, China and Tibet: Simla 1914," *PTT 821-1951*; Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem*, p. 188.
[88] Maxwell, *India's China War*, p. 52.

be debarred from the enjoyment of all privileges accruing therefrom." In other words, if China stopped withholding its signature, it could still enjoy "all privileges accruing therefrom."[89] The Simla Convention — the vehicle for the secret deal between Britain and Tibet — was therefore saved from being "aborted."[90]

But the problem was that Tibet, after this turn of events, still did not receive China's recognition of its independence. For decades after the Simla Conference of 1913/14, the Republic of China had never dropped its claim on Tibet's sovereignty. In contrast to Tibet, Britain had succeeded in formally obtaining what it expected from the border-for-independence deal. Through the Simla Convention of 1914 and Anglo-Tibetan Declaration of 1914, both of which the Tibetan representative Lonchen Shatra signed, the new Indo-Tibetan border or the McMahon Line was established on paper, at least. This gain of Britain's from the conference, however, did not bother the Lhasa authorities. For various reasons, such as bureaucracy and a concern for Chinese nationalism, Britain failed to establish the settled border on the ground and also gave it little publicity. This result was a continuation of Tibet's administration of those pocket areas south of the McMahon Line, including Tawang, from 1914 and afterward. Indeed, this continuation reinforced Lhasa's understanding of the state of the border-for-independence deal after 1914 as 'still pending.' The Kashag made this point clear to Basil Gould, the British Political Officer in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet, who led an official delegation to Lhasa in 1936 to probe Tibet's attitude on the border issue. Only after Tibet "secure[s] a definite Sino-Tibetan boundary" – being formally independent from China – would it be "glad to observe the Indo-Tibetan border as defined in 1914."[91]

A conflict therefore emerged after the mid-1930s in the previously united front against China's encroachment upon Tibet. On one side was the Lamaist state, which was dissatisfied with the absence of the Chinese recognition that Britain promised in 1914, according to the independence-for-border deal. On the other side was Britain, especially its colonial administration based in Delhi, which was anxious about the state of the McMahon Line on ground. From Delhi's standpoint, Tibet had enjoyed decades of *de facto* independence from China since 1914, but Britain's administration was still yet to reach the McMahon Line, a line that had already been established legally by the Anglo-Tibetan Declaration and the Simla Convention. An expression of this anxiety can be found in the revision made to the Aitchison's Treaties. The copies of the version of 1928, which omitted explicit reference to

[89] "Anglo-Tibetan Declaration, 3 July 1914," *PTT 821 to 1951*.
[90] Maxwell, *India's China War*, p. 52.
[91] Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem*, pp. 169-210.

the McMahon Line, were all recalled and revised in 1938 in order to show this particular line on map. The British felt the imperative to set the record straight.[92] This was, indeed, not falsification of documents as some scholars depicted.[93] Toward the end of the WWII, Delhi upgraded its efforts by seizing some of the territories south of the McMahon Line, which had until then been administrated by Lhasa. This was the background of the diplomatic tension between Tibet and Britain in 1944/45. It was rooted, again, in the border-for-independence deal. The deal was unclosed yet from the Tibetan standpoint: "[our] investigation shows that Britain's mediation of the Sino-Tibetan question is still yet to bear fruit."[94]

Because of Britain's retreat from South Asia after WWII, the troubles from the age-old Anglo-Tibetan deal became one primarily between Tibet and the Republic of India. On the eve of India's independence in 1947, Lhasa proposed that Tibet and the new government of India renegotiate the Indo-Tibetan border. Hugh Richardson, the last British envoy to Tibet who was retained to be in charge of Independent India's mission in Lhasa, declined this proposal. This triggered a short territorial dispute between Lhasa and Delhi. In October 1947, the indignant Tibetans cabled the United Nations for support, and sent Nehru a letter in the meantime.[95] The letter, dated October 16th, 1947, contained a long list of ill-defined territories south of the Himalayas that Lhasa perceived to be Tibetan. They included "Sayul and Walong and in direction of Pemakoe, Lonag, Lopa, Mon, Bhutan; Sikkim, Darjeeling and others on this side of River Ganges and Lowo, Ladakh etc. up to boundary of Yarkhim." This extravagant demand, in effect, not only dismissed the McMahon Line, but also pushed the Tibetan boundary line down to the River Ganges. Nehru recalled and dismissed this assertion as "a fantastic claim" in 1959 in a reply to Chinese Prime Minister Zhou.[96] Beijing cited this letter earlier in order to demonstrate that the Sino-Indian border was not delimited, and was even in dispute, even in the old days, because even the Tibetans "themselves later also expressed their dissatisfaction with this line" after India's independence.[97] In 1947, in view of this challenge from Lhasa, Delhi replied with a telegram, restating its wish to

[92] Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem*, p. 199.
[93] Gupta, *The Hidden History.*
[94] Yang, *Zhongguo fandui waiguo*, pp. 223-25.
[95] Yang, *Zhongguo fandui waiguo*, p. 226.
[96] "Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China," 26 September 1959, *WP,* vol. 2, pp. 53-72.
[97] "Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India," 8 September 1959, *WP,* vol. 2, pp. 42-51.

maintain the bilateral relationship "on the existing basis" until "new agreements are reached on matters that either party wish to take up."[98] Lhasa responded with silence.

But the deadlock did not last long. Richardson soon convinced the Tibetans that it would not be wise to abandon the existing border arrangements that Tibet reached with Britain in history. On January 13th, 1948, seizing the opportunity of handing over the weapons and ammunition that he purchased for Tibet from India, Richardson made his case to the Tibet Foreign Bureau. Denying those treaties with Britain, including the Simla Convention, would deprive Tibet of the documents that could be admitted as the "proof of its existence as a state." Tibet would even face "an imminent cease of the intercourse and exchange between India and Tibet," if it chose not to accept Delhi's counterproposal of maintaining the status quo.[99] Lhasa seemed to drop its position afterwards. The problem that derived from the unfinished Anglo-Tibetan deal of 1914 was therefore contained once again. Delhi's reaction to this incident, in retrospect, illustrated what Fry, on the eve of power transfer, meant by standing by the McMahon Line and meanwhile keeping the door open to negotiation.

The second challenge to Delhi after India's independence came from Nanjing. In October 1948, the Republic of China informed India of its intent to terminate the tripartite trade agreement that Britain, Qing China, and Tibet reached in Calcutta in 1908.[100] Article 13 of this agreement stipulated that it could be terminated or renewed after each ten-year term, and in April 1948 the fourth term had ended.[101] The Chinese also invoked the Sino-British Treaty for the Relinquishment of Extra-Territorial Rights in China of 1943. This treaty allowed China to challenge its treaties with Britain in history that affected Chinese sovereignty.[102] It went without saying that the tripartite trade agreement of 1908, from Republican China's standpoint, was one of such historical treaties.

Delhi's reply surprised Nanjing. It contained two points. First, Delhi stated that the new Government of India had inherited the rights and obligations of treaties signed between Tibet and the British Government of India. Second, Tibet's present relationship with India was

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[98] "Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China," 26 September 1959, *WP,* vol. 2, pp. 53-72.
[99] Yang, *Zhongguo fandui waiguo*, p. 227.
[100] Zhao Shixun, "Youguan Zhongyin bianjie yu Xizang wenti zhi zhongyao waijiao jilu [Important Diplomatic Records regarding the Sino-Indian Border and the Tibet Question]," *Zhuanji wenxue* 2, no. 1 (1963), pp. 39-42.
[101] "The Agreement between Great Britain, China and Tibet Amending Trade Regulation of 1893 [Relating to Sikkim and Tibet] (1908)," Tibet Justice Center, *Legal Materials on Tibet* [hereafter: *LMT*], www.tibetjustice.org/materials/treaties/treaties13.html, accessed on 10 December 2019.
[102] "China-Great Britain: Treaty for the Relinquishment of Extraterritorial Rights in China and the Regulation of Related Matters with Exchange of Notes and Agreed Minutes (11 January 1943), Note from Dr. Tse Vung Soong, Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs, to Sir Horace James Seymour, Annex, Section 4," *American Journal of International Law* 37, no. 2 (1943), Supplement: Official Documents, p. 64.

governed by the Simla Convention of 1914 and the corresponding trade agreement.[103] Therefore, there was no need to discuss the termination of the trade agreement of 1908. Tibet's independence from China — the soul of the border-for-independence deal — was safeguarded; and meanwhile, exactly as Fry urged in 1947, India did not provide any "aggressive support of unqualified Tibetan independence."[104]

This was a significant moment. A difference over Tibet's status vis-à-vis China had always existed between Chinese society and Indian society. Nationalist China never recognized the Simla Convention. The treaty was not signed by the Chinese Plenipotentiary Chen Yifan in 1914, and since the late nineteenth Century, China never agreed that Tibet was an independent country capable of entering an international agreement on its own.[105] To the Chinese, Tibet was and had always been an integral part of China. In contrast, as previously mentioned, Indian society and government since 1947 had already established the view that Tibet was a separate country from China. This view was based on Indian experiences of an unhampered, direct relationship with Tibet between 1914 and 1947. The controversial map that the Indian host used at the first Asian Relations Conference of 1947 demonstrated this belief that had taken root in people's minds. In contrast, the Indian Government's reply regarding the 1908 Trade Agreement amounted to a policy statement.

This policy statement had far-reaching implications. The Indian public accepted China's integration of Tibet after 1950 because Nehru told them that the Chinese were "exercising suzerainty," which was recognized by the Simla Convention. Nehru could not reassure the Indian public the same way in 1959 because the Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetan refugees had fled to India, demonstrating that the communist regime was not respecting Tibetan autonomy. Nehru could not make a land swap with Zhou in Delhi in 1960 because Beijing stated publicly and repeatedly that the McMahon Line was illegal. The Dalai Lama elaborated on the connection between the Line and the Simla Convention in a public speech in India in 1959: "If you deny sovereign status to Tibet, you deny the validity of the Simla Convention and, therefore, you deny the validity of the McMahon Line."[106] For India to have

[103] Zhao, "Youguan zhongyin bianjie," pp. 39-42.
[104] Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem*, p. 210.
[105] "Luo Jialun's Telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," 29 September 1948, Wang Jianlang, ed., *Zhonghua minguo shiqi waijiao wenxian huibian 1911-1949* [*Collection of Diplomatic Archives during the Republic of China 1911-1949*] [hereafter: *CDARC*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2015), vol. 10, p. 1118; "Diary of Visiting India as Ambassador," 19 August 1948, *CDARC,* vol. 10, p. 1126.
[106] "Speech Delivered by Dalai Lama on 7 September 1959," *Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives* [hereafter: *CFMA*], 105-00406-01, pp. 52-59.

accepted China's offer on those terms in the circumstances of 1960 would have required the repudiation of major Indian policy dating from 1947/8.

The third challenge to India's Tibet policy arrived in the summer of 1949. On July 8th, the Kashag, in the name of removing potential communist elements, suddenly demanded that Nationalist China withdraw all its personnel in Lhasa within two weeks. The Chinese officials in Tibet were told to return to China via India. Delhi had already envisaged that changes would occur in Tibet because of the approaching communist unification of China. In June, Nehru had asked several major officials involved in India's Tibet policy to make recommendations.[107] Richardson, head of the Indian Mission in Lhasa, subsequently delivered a detailed memorandum, encouraging the government to continue India's diplomatic presence in Tibet and supply the Tibetans with weapons and materials. In early July, Foreign Secretary Menon advanced his note, writing that the government should also seek "other ways" of giving "moral support" to Lhasa while meanwhile strengthening India's northern frontier. Immediately following Menon's suggestion was Principal Foreign Affairs Advisor and Secretary-General of the MEA G.S. Bajpai's note, which stressed Tibet's "social and economic reform" and "precautionary military measures for the defense of our own frontier." Bajpai also reminded Nehru that any aid to Lhasa should not be provided in a way that could be taken as a provocation by the Chinese communists.[108] The Lhasa Incident therefore became a touchstone for Nehru's Tibet policy in the face of the looming communist unification of China.

On the surface, Delhi chose to cooperate with Lhasa by facilitating the return of Chinese personnel via India. However, details from Delhi's internal discussion indicate that India's reaction to this event cannot be interpreted as a committed move to confront the Chinese state, regardless of whether this state was Republican China or Communist China. First, on July 9th, he made it clear to his leading advisors on the Tibet Question that there was no need for the Lhasa Incident to be evaluated from a national security perspective. "Whatever may be the ultimate fate of Tibet in relation to China, I think there is practically no chance of any military danger to India arising from any possible change in Tibet." There was no need, in his opinion, for the Ministry of Defense to consider any "possible military repercussions" on India's border with Tibet.[109] Second, despite the fact that the Indian mission in Lhasa was involved in the creation of the Lhasa Incident — probably in a way that amounted to a clear

[107] "China and Tibet," 5 June 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 11, p. 389.
[108] "The Indian Mission at Lhasa," 9 July 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, p. 410.
[109] "The Indian Mission at Lhasa," *SWJN*2, vol. 12, pp. 410-11.

deviation from the "benevolent spectator" role that Fry intended for Independent India — little evidence shows that Nehru and the central Indian government actively participated in this incident.[110] In a cable to India's Political Officer in Sikkim Harishwar Dayal on July 26th, Nehru expressed his disapproval of Lhasa's indiscriminate expulsions, which was "unwise" and "precipitate" and would "naturally be regarded as an anti-Chinese rather than anti-communist move." Furthermore, with respect to letting the expelled Chinese pass through India without travel permits, Nehru's initial feeling was that India would "be regarded a privy to this move" made by the Kashag.[111] Of course, these comments can be interpreted as suggesting that Nehru was merely unhappy with the way the expulsion was conducted rather than the expulsion per se.[112] The problem with this interpretation is that it cannot be reconciled with Nehru's unwillingness to underwrite the cost, which his government might face by cooperating with the Kashag and letting the expelled Chinese return home via India. "The government of India cannot of course undertake any financial liability in this matter." In other words, more evidence points to the conclusion that in 1949, India's Tibet policy remained one of positioning itself as a "spectator." "The Tibetan government are the best judges of their own interests."[113]

A New China

For most of the period between 1945 and 1949, the CCP was struggling. The surrender of Imperial Japan ushered in a new episode of Communist-Nationalist rivalry, which had previously been suppressed by the Japanese invasion. In early 1946, the civil war was reignited. At this point, the CCP enjoyed a much-improved situation compared to ten years prior, when the party and its military forces narrowly survived a strategic retreat, or the "Long March" as the party later euphemized it. However, the party still faced a Nationalist Government that retained unmatched advantages in terms of territory, population, military force, and diplomatic support. The power vacuum left by the Japanese therefore presented the

[110] As to the direct cause of this event, one view emphasized on the agency of the Tibetans themselves. See: Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, vol. 1* (*1913-1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State*) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 613. The other view, dominating the Chinese perception on the event ever since 1949, was that the Kashag's move resulted from Hugh Richardson's suggestion, head of the Indian Mission in Lhasa. See: Tsering Shakya*, The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (London: Pimlico, 1999), p. 9.

[111] "Role of Chinese Officials in Lhasa," 26 July 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, p. 411.

[112] This belief was subscribed not merely by the Chinese communists, but by their civil war opponents as well Luo Jialun, "Youguan zhongyin bianjie yu xizang wenti zhi zhongyao waijiao jilu_yinyan [Important Diplomatic Records regarding the Sino-Indian Border and the Tibet Question_Preface]," *Zhuanji wenxue* 2, no. 1 (1963), pp. 38-39.

[113]"Role of Chinese Officials in Lhasa," 26 July 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, pp. 411-12.

CCP with not only an enticing opportunity for territorial expansion, but also a formidable challenge. The temporary fall of Yan'an — the communist regime's headquarters since the mid-1930s — in 1947 demonstrated the odds that the CCP once faced in the civil war. Hence, before 1949, the party was not in a position to envision a foreign policy for China as a whole.

The balance of power in China, however, had greatly changed by the early spring of 1949. With a series of decisive military successes from late 1948 onward, the CCP, having already turned the tables on the Nationalist Government, managed to seal the outcome of the civil war.[114] These victories carried the party deep into previously government-controlled urban areas, including Beijing, Tianjing, and Shenyang, which had extensive foreign presences and connections. This development compelled the party to devise a new mode of interacting with the external world.[115] Distinguishing this moment from any point in the past was the fact that the Chinese communists were going to rule China this time, and they knew it. "On the question of establishing a new regime after the [ultimate] victory," Mao told Anastas Mikoyan, who secretly visited Yan'an in February 1949, "our party had already deliberated."[116] The improved prospects in the civil war caused an unconscious change in the CCP's view of the external world. Terms like "the Nation" or "the People's Republic" replaced "the Liberated Area" in internal discussions on foreign policy.[117] In short, the CCP began to view and position itself no longer as a rebel party, but as a government representing China.

Against this backdrop, the party started to formulate basic guidelines for Communist China's foreign policy in the future. The Politburo meeting held in Xibaipo in January 1949

[114] The CCP conducted three successful campaign-level offensives in Manchuria and China Proper from September 1948 to January 1949, annihilating one million and a half elite government troops and establishing an overwhelming military advantage in mainland China.

[115] Niu Jun observed that the party's interactions with American, British and French embassies in Shenyang or Mukden, after its Northeast Army Group's capture the city in the late 1948, influenced considerably the communist leadership's attitude toward the outside world. Niu Jun, *Lenzhan yu xinzhongguo waijiao de yuanqi 1949-1955* [*Cold War and the Origin of New China's Diplomacy, 1949-1955*] (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2012), p. 129.

[116] Shi Zhe, *Zai lishi juren shengbia: Shi Zhe huiyilu* [*Next to Historical Figures: Shi Zhe's Memoir*] (Beijing: Central Literature Press, 1991), pp. 375-76.

[117] "The Instruction of the CCP Central Committee on the Liberated Area's Foreign Policy," 3 May 1946, National Archives Administration of China, ed., *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji* [*Selected Works of the CCP Central Committee*] [hereafter: *SWCCPCC*], vol. 16, (Beijing: CCP Central Party School Press, 1992), pp. 151-52; "The Instruction from the CCP Central Committee on Foreign Affairs," 19 January 1949, *SWCCPCC*, vol. 18, p. 44; also for the middle-ranking importance of diplomacy among all the challenges that the CCP faced before 1949, see "The Complementary Instruction of the CCP Central Committee about Establishing a Report System," 25 March 1948, *SWCCPCC*, vol. 17, p. 132.

was a milestone.[118] During this meeting, Mao told his colleagues that China "should not hurry" to obtain the recognition of the imperialist countries, not only due to the fact that they "did not have legal status in China," but also because Communist China intended to "topple" them anyway. In contrast, "what should be hurried," Mao stressed, "is to establish trade and diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and the Democratic countries." His view was echoed by other leaders like Zhou, who added that "after a hundred years' oppression, [China] has now stood up."[119] The new government "should have the guts" not to kowtow to imperialist countries, which had been the practice of the Nationalist Government.[120] On the basis of this discussion, Zhou drafted preliminary, systematic guidelines for the party on managing external affairs, containing fourteen points.[121] Mao was not entirely satisfied with the draft and he added a fifteenth point: "Last, and also the most important item… everything that happens within China should be left to the Chinese people and their government to handle by themselves. If there is any foreigner proposing any foreign government mediating the Chinese civil war and issues like this, reject it right away."[122]

As the People's Liberation Army (PLA) advanced, these ideas were further developed and disseminated throughout the nascent communist regime through 1949. At the Second Full-member Meeting of the Seventh CCP Central Committee in spring, the last major meeting before the party headquarters moved from Xibaipo to Beijing, Mao articulated those founding principles of the new China. With respect to handling the foreign presence within China, Mao put forth the party's agenda "to destroy gradually and completely imperialism's control in China…expressed in politics, economy, and culture."[123] By June, communist forces had crossed the Yangzi River, capturing Nanjing, the capital of the Nationalist Government, and Shanghai, the financial hub of the country and the largest city in East Asia. The preference for reaching out first to the socialist camp had evolved into a fully-fledged "lean-to-one-side"

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[118] This was one of the several meetings that the Politburo had in Yanan from 6 January to 8 January 1949. They evaluated the prospect of the civil war in the light of the party's decisive military successes and discussed new tasks ahead. Niu, *Lenzhan yu xingzhongguo*, p. 129.
[119] Hu Qiaomu, *Hu Qiaomu huiyi Mao Zedong* [*Hu Qiaomu Recalling Mao Zedong*] (Beijing: People's Press, 2003), p. 546.
[120] CCP Central Archive Research Office, *Zhou Enlai nianpu 1898-1949* [*Chronological Record of Zhou Enlai 1898-1949*] [hereafter: *ZENP 1898-1949*] (Beijing: Central Literature Press, 1997), pp. 825-26.
[121] "The Instruction from the CCP Central Committee on Foreign Affairs," 19 January 1949, *SWCCPCC*, vol. 18, pp. 44-48.
[122] Mao Zedong, "Forbid Any Foreign Country or the United Nations to Interfere in China's Domestic Affairs," 19 January 1949, Mao Zedong*, Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan* [*Selected Works of Mao Zedong on Foreign Affairs*] [hereafter: *SWMZFA*] (Beijing: Central Literature Press, 1994), p. 8.
[123]"To Destroy Gradually and Completely Imperialism's Control in China," 5 March 1949, *SWMZFA*, pp. 80-81.

policy. Mao wrote: "The Chinese have to lean either to the imperialist side or to the socialist side… sitting on the fence is impossible and there is no third way."[124]

Apart from this defining choice — to turn its back on the West and embrace the communist bloc instead — there were a few other novel characteristics of the party's approach to the external world. First, running parallel to the CCP's dramatically increased desire to assert China's sovereignty and national dignity was its diminished interest in conducting business with the non-socialist world. In 1946, the CCP policy on trading with the United States, Britain, and France was aimed toward maximizing business activities "as long as [we] could avoid falling prey to foreign monopoly or causing political criticism from the outside world."[125] In early 1949, however, the party began to teach its cadres that there was "no hurry" to go after "ordinary trade" with the West and that, while China should enter into contracts with capitalist countries on matters that "we need badly," such business "must still be temporary, limited, and local in nature."[126] This shift reflects the new position of the CCP in the civil war. The communists were no longer the underdog; instead, they had accumulated many bargaining chips, such as territory, civilian populations, and military strength, and they expected to have more once they formed the national government. The leaders of Communist China acted in a manner opposite to Nehru's expectation that China would be "eager" to reach out to its neighbours.[127] Economic expediency was becoming less and less important in the CCP's policy toward the non-socialist world.

A second characteristic of the party's new approach to the external world was its schematic and non-pluralist attitude. As of 1949, Mao had only two labels for the countries that China would face: the "Capitalist countries" and the "Soviet Union and New Democratic countries." In Mao's words, China should have "a fundamentally different attitude" toward the socialist camp, because their foreign policies were "fundamentally different" from the capitalist world.[128] He specifically referred to Washington's great support for the Nationalist Government during the civil war.

It is important to note that around the same time that the CCP began building a central government, India and the Tibet Question emerged as important external factors to the new

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[124] Mao Zedong, "On People's Democratic Dictatorship," 30 June 1949, Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong xuanji* [*Selected Works of Mao Zedong*] [hereafter: *SWMZ*] (Beijing: People's Press, 2003), vol. 4, p. 58.
[125] "The Instruction of the CCP Central Committee on the Liberated Area's Foreign Policy," 3 May 1946, *SWCCPCC*, vol. 16, pp. 151-52.
[126]"The Instruction of the CCP Central Committee on Foreign Affairs," 19 January 1949, *SWCCPCC*, vol. 18, p.4
[127] "The Situation in China," *SWJN*2, vol. 8, p. 416.
[128] "Forbid Any Foreign Country or the United Nations to Interfere in China's Domestic Affairs," 19 January 1949, *SWMZFA*, p. 77-78.

regime. In a conversation with Mikoyan in February 1949, Mao admitted that Tibet would pose a challenge due to difficulties of transportation and ethnic issues. Mao, however, was confident that this question would be answered "in time" and "in steps."[129] A month after this meeting, the CCP ordered a school in Beijing to be converted into a college aimed at training cadres versed in ethnic affairs, especially with regard to Tibet and Inner Mongolia.[130] Despite its relatively vague ideas as to how exactly the Tibet Question would be solved, the CCP was clear about one thing: Tibet was a Chinese territory. This view can be traced as far back as an aide-memoire from Zhou to the Comintern in 1939.[131] Likewise, the view of Tibet as unquestionably part of China can be found in a press communiqué in the middle of 1949.[132] For the victorious CCP members, Tibet was just another piece of Chinese territory yet to be liberated.

The connection between these characteristics of the CCP's approach to the outside world in 1949 and Communist China's later dealings with India is discernible. For the CCP, India was among the countries that should "seek for us," instead of the other way around.[133] The Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet in 1954, which laid the foundation of Sino-Indian friendship in the 1950s, was in fact a product of Indian initiative. It was Nehru who proposed this negotiation and the Indians who travelled a long way to Beijing in the end of 1953 to make this happen. In contrast, China's attitude toward the Soviet Union, especially in the early 1950s, appeared anything but reactive. It was Mao who travelled all the way to Moscow in 1949, and there, in order to secure Stalin's friendship — or to be more accurate, his patronage — Mao put on a performance of being "courteous and submissive to an unparalleled level."[134]

The outcome of the negotiations with India about Tibet proved to be in line with the goal that was set in 1949, namely, "to destroy gradually and completely imperialism's control in China."[135] After four months of hard negotiations in 1954, the CCP induced the Indians not

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[129] Shi, *Zai lishi*, p. 380.
[130] "The Central Committee's Instruction on the Several Principles for the Universities in Beijing," 17 March 1949, *SWCCPCC*, vol. 16, p. 174.
[131] It was a review of China's resistance of Japanese aggression since 1937. According to this memoir, the CCP had established its organization in all provinces of China, except "Tibet and Qinghai."
[132] "A Summary Press Communique of the Military Achievements of the Chinese People's Liberation War: the Statistics of the Liberated Territories, Population, Cities, and Railways," 15 July 1949, *SWCCPCC*, vol. 18, p. 373.
[133] Niu, *Lenzhan yu xingzhongguo*, p. 130.
[134] Shen Zhihua, *Wunai de xuanze: Lenzhan yu Zhongsu tongmeng de mingyun* [*The Only Choice: The Cold War and the Fate of the Sino-Soviet Alliance 1945-1959*], vol. 1, (Beijing, Social Sciences Academic Press, 2013), p. 264.
[135] "To Destroy Gradually and Completely Imperialism's Control in China," 5 March 1949, *SWMZFA*, pp. 80-81.

only to accept the Lamaist state henceforth as the "Tibet Region of China," but also to reduce substantially their presence in Tibet. This presence, in the form of assets and rights based on the treaties signed between Tibet and Britain, was considered by Beijing as a continuation of British imperialism.[136] Indeed, Beijing's direct, committed, and uncompromising efforts to establish Chinese presence and sovereignty in Tibet differed substantially from its approach to the Outer Mongolia Question vis-à-vis Moscow in 1950.[137]

The details of the Chinese negotiations with India also illustrate the CCP's preference for asserting Chinese sovereignty over developing the Tibetan economy. For example, consider the bargaining process over the trading center, wherein the Indian side proposed two ways of handling this issue: one was to allow Indian merchants to trade anywhere in Tibet, while the other was to confine their commercial activities to designated markets, although the number of markets increased from eleven to twenty-seven.[138] As sovereignty is more often than not expressed in the form of regulations and controls, Beijing unsurprisingly opted for the second solution and allowed only thirteen such trading centers to exist.[139]

Conclusion

To understand the way Nehru's government treated Communist China in the early 1950s, it is necessary to examine how India approached China before 1950.[140] In the post-WWII context, the Indian concept of China differed considerably from how China is viewed today. As a nation, it did not include Tibet or Mongolia, and as a state, it referred to the Republic of China led by the Guomindang. It was with this China in mind that Nehru initially hoped to forge a future Sino-Indian partnership. He attached great importance to this agenda in 1945. However, the Partition of India and the renewed Chinese civil war undermined the foundation of this grand design. The Indian state was therefore forced to adopt a wait-and-see policy toward China, which was characterized by friendly non-interference. The Guomindang's loss in the civil war, which became increasingly evident toward 1949, posed

[136] "A Summary of the Problem of India's Privileges in Tibet," 19 December 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00153-02, pp. 10-13; "Memorandum of the Fifth Negotiation of Sino-Indian Relationship in Tibet Region of China,' 9 January 1954, *CFMA*, 105-00136-05, p. 42.
[137] Liu Xiaoyuan, *Bianjiang zhongguo: ershi shiji zhoubian ji minzu guanxi shi shu* [Frontier China: 20th-Century Peripheral and Interethnic Relations] (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2016), p. 21.
[138] "The Memorandum of the First Negotiation on the Sino-Indian Relationship in Tibet Region," 2 January 1954, *CFMA*, 105-00136-01, pp. 1-11.
[139] "India and People's Republic of China Agreement (with Exchange of Notes) on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India on 29 April 1954," *WP*, vol. 1, p. 98.
[140] For example, India was a stout advocate of the United Nations recognizing the People's Republic of China, see Anton Harder, "Not at the Cost of China: India and the United Nations Security Council, 1950," in: *Cold War International History Project,* Working Paper, no. 76 (2015), pp. 1-16.

an even more difficult challenge to Nehru's China policy. The concept of China was being redefined. Confronted with the question of either to stick with the former ally, who had supported India's independence in the past, or to switch India's recognition to the winning communist regime, which had set out to establish a new and solid Chinese state, Nehru chose the latter.[141] The "past" friendship between the Guomindang and the Congress Party was not as important as realizing the grand design that he planned for India and China together.[142] It was Nehru's practice of idealism, which he termed "the realism of tomorrow." "It is the capacity to think in a slightly longer term—to think what is good for tomorrow, or for the day after tomorrow, or for the next year—and fashion yourself accordingly."[143]

It is worth highlighting another dimension in order to better understand why Nehru chose to support the Chinese communists after 1950. Nehru's positive preliminary evaluation of the CCP in 1949 suggests that he believed Communist China would retain a significant degree of autonomy from the Soviet Union. For example, he was happy to note that the CCP defeated the Guomindang almost entirely by itself, which he interpreted to mean that Communist China was not "just a hanger-on" of Moscow.[144] Nehru expected China to emerge as a new great power and to join India, the other new power, in checking the Soviet Union and the United States.[145] This prescription for preserving world peace would make little sense if China was closely affiliated or subordinated to either of the two superpowers. As long as China could prove itself not to be a pawn of the Soviet Union, retain a considerable amount of autonomy, or demonstrate the possibility of partnering with India, Nehru's logic remained valid and he continued to adjust India to Communist China. It is unsurprising that Nehru's later government chose to cooperate with Beijing during the First Tibet Crisis and made ceaseless efforts to present China's case internationally, especially during the Korean War.

In contrast, during the period discussed here, Nehru's counterparts among the Chinese communists were yet to formulate an India policy. This was because the CCP was a rebel party before 1949, struggling to survive the civil war and interested only in toppling the Guomindang. However, in 1949 the victorious CCP underwent a fundamental change in becoming a government. It was at this time that the CCP become interested in India and the Tibet Question from the standpoint of a national government. Although it did not yet have a systematic or targeted position toward India, the CCP developed guidelines to follow when

[141] "To Vijayalakshmi Pandit," 1 July 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, p. 408.
[142] Yang, "Chiang Kai-shek and Jawaharlal Nehru," pp. 128-41.
[143] "Preventing the Drift to Disaster," 7 December 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 442.
[144] "The Situation in China," 5 December 1948, *SWJN*2, vol. 8, p. 416.
[145] "The Limits of Self-determination," 2 August 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, p. 441.

dealing with the outside world in 1949, which were significant to China's approach to India from the 1950s onward. These general rules for Communist China's external and internal behaviour included dividing the world in a black-and-white fashion according to communist ideology, leaning toward the socialist bloc while giving the cold shoulder to the capitalist world, and dedicating efforts to uprooting imperialism in China and to re-establishing Chinese sovereignty over areas perceived as Chinese territory. It was the last of those points that lead to the thorny issue of Tibet.

China's stance on Tibet was and is well known, and therefore needs little elaboration. But India's approach to Tibet demands a careful re-investigation, because most attempts to reconstruct it have ironically started with China's position toward Tibet rather than India's. During the period discussed, Indian society did not see Tibet as part of China. Rather, it was viewed as a separate country. Tibet's status vis-à-vis China was understood as "autonomy verging on independence."[146] This view corresponded to the fact that Tibet had maintained *de facto* independence from China after the 1911 Revolution and that Outer Mongolia, which had also detached from the Qing Empire and sought self-rule, was recognized by the Republic of China in 1946. To downplay the validity of the Indian viewpoint by arguing that it was a holdover of British colonialism and ignore the fact of Tibetan autonomy does little to help understand India's later approach to China on the issue of Tibet. This is because, in the 19th Century, Qing China was as much of an empire as Britain, Russia, France, or Germany. The Chinese attempt to establish a modern nation-state out of the corpse of the Qing Empire after 1911 was no more valid than India's subscription to British views regarding Tibet after 1947. Only by switching our approach to the past can we grasp the mentality underlying India's behaviour toward China and its lack of qualms regarding the Tibet Question. "We need no special safeguards to protect special political or economic interests," Nehru wrote in a letter to the head of Indian Mission to the UN, B.N. Rau, on the issue of an early recognition to Communist China.[147] Apparently it did not occur to Nehru, as late as the autumn of 1949, that the Tibet Question, including the flawed McMahon Line, was a factor that should be considered.

What was India's approach to Tibet as a virtually independent country? First, the old British policy was closely connected to that employed by India from 1947 onward. Fry's three-point recommendation on the eve of Indian independence on managing the triangular relationship of India, Tibet, and China formed the framework of India's approach to the Tibet

[146] "Policy regarding China and Tibet", 18 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 343.
[147] "Cable to B.N. Rau," 25 September 1949, *SWJN2*, vol. 13, p. 269.

Question. This approach was intended to support Tibetan autonomy under Chinese suzerainty and to safeguard the McMahon Line at the same time. Its basic principle was for India to take the position of a "benevolent spectator" between Tibet and China, though that might sound hypocritical now from a non-Indian perspective. It was this approach that India inherited from the days of the British Raj.

Fry's delicate principle guided the new government of India, overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks that it faced after independence, in its reaction to incidents related to Tibet. These incidents included Tibet indirectly challenging the McMahon Line by proposing border renegotiations in 1947, Nationalist China's insinuation of the illegitimacy of the Simla Convention by proposing the termination of the tripartite trade agreement of 1906, and Tibet's abrupt and controversial move in 1949 to expel Chinese diplomats from Tibet and request India to provide for their transit. It is particularly worth highlighting that in the last incident, no evidence suggests that Delhi was involved in plotting the incident beforehand, excluding Richardson's Indian mission to Tibet. Furthermore, there is no remotely persuasive evidence showing that India harboured any "expansionist policy" involving ultimately "annexing Tibet."[148] Not only was Nehru reluctant to answer Lhasa's request for the transit of the Chinese diplomats; he was also unwilling to help underwrite the associated cost of this transit.[149] Compared to the CCP's total investment in recovering Tibet from 1950 onward, Nehru was perhaps the stingiest leader of a foreign country with a territorial ambition toward Tibet, if Ambassador Luo was right.[150]

India's approach to Tibet differed fundamentally from China's. For every Chinese government after the Qing Empire, Tibet was part of China, should be part of China, and, in the long term, would be part of China. In this sense, India's Tibet policy, which recognized Tibet's *de facto* independence since 1911, stood in the way of the CCP pursuing this particular endeavour. Further pushing India onto a collision course with China was the fact that India was a parliamentary democracy and Tibet was a Lamaist state; in other words, neither state was communist. Communist China, therefore, proved to face considerably fewer restraints in solving the Tibet Question by force, as opposed to the issue of Outer Mongolia.[151] In the end, despite Nehru's recognition of the importance of Sino-Indian

[148] Luo, "Youguan zhongyin bianjie," pp. 38-39.
[149] "Role of Chinese Officials in Lhasa," 26 July 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, p. 411.
[150] Luo, "Youguan zhongyin bianjie," pp. 38-39.
[151] The PRC was also interested in integrating Outer Mongolia in 1949/50, despite the fact that the latter's independence had already been recognized by the Republic of China. This idea was hinted by Mao to the Soviets during his visit to Moscow in 1950. Unfortunately, Stalin did not endorse it. Liu, *Bianjiang*, p. 21.

relationship, Independent India and Communist China in fact still "started their relations on the wrong foot."[152]

[152] Menon, *Many Worlds*, p. 270.

Chapter 2: Through Crises, 1949-53

Introduction

The early years of the relationship between India and People's Republic of China was a mix of tension and peace. To large extent, the dynamic of change came from the Chinese side. The new regime quickly distinguished itself from its predecessor by embarking on a firm endeavour to pursue territorial integrity and national security. Beijing's occupation of Tibet and its risky military intervention in Korea against the US-led UN force compelled Delhi to re-consider its hitherto friendly policy toward China. Beijing's invasion of Tibet caused an uproar in the Indian society, which had viewed Tibet as an independent country rather than as a province of China. This move also challenged the Indian government's obligation to safeguard Lhasa's autonomy. India's support of the UN resolution against North Korea's aggression and its protests during China's, in the CCP's view, "liberation" of Tibet awoke Beijing's suspicions. After all, India was not a socialist state and did not achieve its independence through firm struggles, i.e. war, with the West. However, the two Asian giants somehow pulled through these conflicts, and by the middle of 1953 had established a satisfactory cooperative relationship concerning Tibet and Korea on the surface. The question is whether this cooperation reflected a genuine state of the Sino-Indian relationship at this stage.

India's Approach to China

Entering 1950, Nehru's adjustment toward Beijing was increasingly challenged by a looming Chinese invasion of Tibet. On January 1st, 1950, through its mouthpiece, *People's Daily*, the CCP announced its New Year's resolutions, one of which was to "liberate" Tibet. Through the following seven months, it released periodical news on this subject in order to prepare the world for its ambition.[153] Nehru was one of those keen observers outside of China. In August, according to some unverified reports from Hong Kong, Beijing appeared to have begun

[153] "Accomplish and Consolidate Victory," *People's Daily,* 1 January 1950; "Ethnic Affairs Committee Convening A Conference on the Tibet Question and Deputy Chairman Zhu De Restating the Resolve to Liberate Tibet," *People's Daily,* 21 January 1950; "The Amount of Grain from Northeast in the Past Ten Months Surpasses 850,000 Tons and More Planned to Be Transported This Year to Support Liberating Taiwan, Tibet and Other Places," *People's Daily,* 24 February 1950; "To Ensure the Success of March to Tibet and Plant the Great Revolutionary Flag in the Himalayas," *People's Daily,* 11 May 1950,; "Chinese Expatriates in Bandung Java Cables Chairman Mao Zedong and Command-in-chief Zhu De Their Regards and Wish to Accelerate Liberating Taiwan and Tibet," *People's Daily,* 21 July 1950; "Representatives of All Walks of Life in Meng County of Shangxi Province Extend Their Regards and Encouragement to the PLA, and Pledge to Support in Full the Liberation of Taiwan and Tibet," *People's Daily*, 28 July 1950; "Consolidate The Inside and Defeat The Enemies," *People's Daily,* 4 August 1950*,* www.laoziliao.net/rmrb*,* accessed on 10 December 2019.

marching its troops toward the borders of Tibet.[154] Considering Tibet to be anything but a part of China, the Indian press demanded that the government clarify its official stance on the issue.[155] Delhi's unannounced position on the Tibet Question — "to help in a friendly settlement… aimed at the autonomy of Tibet being recognized together with Chinese suzerainty" — was too complicated, in Nehru's opinion, for the rank-and-file Indians. Furthermore, to fully describe this position in public would please neither China nor Tibet, and would only work to reduce India's influence when facing either of them.[156] These concerns led Nehru to choose dodging press questions of this kind whenever possible, and indeed, to ask his officials to follow suit.[157]

Despite these developments, Nehru did not believe that this Chinese invasion was going to materialize in the end. First, in the same way that he understood the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949, Nehru treated Tibetan autonomy, which had already lasted for decades, as a "reality" to everyone. The latter meant that it could "not be swept aside by force of arms."[158] Moreover, in his eyes, "no external power… is interfering or can interfere in Tibet." Particularly India with interests "in no way adverse to China" had "no ulterior considerations."[159] Third, he presumed that Beijing was wise enough to see the considerable cost of attacking Tibet, which was causing the new Chinese state to be internationally condemned as an "aggressive expansionist." Such a move would be not only costly but also unnecessary, because China could have "easy success [over Tibet]… at any time later."[160] In short, Nehru estimated that Beijing would opt for a sort of peaceful settlement with Lhasa in the end.

Therefore, India's role emerged as facilitating the two sides to come to terms with each other. Facing the CCP, Nehru's government framed negotiation as the sensible way out. Through India's Embassy in China, Nehru sought to persuade Beijing to agree to his calculation of the pros and cons of attacking Tibet, sincerely requesting Beijing to "bide their time a little."[161] When facing the Tibetans, Nehru somehow presented negotiation — to be

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[154] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 August 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part I, p. 431, footnote.
[155] "To V.K. Krishna Menon," 18 August 1950, *SWJN2*, vol. 15, part 1, p. 429.
[156] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 August 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 431; "To V.K. Krishna Menon," *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 429.
[157] "To V.K. Krishna Menon," 18 August 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 429.
[158] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 436-37.
[159] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 August 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 431; "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 436; "To K.M. Panikkar," 2 September 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 433.
[160] "To K.M. Panikkar," 2 September 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 432; "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 October 19, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part I, pp. 436-37.
[161] "To K.M. Panikkar," 2 September 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 432.

more specific, direct talks with China — as the only way out. In September 1950, dealing with a Tibetan delegation, which was visiting Delhi in an apparent effort to lobby for India's support against China, Nehru made it clear that neither diplomatic nor military aid from India would be possible. He told the Tibetans that India would not host a Tibet-Chinese negotiation as it did "on a previous occasion," namely, the Simla Conference of 1913/14; military-wise, India "cannot give any help in the event of an invasion," either. Tibet would have to forgo its grasp on the present status vis-à-vis China, which was virtual independence, and instead to accept "Tibetan autonomy under the suzerainty of China."[162]

Until the autumn of 1950, Nehru expected Beijing to demonstrate "strength and wisdom" by refraining from invading Tibet by force.[163] From late October to early November, proof of Chinese strength was abundant, but evidence of wisdom was nowhere to be seen. On October 22nd came the news that Beijing had already started military operations in the borderland between China and Tibet, overrunning a series of Tibetan strongholds, including Chamdo. Nehru was completely taken by surprise.[164] On October 25th, merely one day after an Indian request that China not escalate its warfare in Tibet because a Tibetan delegation would soon leave Delhi for Beijing for negotiations, Beijing announced the decision to continue military operations.[165] The way the news reached Nehru increased its psychological impact on him; it came neither from his ambassador to China nor from China's ambassador to India, but from India's morning papers on October 26th.[166] "I must confess, however, that the Chinese government has not played fair with us in regard to Tibet. I feel hurt about this."[167] Panikkar's report that Beijing possibly subscribed to various absurd ideas about the outside world, particularly India, further perplexed Nehru.[168] "If the Chinese government… 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." On the Korean question, Nehru was at first able to find solace in Beijing's "bluffing," as China did not seem to act on its threat of intervention in the case of the 38th Parallel being crossed, which it had issued at the beginning of October. Given the American-led UN occupation of North Korea, a Chinese military intervention would have been, in Nehru's words, "foolish in the extreme."[169] However, toward the end of October

[162] "Conversation with the Tibetan Delegation," 8 September 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 435.
[163] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 August 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 430.
[164] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 22 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 438.
[165] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 27 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 333.
[166] "Message to Chou En-lai," 26 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 331-32.
[167] "To V. Pandit," 27 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 517-18.
[168] "To K.M. Panikkar," 25 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, pp. 440-41; "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 25 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 444.
[169] "To K.M. Panikkar," 25 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, pp. 439-42.

there were increasing reports of Chinese forces fighting in support of North Korea, and on November 5th, General MacArthur confirmed publicly that UN troops were engaging with "Chinese military units."[170]

Beijing's repeated and unhesitant use of force shook the foundations of India's existing China policy and placed the Sino-Indian relationship at a crossroads. Nehru's earlier assessments about China proved not correct. The Chinese leaders now did not appear wise or even reasonable, and they were not as much eager for India's friendship as Nehru predicted in 1948.[171] This shocking and disappointing situation with respect to China convinced Sardar Patel that India's existing China policy had already failed. After carefully studying the correspondence between Beijing and Delhi since the establishment of their official relationship, Patel wrote to Nehru on November 7th, 1950:

> We have done everything we could to assuage Chinese feelings, to allay its apprehension, and to defend its legitimate claims in our discussions and correspondence with America and Britain and in the UN. In spite of this, China is not convinced about our disinterestedness; it continues to regard us with suspicion and the whole psychology is one, at least outwardly, of skepticism perhaps with a little hostility. I doubt if we can go any further than we have done already…[172]

Patel's long letter demanded an overhaul of India's China policy by repositioning Beijing as a threat rather than an opportunity. Unfortunately, as the only figure within the Indian government who possessed the same influence as Nehru, Patel soon fell ill and died in December. Nehru was left as the only captain in navigating India's relationship with China.

He assessed Beijing's actions in a substantially different way from Patel. While Patel saw "Chinese malevolence," Nehru discovered what was believed to be deep-seated Chinese "fear."[173] Indeed, he was not convinced that this fear, primarily toward the United States, was at all justified. In his opinion, China's future depended more on "what China herself does" rather than the outside world.[174] With Beijing's repeated ignorance of the advice as well as

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[170] "Recent Development in East and South Asia," *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 407, footnote.
[171] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 August 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 430; "The Situation in China," 5 December 1948, *SWJN*2, vol. 8, p. 416.
[172] Sardar Patel, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50* [hereafter: *SPC 1945-50*], vol. 10, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1974), p. 336
[173] *SPC 1945-50*, vol. 10, p. 336.
[174] "To K.M. Panikkar," 25 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 441.

protests from Delhi even after it vanquished the main military force of Tibet in the Battle of Chamdo, Nehru became more confident in his assessment that centered on recognizing Chinese "fear." "It does explain many things."[175] Beijing's audacious intervention in Korea in the early November of 1950 further shocked Nehru. It led him to conclude that China's invasion of Tibet was just a by-product of its "general fear of a world conflict." And it was time for India to work pro-actively to "dispel" this "fear," instead of merely waiting for China to overcome this excessive sense of insecurity by itself.[176]

There were more issues on which Nehru differed from Patel. While Patel described Moscow as Beijing's "source of inspiration," Nehru employed the term "source of information." This difference in wording reflected the latter's belief that the new Chinese state's present attitude toward the outside world was caused primarily by being "cut from the rest of the world."[177] If China became more communist and hostile in character under Soviet influence, it could certainly become less so in future if countries such as India would approach and befriend this insecure power. While Patel felt that Beijing deliberately misled India by "instilling a false confidence" in its commitment to resorting to peaceful means to settle the Tibet Question,[178] Nehru concluded that "we may have deceived ourselves," because "at no stage did the Chinese say to us that they would not take any military steps."[179]

Interestingly, Beijing's uncompromising posture on Tibet even caused Nehru to entertain the idea that India should take partial blame for the diplomatic tension between itself and China. For example, on October 27th, Nehru reprimanded Panikkar for being "weak and apologetic" when communicating India's views to China.[180] But several days later, he tried to justify China's paranoia toward the outside world to Home Minister C. Rajagopalachari by pointing out that "for many years…He [Hugh Richardson] tried his best to incite Tibetans against China" and that "only six months ago the same British Agent was there representing us."[181]

[175] "To C. Rajagopalachari," 1 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 336-8.
[176] "Recent Developments in East and South Asia," 8 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 409; "Cable to B.N. Rau," 9 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 412.
[177] *SPC 1945-50*, vol. 10, p. 336; "To K.M. Panikkar," 25 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 441.
[178] *SPC 1945-50*, vol. 10, p. 336.
[179] "To C. Rajagopalachari," 1 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 337.
[180] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 27 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 332-33.
[181] "To C. Rajagopalachari," 1 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 338.

Unsurprisingly, at this fluid moment, once Nehru found evidence that Beijing was still "amenable to reason," he was ready to cooperate again.[182] On November 16th came the evidence that Nehru had been seeking: a belated reply from Beijing to India's note from two weeks prior.[183] In the reply, Nehru found, besides clichés, many encouraging signs, such as the stated wish to work with India, to settle conflict through negotiation, to respect India's interests in Tibet, and to give Tibet some autonomy. The reply also included "repeated reference… to China desiring the friendship of India."[184] Before the reply, Nehru's expectations had reached an all-time low. Given the new situation in Tibet, he had been compelled to internally clarify India's objectives regarding Tibet: to maintain the McMahon Line, to advocate for Tibetan autonomy, and to maintain India's representatives and trade interests in Tibet. While Nehru defined the first as a goal permitting "no room of controversy," the latter two were just India's "advice" and "hope" for China.[185] Nehru did not intend to force China to accept Tibetan autonomy, even when the United States at this juncture repeatedly signalled its readiness to "help" India on the matter of Tibet.[186] Likewise, India's limited diplomatic presence and commercial interests in Tibet were, in Nehru's eyes, not worth a war with Beijing, especially after China's intervention in Korea.[187] China's note on November 16th therefore caused Nehru to reassume his old China policy.

On November 18th, in the spirit of accepting Chinese suzerainty — not sovereignty — over Tibet and of not classifying China as a threat to India, Nehru explained to the parliament how India would adjust to the situation created by Beijing in Tibet.[188] The new policy required India to accept Tibet's integration into China, and Tibet to rely on its unique climate and geography to maintain "a large measure of autonomy" instead of virtual independence. India should accordingly confine the expression of its sympathy toward Tibet to the realm of diplomacy. Anything beyond that would not only bring "greater trouble" to Tibet, but also result in a "suspicious and apprehensive" China "on our [India's] doorstep." As for security

[182] "To Lord Mountbatten," 28 January 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2 p. 499; for Nehru's articulation of China's psychology with reference to its bitter past, see "Message to Ernest Bevin," 20 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 413.
[183] "Chinese Foreign Ministry's Memorandum to India's Embassy to China," 16 November 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, pp. 45-46.
[184] Beijing stated: "as long as our two sides adhere strictly to the principle of mutual respect for territory, sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, we are convinced that the friendship between China and India should be developed in a normal way, and that problems relating to Sino-Indian diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with respect to Tibet may be solved properly and to our mutual benefits through normal diplomatic channels." "Policy regarding China and Tibet," 18 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 343.
[185] "To K.M. Panikkar," 25 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 442.
[186] "To V. Pandit," 1 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 523; "Nehru and the United States," 3 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 528.
[187] "Recent Developments in East and South Asia," 8 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 409.
[188] "Preventing the Drift to Disaster," 7 December 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 442.

implications for India, the new policy ruled out the possibility of China embarking on "a wild adventure across the Himalayas" because Tibet's inhospitable terrain would considerably overstretch China's already vulnerable national defense.[189] There was, however, the danger of India being infiltrated from the Himalayan frontier and of China seizing certain "disputed territory" in this region. India should, therefore, "take all necessary precautions."[190] As to Nehru's view on Chinese Communism, his policy emphasized that Communism might lead to war and expansion only in "certain circumstances," which themselves "depend upon many factors." Citing the disastrous results of Franco-German enmity, the policy reiterated the great value of Sino-Indian friendship in the long term for both countries, as well as for the world.[191]

Facing the drastic deterioration of the situation in Korea, Nehru shifted the focus of his attention to East Asia. As a result, India's foreign policy became "primarily based on avoidance of world war" and "secondly on maintenance of honourable and peaceful relations with China."[192] But as it transpired, Nehru's peace efforts again focused on China. In his view, the danger of yet another world war would not be removed unless "an overall settlement in the Far East" could be reached. And this settlement would have to include issues that mattered primarily to Communist China, including the UN membership and the Taiwan Question.[193] Therefore, Nehru sought every opportunity that emerged after the Chinese intervention in Korea to plead internationally China's cause or "make other people understand it."[194] During the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in January 1951, he urged those world leaders, particularly in the West, to comprehend and adjust to the "mood" of China, a country that was at the moment "proud, sensitive and resentful of any reflection on her new-found strength and self-respect."[195] According to Nehru, Beijing wanted no war; it was just forced into war due to the West's disregard for its warnings.[196] In the beginning of 1951, not just in Britain, Nehru promoted Communist China also in Egypt,

[189] "Policy regarding China and Tibet," 18 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 344-46.
[190] These precautions apparently included converting Sikkim into an Indian protectorate through a treaty signed on 5 December 5 1950, and occupying the whole Tawang region on 12 February 1951. "Policy regarding China and Tibet," 18 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 344.
[191] "Policy regarding China and Tibet," 18 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 345.
[192] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 20 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 350.
[193] "Message to C.R. Attlee," 2 December 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 417-19; "India's Policies," a speech at parliament, 6 December 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 428; "Cable to B.N. Rau", 15 December 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 454.
[194] "To K.M. Panikkar," 2 February 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 501-2.
[195] "The Changing Face of Asia," 11 January 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 470-71; see also "Recent Developments in East and South Asia," 8 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 408; "To K.M. Panikkar," 2 February 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 501-2.
[196] "Need for a Realistic Approach," 4 January 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 462-63.

France, Italy, and indeed, India. There he spared no effort to introduce the CCP regime to the local press, stating that, for example, it was "no satellite" of the Soviets.[197] In line with this approach, India became one of the only two non-socialist countries that voted against the UN General Assembly resolution 498 approved on February 1st, 1951. The resolution condemned China's intervention as aggression. However, Nehru was not particularly disappointed with this development.[198] His letter to Panikkar two days later suggested the reason: "I am glad, at any rate, that our relations with China are good and there is greater understanding of each other."[199]

The spring of 1951, therefore, witnessed a thawing of the Sino-Indian relationship, especially on the Tibet Question. On March 21st, Zhou met Panikkar in Beijing, requesting India's cooperation in persuading the Dalai Lama to stay within Tibet. Having already fled to the border town Yatung, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama could swiftly cross the Indo-Tibetan border, just as his predecessor the Thirteenth Dalai Lama did in the face of Qing China's invasion in 1910. If an exile were to happen again, it would have considerably compromised Beijing's efforts to control Tibet. India cooperated, however. Five days later, it became China's turn to scratch India's back. In a meeting of high-level officials, T.N. Kaul raised India's concern over the border, telling his Chinese counterpart Chen Jiakang that some Chinese maps were incorrect, and that the mutual recognition of the McMahon Line formed the basis of a healthy Indo-Chinese relationship. The reply from Chen Jiakang was ambiguous, but compared to China's notes to India at the height of the Tibet Crisis in the past autumn, it looked friendly and reassuring.[200] The most relieving development for India was a peaceful agreement reached between Tibet and China in Beijing on May 23, 1951.[201] The

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[197] "Fresh Approaches by the Commonwealth Nations," 3 January 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 461; "Need for a Temper of Peace," 12 Jan 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 472-75; "The Solution to the Impasse," 19 January 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 480; "Avoiding Hasty Action," 20 January 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 485-86; " An Opportunity for Peace," 24 January 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 494-98.

[198] "To V.K. Krishna Menon," 31 January 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 500.

[199] "To K.M. Panikkar," 2 February 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 501.

[200] Chen said that he would report to Zhou what he considered Kaul's "personal opinion" on the boundary, while he did not believe that Kaul's statement "represented the general viewpoints of the Indian government." Dai Chaowu, "Zhongguo dui Yindu zhanling 'Maikemahongxian' yinan diqu de fanying jiqi yiyi [China's Reaction to India's Occupation of the Area South of the 'McMahon Line' and Its Significance, 1951-1954]," *CPC History Studies*, no. 12 (2014), p. 71.

[201] The agreement was written in both Tibetan and Chinese. Its stated Tibetan name བོད་ཞི་བས་བཙིངས་འགྲོལ་འཛུལ་ཐབས་སྐོར་གྱི་གོས་མཐུན་དོན་ཚན་བཅུ་བདུན་, when translated into English, is the "Seventeen-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet." The Tibetan name contains no suggestion of the relationship between Lhasa and Beijing. The agreement's stated Chinese name, 中央人民政府和西藏地方政府关于和平解放西藏办法的协议, could have been translated into English in two ways. One is the "Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet," and the other is the "Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Government of Tibet Region on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet." The difference is whether "西藏地方政府"should be treated as the "Local

state of war between Lhasa and Beijing, which had once posed a tremendous obstacle to Nehru's pursuit of his adjustment policy toward China, was now removed without Indian entanglement. This was the best result India could expect as a "benevolent spectator," and Nehru saw no reason for it to stop being a "quiet observer" in the future.[202]

The rest of 1951 registered further growth of the Sino-Indian friendship, characterized by many Indian efforts to advance China's interests and a few friendly Chinese gestures in return, which were sufficient for Nehru. On the question of imposing an embargo against Beijing, motioned by the US at the UN in May, Nehru's position was clear-cut, as revealed in his instruction to India's UN representative B.N. Rau: "We propose to continue this [trade with China]… we cannot be a party to this resolution or any like resolution flowing from original Aggressor Resolution which we opposed."[203] India became one of nine countries that abstained from that vote at the UN. The issue of concluding a multilateral peace treaty with Japan in order to end WWII officially was another example. Nehru emphasized that the treaty should contain "nothing" objectionable to Beijing or Moscow and should include specific provisions for "return[ing] Taiwan to China."[204] Therefore, India and Burma were invited to sign the San Francisco Treaty, but in the end, they chose not to participate. As to the old issue of mainland China's UN membership, Nehru continued his unwavering support. In November, Nehru instructed Rau to vote for a Russian motion at the UN on admitting the PRC, despite foreseeing that the bill had no chance of being passed. Doing otherwise "would be inconsistent with our policy and past record."[205] In October, to Nehru's great delight, came a Chinese reaction of significance to India. According to Panikkar, Zhou privately expressed his "special emphasis" on building China's friendship with India and other Asian countries, and stated that "no difference of point of view" existed between China and India regarding Tibet, and that China was "particularly anxious to safeguards in every way Indian interests."[206] Interpreting this as a sign of China also developing a grand Asia policy, of which the boundary problems were "only parts," Nehru immediately devised a road map for

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Government of Tibet" or the "Government of Tibet Region." The CCP preferred and widely used the former, which apparently downplays Tibet's autonomy from China and strengthens the idea of Tibet being an integral part of China and a body subordinate to the Chinese government.

[202] "The Tibetan Delegation in India," 21 July 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 16, part 2, pp. 647-48.

[203] "Cable to B.N. Rau," 12 May 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 16, part 1, p. 431.

[204] "An Indo-Japanese Treaty," 1 June 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 16, part 1, p. 461; "Cable to VK Krishna Menon," 4 June 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 16, part 1, p. 462;

[205] "Cable to BN Rau," 8 November 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 17, p. 510.

[206] Note that Beijing at this moment likely had no idea yet of the connection between the concept of "McMahon Line" and Simla Conference. "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 2 October 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 16, part 2, p. 643.

China to forge their friendship in turn with India, Nepal, Burma, and Indonesia.[207] Against this development, at a press conference in November, Nehru assured his people that those controversial Chinese maps were antiquated, and Beijing was just "too busy" to correct them and that this issue, along with the trade and mission issues, would be solved through "friendly talks" in the end.[208]

Entering 1952, not much changed in terms of Nehru's commitment to adjusting India to China. However, China's gradual occupation of Tibet, which started in the autumn of 1951, had caused anxieties for the Indian public.[209] After all, it was one thing to recognize China's special relationship with Tibet on paper, but another to see Chinese civilian and military personnel appearing on the streets and checkpoints of Tibet. Nehru, therefore, had to reassure his people of a minimum negative impact on India because of this occupation by, for example, downplaying the significance of the traditional trade and diplomatic connection between India and Tibet.[210] Meanwhile, in public he mildly admonished the Tibetan population in Kalimpong, which he considered "a factory of rumours" that produced only "fantastic" stories for the Western media in an "attempt to create trouble between India and China."[211] "Nobody need get upset over the recent developments in Tibet," he said in public, continuing with: "I would like to repeat that one of the foremost interests of India is cultivation of friendly relations with her neighbours, especially China and Tibet."[212] Nehru did not view the dramatic expansion of the Chinese presence in Tibet after the Seventeen-Point Agreement as China establishing sovereignty. It was suzerainty that he saw being formed there, a result that he predicted in the autumn of 1950.[213] This perception was reflected in his evaluation of the Chinese request to trans-ship goods to Tibet via India, which was still viewed as a triangular trade arrangement.[214]

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[207] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 2 October 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 16, part 2, p. 643.
[208] "Relations with China and Tibet," 3 November 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 17, p. 507.
[209] "China and Tibet," 28 February 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 17, pp. 510-11; "To MA Rauf," 27 January 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 17, p. 524.
[210] "China and Tibet," 28 February 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 17, pp. 510-11; for some Western reports of Chinese claiming a borderland temple, see "To MA Rauf," 27 January 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 17, p. 524.
[211] "To MA Rauf," 27 January 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 17, p. 524; "Desirability of Friendly Ties with China and Tibet," 29 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 473.
[212] "Desirability of Friendly Ties with China and Tibet," 29 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 473.
[213] "Cable to Indian Mission, Lhasa," 6 September 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 652; "Policy regarding China and Tibet," 18 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 344; even the Tibetan elites were also expecting a Chinese suzerainty similar to that Qing China once practiced, see Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, vol. 2, *1951-1955: The Calm before the Storm* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 187.
[214] "We should distinguish between continuance of old border trade between India and Tibet and new proposals of trade in bulk between China and Tibet passing through India." "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 12 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 471.

Not only did Nehru find China's expansion into Tibet justified, he also felt that it was a benevolent suzerain power, which most importantly posed no threat to India. This attitude could be found in Nehru's approach to India's borderland matters after Chinese entry into Tibet. In the spring of 1952, he asked the Assam Government to promote primary education in the tribal areas of the NEFA as a response to China's move to build schools in Tibet. It is reasonable to assume that Nehru was concerned about the spillover impact of Chinese expansion in Tibet. No evidence, however, indicates that Nehru was apprehensive. In his correspondence with the top officials of Assam, he praised Chinese Communists for "putting up Tibetan schools for the Tibetans, and not interfering with their ways," and India should "learn from them."[215] If education, especially in terms of teaching the language that is used by the mainstream society, plays an important role in forging national identity or combating foreign influence, Nehru obviously did not think in that way. He told the Assam Government that the "correct approach" was to first teach the "tribal language[s] or Tibetan," whereas "Assamese and Hindi should come in at a later stage."[216] In general, his management of tribal affairs in 1952 suggested that the Indian Prime Minister accepted China's annexation of Tibet with poise and assurance.[217]

Meanwhile, the Sino-Indian friendship seemed to be following an upward trend with occasional annoyances. In April 1952, Panikkar reported that Zhou was reluctant to discuss the "general problem of our interests" in Tibet, an attitude that surprised Nehru.[218] However, this report came simultaneously with a Chinese offer of selling 100,000 tons of rice to India and a request that India allow the trans-shipment of Chinese rice to Tibet.[219] This request was later developed into a formal *ad hoc* agreement between Delhi and Beijing on trans-shipping goods via India to Tibet.[220] Much as Nehru was happy to demonstrate India's good will, he was not willing to do so to the point of overstretching its transportation system for the mere purpose of assisting China to overcome the logistical difficulties due to Tibet's harsh climate and terrain. Indeed, he hoped that this assistance would also lead to a "general settlement" with China about Tibet, one that would safeguard India's interests there, particularly

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[215] "To Bisnuram Medhi," 4 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 363. "To Jairamdas Doulatram," 4 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 362.
[216] "To Bisnuram Medhi," 4 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 364.
[217] For more about Nehru's handling of tribal affairs, see "To C. Rajagopalachari," 29 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, pp. 367-9; "Understanding the Tribal Way of Life," 7 June 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, pp. 370-72.
[218] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 12 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 471. Nehru did not know that after entering Lhasa, the CCP managed to apprehend the controversial details behind the McMahon Line and also noticed that India occupied Tawang in the early 1951. China, however, did not confront India with these issues immediately, for the fear of India exploiting during negotiation China's logistical difficulty.
[219] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 12 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, pp. 471-72.
[220] Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 1, p. 30.

regarding the frontier.[221] The feedback from people below Nehru probably strengthened his confidence in achieving this goal as well as growing further the Sino-Indian relationship. V.L. Pandit's report in July 1952, as the head of the Indian Cultural Delegation to China that year, is worth quoting in part, in order to better understand the source of Nehru's optimism.

> In concluding, I will again refer to the growing friendship we formed for India everywhere we went. The need for closer contacts, political as well as cultural, we not only constantly referred to but seemed a very real desire. India is looked upon as a friend who can be trusted and her foreign policy is understood and appreciated.[222]

Against this background of Sino-Indian cooperation and amicability, Nehru became to believe that the two sides' potential difference on the border issue had disappeared. As early as in January 1952, Delhi instructed Panikkar in Beijing to find opportunities to talk to the Chinese and "specify our interests including those on the frontier." This led to a meeting between Panikkar and Zhou on June 14th, 1952. In retrospect, it is questionable whether Panikkar did his part as Nehru instructed. He made, in fact, no reference to Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and the McMahon Line, which all mattered to India's northern frontier either directly or indirectly. Indeed, he later produced justifications that Nehru found reasonable. What did bother Nehru upon receiving Panikkar's report was Zhou oddly enough did also mention the border issue. He could not help but think that this meant "some kind of acquiescence."[223] The same Chinese silence happened again in a follow-up meeting on Tibet on June 22nd.[224] Nehru's perception that Beijing had informally accepted all of Tibet's existing Himalayan borders was therefore reinforced: "We should not make specific mention about the frontier" in the future.[225]

Believing that India's "chief concern" about Tibet — "proper maintenance of our frontier there" — had been taken care of by Beijing for the time being, Nehru pressed on his friendly

[221] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 12 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 472; "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 24 May 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 473.
[222] "Indian Cultural Delegation to China," 6 July 1952, *NMML*, V.L. Pandit Papers (II Installment), Subject File 18, p. 22; see also "Cable to V.L. Pandit," 7 May 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 533.
[223] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 16 June 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 474-75; "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 18 June 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 475.
[224] Memorandum of the Convention between Chargé d'Affaires T.N. Kaul and Deputy Foreign Minister Zhang Hanfu, 22 June 1952, *CFMA*, 105-00025-03, pp. 18-32.
[225] "Border Issue with China," 29 July 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 651.

China policy.[226] This meant following Beijing's blueprint on the Tibet Question. India, as requested by Zhou in his conversation with Panikkar in June, converted its mission at Lhasa into the Consulate-General for the Tibet Region of China.[227] The Indian government also worked to distance itself from any anti-Beijing forces within the Tibetan society, which had sought India's support to resist China's occupation of Tibet. "We can certainly be no party to any secret or other activities against the Chinese," he stressed this to the Indian diplomats in Lhasa. And those dissatisfying Tibetans should not be given "any impression of possibility of [Indian] interference or help"[228] Ultimately, as a democratically elected statesman, Nehru also needed to persuade his voters to accept the present state of Tibet under the Chinese occupation, which partly resulted from India's China policy. What he did was portraying China's increased presence in Tibet as "the suzerainty power… exercising suzerainty." Indeed, he did believe in this. Nehru reminded the public that "you cannot treat Tibet as an independent country," although he did not explicitly say that he also never recognized Chinese sovereignty over Tibet.[229]

The perception that China now regarded India as a friend and that the two countries were closing the gap between their positions regarding Tibet encouraged Nehru to have India assume a more active role in mediating the Korean question. However, the deadlocked POW issue that had become the only outstanding issue was a source of frustration to him. The first disappointment came on July 10th, when Beijing returned to its early position of opposing voluntary repatriation. Until then, Beijing had given Delhi the impression that it had, in principle, accepted a repatriation compromise.[230] It was "very surprising and completely out of tune with recent assurance given to us." Always setting India's mediation efforts on the pace dictated by Beijing's attitude, Nehru had to pause the efforts, writing: "For the present I do not see what we can do."[231] The second frustration came in November 16th, when India put forward a truce proposal at the UN.[232] It aimed to "find a middle way, keeping in view Chinese views and sentiments," with its content closely following Zhou's suggestions from

[226] "Cable to Indian Mission, Lhasa," 6 September 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 652.
[227] Memorandum of the Convention between Chargé d'Affaires T.N. Kaul and Deputy Foreign Minister Zhang Hanfu, 22 June 1952, *CFMA*, 105-00025-03, pp. 21-22; "Border Issue with China," 29 July 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 651.
[228] "Cable to Indian Mission, Lhasa," 6 September 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 652.
[229] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar, "16 June 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 474; "Negotiations on Tibet," 21 June 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 476.
[230] "Cable to India Embassy, Peking," 1 July 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, pp. 548-49.
[231] "Cable to VK Krishna Menon," 11 July 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 552; "Cable to VK Krishna Menon," 12 July 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, pp. 552-53.
[232] "Cable to V. Pandit," 16 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 424.

October, and with even "further concessions to Chinese position."[233] Beijing gave no comment, although the content of the proposal was communicated to them at the earliest time, and Nehru, anxiously waiting for a Chinese reply, gradually became convinced that "no reply" meant "no strong objection".[234] However, on November 24th, over a week after the Indian motion at the UN, Beijing suddenly expressed its disapproval in the form of an aide-memoire to the Indian ambassador to China.[235] "The world is determined to commit suicide," the extremely disappointed and disheartened Indian Prime Minister wrote to his sister upon hearing the news.[236]

India's later public treatment by China further rubbed salt into the wound. While India, at China's request, did not publicize the Chinese aide-memoire with the good intention of delaying Beijing from assuming the "burden of rejection" — Beijing did not hesitate to assail India and its proposal.[237] In early December, Radio Beijing criticized India, calling Delhi arrogant.[238] Zhou followed up on December 14th when he publicly denounced the Indian resolution as "void, illegal, unfair and unreasonable," and claimed that India had been "used" by "subtle" American manoeuvres.[239] On January 21st, 1953, Zhou levelled another accusation when he claimed that the Indian resolution had "encouraged" Washington to escalate warfare in Korea.[240] In his February 5th letter to Raghavan, Zhang Hanfu repeated the same accusation and demanded that the resolution be rescinded. The winter of 1952-53 was indeed a cold one.

But all these developments did not create a crisis of faith for Nehru, contrary to what happened during the Tibet Crisis. Indeed, Beijing's erratic behaviours and relentless criticisms aroused indignation within the Indian government. B. Tyabji, the MEA Commonwealth Secretary, was angered by China's unexpected open rejection of India's peace proposal in November 1952 and its joining Russia in criticizing India afterward. This was ungratefulness in his eyes, as he complained to Nehru, because India had been "carrying China along with them [Russians] willy-nilly." Nehru lied in his reply to Tyabji, however, by

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[233] "Cable to N. Raghavan," 2 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 413; "Cable to N. Raghavan," 2 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, pp, 414-8; "Cable to N. Raghavan," 3 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 419.
[234] "Cable to VK Krishna Menon," 8 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 420; "Cable to N. Raghavan," 11 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 421-22; "Cable to VK Krishna Menon," 11 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 420; "To VK Krishna Menon," 12 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 422.
[235] "Cable to N. Raghavan," 25 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 429.
[236] "To V. Pandit," 25 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 429.
[237] "To V. Pandit," 25 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 429; "Cable to V. Pandit," 26 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 434; "Cable to V. Pandit," 27 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 436, footnote.
[238] "Cable to N. Raghavan," 7 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 450.
[239] "To Thakin Nu," 25 January 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 21, p. 447.
[240] "Chou En-lai's Statement on Indian Resolution," 23 January 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 21, p. 455.

claiming that the rejection "did not come as a surprise to me." The truth was that he was no less prepared for China's rejection than Tyabji was.[241] The difference between them was that Nehru chose to interpret China's erratic behaviours as the result of Soviet influence, and even of Indian negligence. "I think we made one or two mistakes about the procedures and, possibly, about the drafting also." Of course, he did feel that Beijing earlier on "gave us definitely the impression" of not opposing India's proposal. But clearly, Nehru did not think that it was the time for India, given the ongoing conflict in Korea, to react to Beijing in a way that might jeopardize its neutrality vis-à-vis China. "Our attitude must always be one of friendliness with firmness in so far as important matters are concerned."[242]

Therefore, in the following three or four months, a period of chilly Sino-Indian relations, the desire to preserve China's interests effectively still guided India's diplomatic efforts on issues related to China. For example, against Beijing's will, Nehru did not order the withdrawal of that proposal, for he feared "some extreme Resolution representing American viewpoint to be passed."[243] Furthermore, he did not ask his officials to retaliate against Beijing and Moscow, in the hope that the door of negotiation "not be slammed."[244] Given Chinese coldness toward India, illustrated by the constant avoidance of personal contact with Indian diplomats in Beijing, Nehru commented that "we can only wait for a more favourable opportunity" to explain India's policy.[245] It is interesting to note that while Beijing was under the illusion that Delhi imposed an embargo over Tibet, Nehru was, in fact, continuously resisting the West by finding every possible excuse for not abiding by those UN trade regulations against China in the spring of 1953.[246]

Beijing's erratic reactions did, however, lead Nehru to make clear to his officials that there was a fine line between adjustment and appeasement, between being sympathetic and being obsequious.[247] Treating Beijing with both "friendliness and firmness" became a central tenet

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[241] "Chinese Reaction to Indian Proposal," 27 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 436.
[242] For Nehru's opinion on Russia's influence, see "Cable to Raghavan, " 2 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, pp. 445-46; "Cable to V. Pandit," 2 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 446-47; "Cable to VK Krishan Menon," 7 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 451; for Nehru's opinion on India's responsibility in this episode, see "To Girja Shankar Bajpai," 2 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 447; "To KPS Menon," 16 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 464; "To K.M. Panikkar" 17 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 465.
[243] "Cable to N. Raghavan," 28 November 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 441.
[244] "To B.G. Kher," 8 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 452.
[245] "Cable to V. Pandit," 18 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 464.
[246] "Supply of Mica to China," 19 March 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 21, pp. 558-59; "Shipment of Strategic Goods to China," 6 April 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 22, pp. 352-53; "Policy on Trade with China," 6 May 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 22, pp. 356-57; "Exports to Tibet," 9 May 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 22, pp. 357-58; "Cable to B.N. Rau," 12 May 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 16, p. 431; "Cable to P. Subbarayan," 24 May 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 16, pp. 431-32.
[247] "Cable to B.N. Rau," 9 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 412; "Policy regarding China and Tibet," 18 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, pp. 343-46; "To N. Raghavan," 19 April 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 22, p. 354-55.

of India's future dealings with China.[248] A lesson that Nehru drew from this episode was that Beijing did "not appreciate weakness."[249] This was why he generally approved U Nu's idea in the spring of 1953 to form a fifty-year friendship and non-aggression pact between India, China and Burma (today's Myanmar), but rather reminded his partner: "The Chinese government should not be made to think that we want this pact because of our weakness and therefore we want favour from them. They do not respect those who show weakness. We have to be both friendly and firm."[250] It was against this background that Nehru strengthened India's borders with Tibet for contingencies and India's facilitation of trans-shipping came to be invested with the vague hope of demonstrating China's reliance on India, although the generally cooperative approach toward the Chinese presence in Tibet did not change.[251]

In the spring of 1953, Nehru was relieved that the icy period of Sino-Indian relations seemed to come to an end. In April, Beijing developed a truce proposal very close to the original Indian proposal, which it had rejected in the previous winter, and requested an immediate Indian opinion. "For the first time after a considerable period," Nehru wrote to Menon, "Chou Enlai appeared anxious for friendly relations and for some help in transporting various articles via India to Tibet."[252] Regarding this change in China, Nehru associated it with the death of Stalin in March and predicted a further decrease of Soviet influence over Beijing. India's "infinitive capacity for patience" was also believed to share the credit, as it had resulted in the formation of an extremely cautious approach to mediation, characterized by clarifying and aligning to Beijing's intentions. The general China policy, as Nehru asked Raghavan to bear in mind, was to "remember our long-range policy…[of] friendship with China… [but] not giving in… vital… interest."[253]

China's Approach to India

Patel's hunch before his death in late 1950 was right. Communist China never saw India as a friend. The *People's Daily* made China's general opinion abundantly clear even before 1950. According to the publication, Nehru's government was as a "reactionary government"

[248] "To G.L. Mehta," 10 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 459; "To N. Raghavan," 19 April. 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 22, p. 355.
[249] "To G.L. Mehta," 10 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 459; "Cable to N. Raghavan," 25 January 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 21, p. 448.
[250] "To Thakin Nu," 6 March 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 21, p. 535.
[251] UP-Tibetan borders & check posts "To K.N. Katju," 13 February 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 21, p. 305; "Need for Check Posts on UP-Tibet Border," 9 March 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 21, p. 308; " North-Eastern Frontier Situation," 5 March 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 21, pp. 555-58.
[252] "Cable to VK Krishna Menon," 12 April 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 22, pp. 434-35.
[253] "To N. Raghavan," 19 April 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 22, pp. 354-55.

drifting toward becoming an imperialist "hanger-on," and Nehru was the "pawn" and "the most faithful running dog" of American imperialism.[254] India's recognition of Communist China on December 30th, 1949 caused the CCP to suppress this opinion in public, but only temporarily. Immediately after Delhi voted for the UN to provide assistance to South Korea on July 7th, 1950, renewed criticism appeared on the *People's Daily*.[255] In short, the communist regime harboured a deep-seated distrust of India, one that took only a divisive issue to reveal itself publicly.

This distrust was rooted in the belief that Delhi had "an ulterior motive" in Tibet.[256] The CCP inherited this viewpoint from its civil war enemy, the Nationalist Party of China. On August 19th, 1949, the Central Daily News, the mouthpiece of the Nationalist Party, published an article reporting the Kashag's sudden expulsion of Chinese official in Lhasa in June. The article denounced the incident as a "betrayal… instigated and plotted by the Englishman Richardson, head of Indian Mission in Lhasa."[257] Whether or not this incident was truly the product of Richardson's advice remains debatable even today. And whether Nehru or the Union Government of India was directly involved is also unclear.[258] But in the eyes of the Nationalist Chinese, this incident generated the best footnote to the theory of

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[254] "The People Commemorate with Regret the 'Independent' India Becoming Increasingly a Hanger-on," *People's Daily*, 27 August 1948; "Nehru, Preparing a Reactionary Group in Southeast Asia and Happy to be American Imperialism's Pawn, is Resisted by Indian People," *People's Daily*, 26 January 1949; "American Imperialism Doubles its Efforts in Fostering Nehru as a Pawn for its Aggressions in the Far East," *People's Daily*, 17 February 1949; "The Reactionary Indian Government's Bloodily Suppression of Democratic Movements," *People's Daily*, 15 March 1949; "American Imperialism's Hunting Hawk and Hound Nehru Confessed Preparing 'Asian Group' and Communist Party of India Announcing its Firm Opposition," *People's Daily*, 25 April 1949; "Nehru Seeking to Hide but Only to Expose Himself, America and Britain's Betraying Their Wild Ambition to Invade Tibet, and Britain Publicizing its Sinful Activities in Collusion with American Imperialism," *People's Daily*, 16 September 1949; "Nehru Arrived In America and the Truman Government Gave him the Most Lavish Welcome, Hoping Him to Become American Imperialism's the Most Faithful Running Dog," *People's Daily*, 19 October 1949; "The Reactionary Indian Government Persecuted Peasant Leaders, and Peking Women's Convention Cabled in Protest," *People's Daily*, 30 November 1949.

[255] "India Disguising as Being Neutral and Acting as American Imperialism's Accomplice; [India's] Real Attitude toward the Korean Question Revealed," *People's Daily*, 9 July 1950; "India's UN Representative Going so Far as to Vote in Favor of American Intervention of Korea," *People's Daily*, 9 July 1950, www.laoziliao.net/rmrb, accessed on 10 December 2019.

[256] Mao's Letter to CCP Central Committee and Southwest Bureau on 9 December 1949, indirectly quoted from Liu, *Bianjiang*, p. 227.

[257] Ji Youquan, Baixue: *Jiefang Xizang jishi* [*White Snow: Recording Tibet's Liberation*] (Beijing: Zhongguo Wuzi Chubanshe, 1993), p. 84.

[258] Toward 1947, British India's policy had transformed into one that positioned India as a "benevolent spectator" in the dispute between Tibet and China. In fact, it attached greater importance to winning the good will of China rather than supporting Tibet's independence as before. See Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem,* pp. 208-209; The period from 1947 to 1949 was also a chaotic moment for the newly established Indian state, meaning that Delhi had no incentive to alter or even review the hitherto policy on Tibet that remained no threat whatsoever to India. The Chinese belief that Independent India had a grand design of ultimately annexing Tibet by actively supporting Lhasa against China in 1949 was unfounded. See "The Indian Mission at Lhasa," 9 July 1949, *SWJN2*, vol. 12, pp. 410-11; "Role of Chinese Officials in Lhasa," 26 July 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, pp. 411-12.

Indian "ulterior motives." In 1963, Luo Jialun, the first and also the last of Republican China's ambassadors to India, still held on his views that he had developed decades prior about India's role in the Lhasa Incident: "Behind the Lhasa betrayal was a conspiracy hatched by Richardson who represented the Indian Government in Tibet."[259]

The Chinese had their own ways of looking at the past regarding Tibet. Due to the change of power in China proper in 1911, Chinese rule in Tibet was thrown into turmoil. This led to the expulsion of Chinese troops from Tibet in 1912 and a sustained British diplomatic intervention in 1913, which culminated in the tripartite Simla Conference of 1913-4. After these developments, there were nearly four decades of *de facto* Tibetan independence, partly thanks to British patronage. India's independence from Britain in 1947 did not end the practice of treating Tibet as a region separate from China, despite the protests from the Nationalist Government of China.[260] It is questionable as to wheher and how the CCP, a party that consisted mainly of peasants and was struggling to survive, possessed any knowledge about this issue before 1949. But, emerging victorious from the civil war, the CCP inherited the institutional and collective memories of Republican China. This happened partly through incorporating those experts on Tibet-China affairs who were left behind by the Nationalist Government before it fled to Taiwan.[261]

Compared to being Chinese, being communist was a more direct and powerful factor in forging China's distrust of India. As early as May 1949, "big brother" Stalin warned Mao that the imperialists would not watch idly the CCP's victorious troops advancing toward China's borders with Indochina, Burma, and India. The "Anglo-Franco-Americans" would "take all measures from blockade to military clashes" to prevent Chinese communists from encouraging revolutions in South Asia and Southeast Asia. Then on August 14th came the news of the visit of American journalist Lowell Thomas to Tibet and, on August 19th, there came the report that the Kashag had already expelled all Chinese officials from Tibet. Given the difference made by Edgar Snow — another American journalist — to the CCP itself during WWII, Comrade Stalin's warning in May probably looked like a prophecy. Considering India's leadership, especially Nehru—who was born into a rich Brahmin family, nurtured with an elitist British education, and had assumed power without overthrowing the British by force — Beijing found more reasons to treat India as a jackal following the lead of

[259] Luo, "Youguan zhongyin bianjie," pp. 38-39.
[260] Yang Yun-yuan, "Controversies over Tibet: China versus India 1947-49," *The China Quarterly*, no. 111 (1987), pp. 407-20.
[261] In February 1950, two months after the CCP captured Chengdu, the Southwest Bureau established a research center there, which was called "Research Room for Tibet Question" and filled with over twenty researchers and university professors versed various realms regarding Tibet. Ji, *Baixue*, p. 28.

imperialist "lions" than to see India as an independent country.[262] Communist China suspected that India was part of an anti-communist league developing across the world. This suspicion was well illustrated by Xinhua News Agency's editorial on September 2nd, 1949 about the Lhasa Incident: This was a plot by "the British and American imperialisms with their follower, India's Nehru government."[263]

Being both communist and Chinese, the new regime developed a basic distrust toward India. This distrust in combination of the party's anxieties toward potential American and British interventions caused Mao's decision at the end of 1949 to accelerate the process of liberating Tibet. He decided to commence military operations there "by the fall or winter of next year."[264] The First Tibet Crisis, so far as Tibet and India's shared interest in preserving the status quo between Tibet and China was concerned was therefore about to emerge.

There is a second dimension to understanding China's disingenuous dealings with India: how the Chinese regime conducted diplomacy. First, diplomats were selected not by their qualifications for this profession, but primarily by how "red" they were beforehand. "An absolute loyalty to the party, the state and the people, plus a firm class stance in whatever situation" were the overriding criteria set by Zhou in 1949 for the Foreign Service.[265] Many of the former Chinese diplomats were therefore discharged and only allowed to provide consultancy to the "New Diplomats" of "New China." As Mao explained to Yuan Zhongxian in a training session in early 1950, "this is called setting up a new stove." Zhongxian, a fine military commander with war-tested loyalty, was at this moment struggling with even the basics of acting as the first ambassador to India. Therefore, to assume that Communist China should know esoteric Western legal concepts such as "law of estoppel" lends little help to understanding Beijing's approach to Delhi, especially regarding the border dispute.[266]

Second, facing the non-socialist world, Beijing's diplomats were not in fact conducting diplomacy, but were instead ordered to apply the united front policy. There is, of course, a difference between the two. Diplomacy might be defined roughly as a practice driven by the ultimate quest for peace and realized through non-military means such as negotiation. In

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[262] "Cable, Stalin to Mao Zedong [via Kovalev]," 26 May 1949, *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, no. 16 (2011), p. 166.
[263] Liu, *Bianjiang*, p. 222.
[264] "Mao's Telegram to Peng Dehuai on the Question of Liberating Tibet," 23 November 1949, Mao Zedong, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* [*Mao Zedong's Writings since the State's Establishment*][hereafter: *JYMZW*], vol. 1, (Beijing: Central Literature Press, 1987), p. 152; also see Mao's Letter to CCP Central Committee and Southwest Bureau on 9 December 1949, Liu, *Bianjiang*, p. 227.
[265] Li Lianqing, *Dai waijiaojia Zhou Enlai* [Great Diplomat Zhou Enlai] (Hong Kong: Heaven and Earth Book LTD, 1994), vol. 1, p. 57.
[266] Noorani argues that "the law of estoppel debars it [China] from questioning the [McMahon] Line" after 1914. See Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem*, p. 192.

contrast, the united front policy is a particular political strategy with "an appearance of seeking for peace but an actual aim at struggling" with the enemy.[267] Beijing's diplomats in the early Cold War were not diplomats but "red diplomatic soldiers."[268] They were trained to remember, for example, that their "first task was to identify enemies from friends," that "[they] must be clear about the nature of imperialism," and that "[they] must comprehend the struggle strategy of both uniting and struggling."[269] In other words, for these "red diplomatic soldiers," the non-socialist state of India was an enemy or an enemy-to-be.[270] Consequently, on most occasions, China tended to interpret India's intentions in a negative way rather than a positive one, inevitably exaggerating or even creating the threat from India.

Unsurprisingly, from the summer of 1950 every single note from Delhi to Beijing on the Tibetan crisis, which were intended by Nehru to demonstrate India's goodwill, were read by Communist China as a reminder of India's interference. The first note came on August 12th, 1950, stating that India "did not have and will not have any political or territorial interests," except "commercial and trade interests" which stemmed from the "rights derived from the treaties signed since 1906."[271] Beijing's interpretation, however, was that "India disguised itself as having no political or territorial interests and meanwhile wanted to keep its privileges derived from the treaties signed since 1906."[272] On August 26th, Panikkar delivered an aide-memoire reiterating that India had "no ambition" in Tibet but only the desire that peaceful settlement be reached between Lhasa and Beijing.[273] Through Beijing's prism, this action was understood as, "India continued raising questions about its interests in Tibet, the border, and Tibetan autonomy, and conspired to prevent us from liberating Tibet by disguising itself as being encouraging to us in order to settle the Tibetan question peacefully."[274] On October

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[267] Yang Kuisong, "Xin zhongguo de geming waijiao sixiang yu shijian [The Theory and Practice of New China's Revolutionary Diplomacy]," *Historical Monthly*, no. 2 (2010), p. 65.
[268] Yang, *Cangsang jiushinian*, p. 292.
[269] "Speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party," 5 March 1949, *SWMZ*, vol. 4, pp. 1435-1436; " New China's Diplomacy," 8 November 1949, Zhou Enlai, *Zhou Enlai waijiao wenxuan* [*Selected Works of Zhou Enlai on Diplomacy*][hereafter: *ZEWW*] (Beijing: Central Literature Press, 1990), pp. 1-7.
[270] Yang, *Cangsang jiushinian*, p. 292; The Chinese military attache Zhu Kaiyin recollected that the Chinese ambassador Yuan Zhongxian, in a private occasion, played a joke on him by interpreting his name as meaning "to open a red base-area in India." Zhu Kaiyin, "Xin Zhongguo shouren zhuyin wuguan de huiyi [Recollection of New China's First Military Attaché to India]," *Bainian Chao*, no. 7 (2005), p. 11.
[271] "The Memorandum from the Indian Embassy to the Chinese Foreign Ministry," 12 August 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 31.
[272] "A Report of the Course of Our Dealing with India on the Tibet Question," 24 November 1950, *CFMA*, 105-00011-02, pp. 42-44,
[273] "The Memorandum from the Indian Embassy in China to the Chinese Foreign Ministry," 26 August 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 33
[274] "A Report of the Course of Our Dealing with India on the Tibet Question," 24 November 1950, *CFMA*, 105-00011-02, pp. 42-44.

21st, when Nehru found out that China had started its military operation in Tibet, he tried again to dissuade Beijing from using force. India's memorandum to China highlighted that a military operation, against the background of the ongoing Korean crisis, would produce unnecessary international criticism and prevent China from obtaining UN membership.[275] The reminder, intended as a kindness, was again received by Beijing as evidence of hostility. "India openly interfered with our domestic affairs and attempted to prevent us from advancing and liberating Tibet, in order to maintain its mission, trade agency, post facilitates and garrison troops in Tibet."[276] India's notes to China on October 28th and November 1st, now protesting Beijing continuing its military operation in Tibet, thus certainly did not escape the fate of being misread by Communist China.[277]

It should be highlighted that in the second half of 1950, Beijing developed two critical understandings of India's position on the Tibet question: First, Delhi had come to recognize China's sovereignty in Tibet; second, Nehru also used the concept of suzerainty in order to extort every possible concession from China. This reading of Nehru's India was because of an aide-memoire from Panikkar to Beijing on August 12th, 1950, the wording of which convinced Mao that India gave its recognition of Tibet being Chinese territory.[278] Some argue that in this case, Panikkar "exceeded Nehru's instructions," thereby deviating from Delhi's "muddled policy on Tibet."[279]

To answer this question is not easy. On August 19th, 1950, Nehru specified to Panikkar that India's policy was "to help in a friendly settlement…aimed at the autonomy of Tibet being recognized together with Chinese suzerainty."[280] Even if Nehru had told Panikkar something vaguely similar before, the problem with the view that Panikkar's move contravened Nehru's order is that the aide-memoire on August 12th actually contained no outright expression that India recognized China's sovereignty over Tibet. On the contrary, the use of the phrase "Sino-Tibetan relationship" suggests that Panikkar still treated Tibet as a

[275] "The Memorandum from the Indian Embassy in China to the Chinese Foreign Ministry," 21 October 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, pp. 36-37.
[276] "A Report of the Course of Our Dealing with India on the Tibet Question," 24 November 1950, *CFMA*, 105-00011-02, pp. 42-44.
[277] "Indian Ambassador to China Panikkar's Note to Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai," 28 October 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, pp. 39-40; "Indian Ambassador to China Panikkar's Note to Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai," 1 November 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, pp. 42-44; for China's reading, see Yang, *Zhongguo fandui waiguo,* p. 250; "A Report of the Course of Our Dealing with India on the Tibet Question," 24 November 1950, *CFMA*, 105-00011-02, pp. 42-44.
[278] "Indian Government Written Statement on Tibet, in English," 12 August 1950, *CMFA,* 105-00010-01(1), p. 7, indirectly mentioned in Harder, "*Defining Independence*," p. 78; for Mao's reaction to this document, see Zhang Guoxing, "Mao Zedong yu heping jiefang Xizang [Mao Zedong and Tibet's Peaceful Liberation]," *Party History Study Materials*, no. 2 (2003), pp. 19-26, and Ji, *Baixue*, p. 144.
[279] Harder, "*Defining Independence*," pp. 77-78.
[280] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 August 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 431.

polity on equal footing with China.[281] In other words, Panikkar did not exceed Nehru's instruction, at least in his aide-memoire to Beijing on August 12th. He did, however, employ the term "Chinese sovereignty" in his aide-memoire to Beijing on August 26th, which described India's expectation of how the Tibetan question should be settled.[282] But strangely enough, on October 18th, 1950, in Delhi, right under Nehru's nose, Foreign Secretary K.P.S. Menon delivered an unofficial note to Chinese Ambassador Yuan Zhongxian that also included the term "Chinese sovereignty."[283]

Since it is very unlikely that two of the most important members of India's foreign service made collective efforts to undermine the particular policy of their master, the only reasonable explanation is that, until late October or early November 1950, Indian foreign service continued the practice of using the concepts of "sovereignty" and "suzerainty" interchangeably when dealing with Communist China.[284] It is likely that during the past four decades, despite the repeated assertions of sovereignty over Tibet, no Chinese government had reinforced these claims on the ground. And for Communist China, there were reasons, in Nehru's opinion, to leave Tibet as it was for the foreseeable future.[285] In fact, he had expected Beijing to display its "wisdom" on this matter.[286] To make this happen, Nehru was willing to nominally concede to China's position to the point of not causing any substantial change to Tibet's independence-like autonomy. This was exactly what he did to Republic of China three years ago, in the map controversy of the Asian Relations Conference of 1947.[287] He did not want India to lose this diplomatic leverage on China as well as Tibet, with which he could facilitate a peaceful settlement between them. Therefore, ever since the Tibet Question entered the public discourse, Nehru had stated India's policy on this matter as vaguely as he could, and indeed, asked his officials to follow suit.[288]

Things changed because of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in October 1950. The unprecedented move threatened to disrupt the unstable yet peaceful Sino-Tibetan equilibrium of the past four decades. Beijing's willingness to use force to resolve the Tibetan question,

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[281] "The Aide-memoire from the Indian Embassy in China to the Chinese Foreign Ministry," 12 August 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 31.
[282] "The Aide-memoire from the Indian Embassy in China to the Chinese Foreign Ministry," 26 August 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 33.
[283] "The Unofficial Note from the Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India Menon to China's Ambassador to India Yuan Zhongxian," 18 October 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 35.
[284] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 20 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 350.
[285] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 August 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 431; "To K.M. Paniknnar," 19 October 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 436; "To K.M. Panikkar," 2 September 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 433.
[286] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 19 August 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 430.
[287] Yang, "Controversies over Tibet," p. 408.
[288] "To VK Krishna Meon," 18 August 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 1, p. 429.

especially after India notified China of the Tibetan delegation's departure for the negotiations in Beijing, caused Delhi to withdraw its lip service to China's claim of sovereignty over Tibet. As Communist China used force to create facts on the ground, India was forced to qualify its endorsement of China's claim, first in its note to Beijing on November 1st, by switching from the use of "Chinese sovereignty" to "Chinese suzerainty."[289] A part of Nehru's cable to Panikkar on November 20th is worth quoting, as it illustrates exactly what Nehru thought of the terms autonomy, sovereignty, and suzerainty:

> Regarding use of word 'sovereignty' or 'suzerainty," the question is rather academic. We have always laid stress on autonomy of Tibet. Autonomy plus sovereignty leads to suzerainty. Words are not important. What we do attach value to is autonomy of Tibet. We feel that as this matter may come up before the United Nations or might be otherwise raised, it is desirable to make out position clear to Chinese Government lest they may accuse us of misleading them later.[290]

In other words, neither India's earlier use of the concept "Chinese sovereignty," nor the later switch to the term "Chinese suzerainty" meant any substantial change to India's policy, in Nehru's opinion. Unfortunately, words *were* important to Beijing, as the Chinese Foreign Ministry clarified:

> The Tibetan question was entirely a domestic question of China… it was autonomy within Chinese sovereignty. This point was already acknowledged by the Indian government in its note to the Chinese government on August 26. The fact that when the Chinese were trying to exercise its national sovereignty and start liberating the Tibetan people… the Indian government was attempting to influence and prevent the Chinese government's exercising of national sovereignty is very hard not to astound the Chinese government.[291]

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[289] The Note from the Indian Government Forwarded by Ambassador Panikkar to the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, 1 November 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 42.
[290] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 20 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 350.
[291] "The Aide-memoire from the Chinese Foreign Ministry to India's Embassy in China"16 November 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 45.

The diplomatic "skirmish" between India and China during the First Tibetan Crisis ended with the Chinese note on November 16th. Delhi chose not to further challenge Beijing because Nehru felt that he had found something encouraging in this note besides those clichés about Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. However, for the CCP, since the Tibetan separatists had now been forced to go to Beijing to negotiate, the Indian silence implied China's victory over India in the diplomatic realm.[292] In a way, the state of the Tibet Question from this point to the outbreak of the Tibetan Rebellion nine years later resembles Schrodinger's Cat — multiple possibilities existed. Nehru's India saw Tibet's autonomy being preserved while Mao's China saw Chinese sovereignty being realized. Indeed, neither side was aware of this fundamental difference between their perceptions of the state of Tibet. In other words, the bomb of the Tibet Question was not defused but merely given another nine years' time.

The conclusion of the Seventeen-Point Agreement in May 1951 spelled a new age for China's relationship with India. The process of implementing the agreement in Tibet, characterized by China's expansion of its civil and military governance into Tibet proper from the autumn of 1951, also turned out to be a way for Communist China to learn more about India, especially its countless ties with Tibet. This knowledge inevitably affected Beijing's evaluation of Nehru's government.

Beijing realized India's value first through understanding the party-state's colossal difficulty in feeding its legion in Tibet. The communist force from China proper, comprised of both civil and military personnel, numbered approximately thirty thousand. This was a formidable force that had not been seen in Tibet since the 18th Century and was fifteen times larger than the expeditionary force that the Qing Empire sent to invade Tibet in 1909.[293] Furthermore, different from any other military expedition to Tibet in history, this force was intended to be stationed as a garrison force, which, with the inhospitable climate and terrain of the Tibetan plateau, posed a tremendous burden on the new regime's logistical system. The Chinese had to purchase food from the locals to meet their increased food needs, which quickly caused food prices in Tibet to soar. By the middle of 1952, highland barley, the principal cereal in Tibet, cost twice as much as on the eve of the Chinese entry of Lhasa.[294]

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[292] "India, knowing well that its political interference has failed, that [it's] militarily impotent, has to turn to economic means." "Opinions on the Trade with India," 4 February 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-06, p. 16.
[293] Dai, "Zhongguo dui Yindu zhanling 'Maikemahongxian' yinan diqu de fanying jiqi yiyi, xu" ["China's Reaction to India's Occupation of the Area South of the 'McMahon Line' and Its Significance, 1951-1954, continued"], *CPC History Studies*, no.1 (2015), p. 64, p. 68; see also Ji, *Baixue*, p. 98, p. 393, p. 430.
[294] This trend continued in 1953, when barley costed four times as high as in 1951. Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 1, p. 26.

Tibet's aristocratic and religious landlords, with enough food in their granaries to stabilize the market in short term, had no interest in selling their grain.[295] They did not like to see so many Chinese, who were foreigners to their eyes, at their doorstep. It was not the Qing-like rule that they expected from the peace agreement in Beijing, and they were certainly happy to let hunger help drive the Chinese out of Tibet.[296] The dilemma for the Chinese communist force was that they knew that the Tibetan elites were hiding food, but they could not force the Tibetans to open their granaries, since that would alienate the hearts and souls that Beijing wanted to win over. The food shortage therefore deepened. In the spring of 1952, a Chinese communist soldier's daily food ration was down to a quarter of the standard; it was supplemented with a certain amount of horse fodder.[297] General Zhang Guohua, commanding the party's entire military force in Tibet, had to check the remaining supplies at his disposal on a daily basis.[298] Finally, in April 1952, the plan to implement the Seventeen-Point Agreement was postponed because of the dire food shortage.[299]

Against this background, India entered the picture. In a telegram to the Tibet Work Committee on April 6th, 1952, Mao pointed out that one of the two ways out of the current grim situation was "to strengthen the [Tibet's] trade with India and with China proper."[300] In line with this general instruction, China quickly reached a trans-shipping agreement with India in late May, immediately opening a steady stream of supplies from China via India.[301] By the spring of 1953, Delhi's cooperation led Beijing to decide to develop this route as the major source of supplies to Tibet for "the following three to five years' time." In 1953, it linked the trans-shipping deal to the normal rice trade between the two countries and requested to purchase further goods from India, such as sugar, iron, and cloth, with money that India paid for Chinese rice, and to include those goods in cargoes to be transported to Tibet via India. Meanwhile, Tibet's trade with India after 1952 was directed not according to an economic logic, namely for profit, but according to a political one, in order to meet the demands resulting from the exercise of Chinese sovereignty in Tibet. The Chinese authorities in Tibet, as instructed by the CCP Central Committee, started to offer lucrative deals to

[295] Goldstein, *A History*, vol. 2, p. 252.
[296] Goldstein, *A History*, vol. 2, p. 187.
[297] Editorial Board, *Jiefang xizang shi* [*A History of Tibet's Liberation*] (Beijing: CCP Party History Press, 2008), p. 245.
[298] "Zhongguo dui yindu zhanling, continued," p. 65.
[299] The Central Committee's Telegram to the Southwest Bureau and the Tibet Work Committee, 6 April 1952, indirectly quoted from Ji, *Baixue*, p. 407.
[300] The Central Committee's Telegram to the Southwest Bureau and the Tibet Work Committee, 6 April 1952, indirectly quoted from Ji, *Baixue*, p. 407.
[301] Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 1, p. 30; "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 12 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 471; "Negotiations on Tibet," 21 June 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 477.

merchants in Tibet regardless of their nationality, hoping that they would bring back as many Indian goods as possible through all channels, including smuggling.[302]

All this, however, did not make India a friend in China's eyes. First of all, the whole project of providing for Tibet via the Indian route and market was intended, from the very beginning, to be an ad-hoc solution before the completion of highways to Tibet from the rest of the People's Republic of China. The long-term goal had always been to be "self-sufficient" and to "get rid of the dependence on India," which, in effect, meant absorbing Tibet into China's economic and political orbit.[303] In other words, nothing was done for the advancement of the Sino-Indian friendship. Second, while Nehru felt grateful to China for selling India rice at a time when it faced a nation-wide food shortage, no similar sentiment emerged in China because of India's cooperation on Tibet.[304] This is best illustrated by one recommendation from China's Ambassador to India, Yuan Zhongxian, regarding how to galvanize Tibet's trade with India: "[We] buy imports with high prices and sell exports with low prices, thereby filling Indian and Tibetan merchants with greed."[305]

In fact, after entering Tibet, the Chinese communists found some reasons for them to stay vigilant with regard to India. When examining Tibet's external trade, the party noticed that Tibet could no longer import rice from Bhutan in November 1950, a change that happened after the Battle of Chamdo.[306] The former Tibetan Finance Minister, citing the explanation from the "prince of Bhutan," reported that the "blockade was ordered by India." "If [Bhutan] failed to block the border, India would send troops to do it. Fearing that the Indian troops might come, Bhutan closed the border."[307] Considering the Indo-Bhutanese Friendship Treaty of 1949, which granted India the right to supervise Bhutan's diplomacy, the Chinese communists found this explanation persuasive. This "blockade," therefore, became a footnote to the belief that India had an "ulterior motive." Meanwhile, the Chinese noticed that in the winter of 1950, Tibetan wool faced a thirty-percent tariff in India, which had never happened before.[308] Toward the end of 1952, to the disappointment of the CCP, which was scrambling to expand Tibet's trade with the external world, India's Political Commissioner to Sikkim

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[302] "Counter-policies on India Implementing an Embargo over Tibet," 7 March 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-08, pp. 24-26.
[303] "Counter-policies on India Implementing an Embargo over Tibet," 7 March 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-08, pp. 24-25.
[304] "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 12 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 471.
[305] "Opinions on the Trade with India," 4 February 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-06, p. 16.
[306] Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 1, p. 27.
[307] "Bhutan Blocking the Border and Banning the Transportation of Rice to Tibet," 15 August 1951, *CFMA*, 118-00262-01(1), indirectly cited from Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 1, p. 27.
[308] Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 1, p. 27.

announced a new regulation on India's exports to Tibet, which considerably reduced the types of goods that Tibet could legally obtain from India.[309] Following this was a new permit system, instituted by India in early 1953 as a means of regulating Tibetan mule grooms entering India and Sikkim, which complicated the cross-Himalayan transportation and caused shipping costs to climb.[310] China's assessment of these changes at the beginning of 1953 was that India had imposed an "embargo" intended to sabotage China's rule in Tibet.[311] Ambassador Yuan reported to the Foreign Ministry that "India, knowing well that its political interference has failed, that [it is] militarily impotent, has to turn to economic means."[312] The CCP Politburo adopted this evaluation of Delhi's intentions and passed it on to the Tibet Work Committee.[313]

This interpretation of India's intentions by the Chinese government during the Cold War, which led to the myth of Indian interference in the Chinese literature, contains many unanswered questions.[314] What was the relationship between the alleged Indian-directed ban on exporting rice from Bhutan to Tibet in the autumn of 1950, and India's severe internal food shortage in the early 1950s? To what extent was the tariff imposed on Tibetan wool the result of the US ending imports of wool from Tibet via India? In fact, the theory that India attempted to undermine China's rule in Tibet through an "embargo" falls apart on closer inspections. Why did Delhi not introduce this supposed embargo in the winter of 1951, when Beijing's troops had just entered Tibet and its rule was in its most vulnerable position? Why did Delhi "turn to economic means" to "instigate internal chaos and conflict" in Tibet merely four months after it had agreed to trans-ship goods to Tibet for Beijing?[315] What was the connection between Beijing's ill-treatment of India, which had introduced a well-intentioned POW proposal on the Korean War at the UN in November 1952, and India's new exporting

[309] According to the regulation announced on 8 December 1952, out of 242 items affected, only 37 could be still sold freely, while the rest were either prohibited completely, or conditioned on certain situations, or restricted with varying quotas, or requiring some government permits. See "India's Political Commissioner to Sikkim Announcing a Regulation on Controlling the Exports to Tibet," 31 December 1952, *CFMA*, 105-00116-01(1), partially available at Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 1, p. 28.
[310] "Regarding the Authorities of India and Sikkim Suddenly Declaring that the Grooms of Xikang [Kham] and Qinghai Need to Apply for Permits and Visas before Their Entries," 2 April 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-10, partially available at Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 1, p. 29.
[311] "Please Report the Impacts which India's Embargo against Tibet Might Have on Us," 10 January 1953, *CFMA*, 105–00116–01(1), indirectly cited from Dai, "From 'Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai'," p. 72; "Opinions on How to Deal India Implementing an Embargo over Tibet," 14 February 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-07, indirectly cited from Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 1, p. 34; "Counter-policies on India Implementing an Embargo over Tibet," 7 March 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-08, pp. 24-26.
[312] "Opinions on the Trade with India," 4 February 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-06, p. 16.
[313] "Counter-policies on the Indian Implementing an Embargo over Tibet," 7 March 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-08, pp. 24-26.
[314] Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 1, pp. 24-37; Dai, "Yindu dui xizang defang," part 2, pp. 57-70.
[315] "Opinions on the Trade with India," 4 February 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-06, p. 16.

regulation in December, plus the new permit system introduced in 1953? Why did India impose an "embargo" of its own in 1952, while it had voted against an UN embargo resolution on China in 1951? None of these questions were touched upon during the internal consultations in Beijing. With hindsight, this absence demonstrates that the early Chinese foreign service was either incompetent, or deeply suspicious of India, or likely both.

With Delhi's timely and critical facilitation, Beijing established a foothold in Tibet after mid-1952. However, the longer the Chinese communists stayed in Tibet and the more acquainted they got with the land, the more dissatisfied they became with India. In July 1952, Beijing received an internal report about an Indian trade agent, who not only carried weapons and a radio into West Tibet, but also distributed "reactionary magazines" among the locals there. The report claimed that these materials, which had been printed in India, exaggerated China's casualties in Korea and held the CCP responsible for the rise of inflation and the drop in Tibetan living standards.[316] In June 1953, the Foreign Ministry received a report about Bhutan using the territory of Yatung to transport arms from India. Yang Gonsu, supervising Tibet's external matters after 1951, suggested two Indian "conspiracies against us," and further interpreted the transportation of arms—"done openly"—as a deliberate display of India keeping Yatung within its "sphere of influence."[317] In August 1953, Yang updated the Foreign Ministry on the Indian garrison force's "reckless behaviour," i.e., riding horses through the downtown of Gyantze, which in his opinion, was nothing but "parading power and arrogance."[318]

It was through a long process that Beijing came to realize that a border issue probably existed between India and Tibet. This process seems to begin with a note from India on August 26th, 1950, in which the Indian side expressed a wish, among many others, for China's respect of the "already-recognized Indo-Tibetan border" in the future. No evidence shows that Beijing at this moment had any idea of what this "already-recognized Indo-Tibetan border" actually meant. [319]

Only after a meeting seven months later did the Chinese side seemed to notice India's special interest on the border issue. On March 26th, 1951 in Beijing, the Indian Chargé

[316] "A Report to the Central Committee about the Indian Trade Agent Distributing Reactionary Magazines in Tibet," 28 July 1952, *CFMA,* 105-00095-01, pp. 1-2; "Reporting to the Ministry and the Southwest Bureau: The India Trade Delegation's Activities in Tibet," 28 August 1952, *CFMA,* 105-00095-01, pp. 20-21.
[317] "Request for Instruction regarding Bhutan Transporting Arms and Ammunitions via Our Yatung," 22 June 1953, *CFMA*, 118-00262-03, p. 5.
[318] "Opinions on How to Deal with the Indian Garrison Force's Reckless Actions," 17 August 1953, *CFMA,* 105-00114-16, pp. 35-36.
[319] "Note from the Indian Embassy in China to the Chinese Foreign Ministry," 26 August 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 33.

d'Affaires T.N. Kaul had a talk with Chen Jiakang, head of the Asia Division of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. Kaul alleged that many Chinese maps were incorrect, as they failed to show the "McMahon Line," when illustrating the division between India and Tibet, thereby depicting many Indian territories as Tibet's.[320] From this meeting, the CCP obtained and added the term "McMahon Line" to its lexicon about Tibet as well as India. Meanwhile, it is particularly worth highlighting Chen's response to Kaul. Having no idea of whether and where this line existed, Chen evaded the map issue with a diplomatic answer. He replied that he would forward to his superior Zhou "Mr. Kaul's personal opinion that does not stand for the Indian government's view" and that "according to premier's statement, all questions between India and China, including the border question, would be properly solved through normal diplomatic channels of discussion."[321] The second part of this answer was a commonly used trick by diplomats to avoid expressing one's own opinion by reciting earlier ones of other diplomats. And the first part downgraded Kaul's points to the status of a non-official message, thereby enabling the Chinese government to delay a straightforward and formal discussion with India on the border matter.

By the middle of 1951, the new government had progressed considerably in understanding the "border question." This was mainly thanks to the Foreign Ministry's international law consultant Zhou Gengsheng.[322] A report from him showed that Britain and India still considered the Simla Convention to be valid. He explained that during the Simla Conference, the Beiyang government objected merely to the "issue of dividing between Tibet and its neighbouring provinces and between Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet." But China was not bound, he emphasized, by this treaty because there was no Chinese signature. It is worth highlighting that Zhou's report contained no reference to the McMahon Line.[323] Behind this absence was a four decade-old hidden history: in 1914, the Tibetans secretly used their concession on the Indo-Tibetan border in exchange for Britain's support for Tibet's independence from China.

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[320] Dai, "Zhongguo dui Yindu zhanling," p. 70.

[321] For an example of Zhou Enlai's tight control of the Foreign Ministry, see "Acting Director Chen Jiakang's Talk with Councilor Kaul from the Indian Embassy regarding the Rice Question," 28 March 1951, 105-00081-07, *CFMA,* p. 26; the "premier's statement" was probably referred to the note to India on 16 November 1950, see "The Aide-memoire from the Chinese Foreign Ministry to India's Embassy in China,"16 November 1950, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 46; for more about Kaul-Chen talk on 26 March 1951, Dai, "Zhongguo dui yindu zhanling," p. 71.

[322] Born in 1889 in Changsha, China, Zhou received his master's degree in law from Edinburgh University and J.D. from Paris University. His accomplishments in the field of international law made him a consultant of the newly established Chinese Foreign Ministry in 1950.

[323] "The Historical Background regarding Tibet's Treaty," June 1951, *CFMA*, 105-00118-01(1), indirectly quoted from Dai, "Zhongguo dui yindu zhanling, continued," p. 73.

The CCP grasped some basics about the McMahon Line only after its troops entered Tibet proper and began to revisit the past from a Tibetan perspective. In Lhasa on November 8th, 1951, a Chinese communist officer had a meeting with the director of the Tibet Foreign Bureau, Surkhang Dzasa, inquiring about Tibet's relationship with India, the Simla Conference, and the Indo-Tibetan border. At this meeting, Surkhang confirmed that the Simla Convention was signed by the British and Tibetan representatives only. As to the border issue, Surkhang mentioned "a red line drawn by the British on a map" which caused "Tsona Dzong and a substantial area south of it, including Tawang, to be included within India." He highlighted, however, that there was no textual reference to this line in the Convention, except the two signatories' seals on the map. Surkhang equally stressed that the territories that became part of India according to that "red line" had actually continued to be run by Tibet after 1914, which "was never questioned" by British India.[324] And he added that in the middle of the Tibetan delegation's travel to Beijing for negotiation, India seized these territories by force against protests from the Kashag.[325]

Surkhang's account, in retrospect, represents merely one version of the past regarding the McMahon Line. It omitted, whether intentionally or unintentionally, certain crucial facts — such as Basil Gould's visit to Lhasa in 1936. Stirred by a Western traveler's accidental discovery that Lhasa's administration of Tawang had continued for over two decades after the Simla Conference, Delhi sent Gould, its Political Officer in Sikkim, to Lhasa to discuss this matter with the Kashag. In other words, contrary to Surkhang's testimony, Tibet's rule in Tawang *was* questioned after 1914. Most importantly, either out of fear toward the Red Chinese who were then stationed on Tibet's doorstep, or due to resentment toward India, which had not assisted Tibet against China in the past two years, Surkhang's account shirked Tibet's own responsibility for making the McMahon Line. Equally true as the fact that the British had drawn an arbitrary line on the map was the fact that Lhasa had agreed to it in

[324] Dai, "Zhongguo dui yindu zhanling," p. 70.

[325] In February 1951, Capitan Ralengnao Khathing reached Tawang with two hundred Assam Rifles soldiers, subsequently declaring that this land was henceforth under Indian administration according to the Simla Convention of 1914. The Chinese government and scholars have maintained the view that this was an underhand move by Delhi that took advantage of difficulties that China was facing at the time, including negotiating with Lhasa and fighting the Korean War. Chinese scholars have consistently ignored the fact that it was very much China's assertive actions in Korea and toward Tibet that prompted this move on India's part. India's capture of Tawang was, in fact, defensive in nature, and most importantly, based on the premise that Tibet was a country separate from China. See Wang Taiping*, Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiaoshi* [*Diplomatic History of People's Republic of China*], vol. 2 (1957-1969), (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1998), pp. 70-74; Xie Yixian, *Zhongguo waijiaoshi: Zhonghua renmin gongheguo shiqi 1949-1979* [*Diplomatic History of the People's Republic of China, 1949-1979*] (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Press, 2001), p. 260; Zhang Minqiu, *Zhongyin guanxi yanjiu 1947-2003* [*Sino-Indian Relations 1947-2003*] (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2004), p. 63; Wang Hongwei, *Dangdai zhongyin guanxi pingshu* [*An Appraisal of the Contemporary Sino-Indian Relations*] (Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 2009), p. 155.

exchange for Britain's diplomatic support. This was a deal between two equal parties. The Tibetans were well aware of, and had certainly clung to, the essence of this border-for-independence deal, as Gould reported of his talk with the Kashag in 1936:

> They regarded the adjustment of the Tibet-Indian boundary as part and parcel of the general adjustment and determination of boundaries contemplated in the 1914 Convention. If they could, with our help, secure a definite Sino-Tibetan boundary they would of course be glad to observe the Indo-Tibetan border as defined in 1914.[326]

It is worth adding that in the decades after 1914, for whatever reason, Britain did give support to Tibet, including helping to establish a modern army and the Foreign Bureau, while thwarting Nationalist China's attempts to penetrate Tibet by building the Indo-China Road through Tibet.[327] In other words, Surkhang's testimony effectively installed in the minds of the Chinese communists the myth that Tibet had been "wronged by empire."[328] This myth, along with the perceived evidence of Indian intervention and sabotage, only reinforced the party's original premise: India had "an ulterior motive."[329] Hence, while Nehru believed that friendship had been developing between India and China during this time, Beijing felt that China had been bearing with a beneficial but undignified bilateral relationship characterized by a Chinese "dependence" on India.

Conclusion

Nehru's adjustment policy toward China faced various challenges caused by China's invasion and subsequent occupation of Tibet and its intervention in Korea. Regarding the Tibetan crisis, Nehru directed his government to maintain "a benevolent spectator" policy. By denying Tibet's request for Indian aid and rejecting the US proposal to intervene, Nehru effectively put the two million Tibetans of the Lamaist state in a lone fight against Communist China, which used its military force numbering in the millions. India was the

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[326] Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem*, p. 205.
[327] Dong Zhiyong, "Kangri zhanzheng shiqi yingguo dui Xizang de qinglue [Britain's Invasion in Tibet during the War of Resistance against Japan]*," The Journal of Studies of China's Resistance War against Japan*, no. 1 (1994), pp. 124-46.
[328] Manjari Chatterjee Miller, *Wronged by Empire: Post-Imperial Ideology and Foreign Policy in India and China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).
[329] "On India Banning Exporting Supplies to Tibet," 28 January 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00116-05, indirectly from Dai, "Zhongguo dui yindu zhanling," p. 72; "On Government of India Notifying Our Country to Settle the Remaining Issues Regarding Tibet," 7 October 1953, *CFMA,* 105-00032-22, p. 75.

absent third party at the conclusion of the Seventeen-Point Agreement in Beijing in May 1951. Nehru's adjustment policy also made Delhi a champion of Beijing's cause during the Korean War, when Communist China was at war with the whole non-socialist world. India, for example, voted against or abstained from UN resolutions unfavourable to China while promoting those that were favourable. By the end of the Korean War, the heart of this policy — a conscious and incessant attempt to understand and cooperate with Communist China — remained intact. However, Nehru's adjustment policy was not an appeasement. The policy had a bottom line of maintaining India's existing border arrangements with Tibet, especially the McMahon Line, which was defined on paper in 1914 at the Simla Convention but had never been effectively established on ground. This was likely why Nehru appeared to acquiesce the Assam Government's seizure of Tawang by force in early 1951, a move that was in fact out of Patel's order.[330] In no way did Nehru intend his government to be or look obsequious to Beijing, especially after the latter's erratic and relentless behaviours toward India's painstaking efforts to mediate the Korean War in the early 1953. India ought to be not just "friendly," but "friendly and firm" toward China.

What sustained this friendly and cooperative China policy? First, Patel's death should not be underestimated. Toward the end of 1950, he had become convinced that Beijing harboured a deep distrust toward Delhi, despite what India had done for Communist China. As the only man who carried the same weight as Nehru within the Indian state apparatus, Patel unfortunately died soon after sharing with Nehru his interpretation of China's intentions. Nehru's approach to China was therefore unchallenged within India for the years to come. Second, an often-ignored factor is that Nehru believed that Tibetan autonomy was a fact, in the same way that he saw Communist China as a reality. This belief derived not only from his observation of Tibet's *de facto* independence for nearly four decades, but also from his confidence in the power of nature. He trusted that Tibet's harsh climate and inhospitable terrain would effectively contain the expansion of China's presence at the Tibetan Plateau, thereby still preserving Tibet's autonomy and forestalling any attempt to launch a major attack upon India from Tibet. Choosing not to aid Tibet in 1950/51 and later cooperating with Beijing in establishing Chinese rule there were all calculated moves by Nehru. He believed that his adjustments to China's rise would not jeopardize India's national security as well as

[330] Claude Arpi, "The Man Who Brought Tawang under India," *The Pioneer*, 10 September 2015, www.dailypioneer.com/2015/columnists/the-man-who-brought-tawang-under-india.html, accessed on 10 December 2019.

Tibet's autonomy in any meaningful way. In other words, so far as Nehru was concerned, India felt secure vis-à-vis China, even with the latter's ambitions regarding Tibet.

That India's China policy was based on a sense of security rather than one of insecurity betrays the fallacy of those Chinese interpretations, which often accuse India of inheriting after its independence the spirit of the "Great Game" with a constant interest in keeping Tibet a "buffer" between India and China.[331] A widely-quoted fact is that Nehru's Principal Foreign Affairs Advisor Bajpai once told the British explicitly that India wished to "retain Tibet as a buffer" but was short of "military resources" to do so.[332] It appears as though the people in charge of India's diplomacy had an "ulterior motive" toward China in 1950, and would have their wishes fulfilled if given the means. An often-ignored point is that India was, in fact, given such means at the juncture of 1950/51. In November 1950, the United States offered to "help" India deal with the ongoing crisis in Tibet because of Beijing's military operations there. Again, it was Bajpai who expressed India's disinterest in any outside "help," especially from Washington. Nehru reaffirmed this position later on.[333] In other words, however militarily unprepared India was in 1950, Nehru's government had a real option to intervene in the conflict between Tibet and China. That such an intervention did not happen, as it transpired, proved to result not from a lack of means, such as "military resources," but from an absence of will or an "ulterior motive." This unwillingness to confront Communist China based on a sense of security continued after the autumn of 1951, when Beijing began to occupy Tibet based on the peace agreement with the Tibetans.[334] The fallacy of applying terms like "Great Game" and "buffer" to understanding Nehru's policy toward China and Tibet is as follows: Britain felt insecure with the expansions of both Russia and China into Central Asia in the late 19th Century, while the Republic of India, as far as Nehru was concerned, was confident toward Communist China's ambition over Tibet in the mid-20th Century. In other words, Nehru had no intention, in the same way as the British Empire did in the past, to play a "Great Game" in Tibet. It is worth adding that in contrast to Delhi's poise and restraint on the Tibet Question, Beijing's all-out intervention in Korea from

[331] The term "Great Game" refers to the struggle primarily between the Russian Empire and the British Empire for supremacy in Central Asia. It effectively ended in 1907, when they entered a treaty that reconciled their conflict of interest there.
[332] Shakya, *The Dragon*, p. 58; Menon, *Many Worlds*, p. 270.
[333] "Nehru and the United States," 3 November 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 528.
[334] For Nehru's supportive attitudes toward the Sino-Nepalese relationship and Sino-Burma relationship, see "Cable to K.M. Panikkar," 2 October 1951, *SWJN*2, vol. 16, part 2, pp. 643-44; for a seemingly insignificant but actually powerful illustration of Nehru's relaxation with the CCP's occupation of Tibet, i.e. his handling of the education issue of the borderland people of India, see "To Bisnuram Medhi," 4 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, pp. 363-64.

1950 onward shows that it was Communist China who was playing a "Great Game" and maintaining a neighbour as a "buffer" between itself and the outside world.

The third factor for the continuation of China's existing policy was the concept of suzerainty. The Republic of India was a democracy, in which the government faced pressure from its own people for a reasonable explanation about its stance toward any major change in the country's external environment. The Chinese occupation of Tibet, India's largest neighbour and a virtually independent country, was one such change. Indian anxiety about this geopolitical change was assuaged by Nehru's depiction of Beijing's activities in Tibet as "exercising … suzerainty," implying that the Tibetans were left with a considerable degree of autonomy. [335] The convergence of many other factors made this public justification successful. These factors included Nehru's belief that Tibetan autonomy was a fact, one that was established by decades of virtual independence and guarded by Tibet's unique climate and terrain. Second, both India and Tibet had to face the fact that China had never recognized Tibet's independence and had repeatedly claimed sovereignty over Tibet. Most importantly, the CCP adopted a moderate and gradualist approach toward implementing the peace agreement with Tibet. Although from the standpoint of the Chinese communists they were simply re-establishing China's sovereignty, logistical difficulties forced the CCP to concede more to the Tibetans than they would have preferred. This situation in Tibet, when viewed by the Indian people as well as Nehru, looked very much like Beijing merely practicing suzerainty.[336]

In contrast to India's China policy, China's approach to India did not receive much challenge from India. This was partly because China was the one setting the pace of Sino-Indian interactions through military action and confrontational acts. It was also related to the CCP's low expectations of India, namely a consistent, deep-seated distrust. The party suspected that Nehru's government was under Western influence and had "an ulterior motive" toward Tibet. This was why, after India sided with the UN decision in July 1950 to repel North Korea's aggression, it immediately faced open criticism from China again, after half a year of silence in the wake of Indian recognition of the new regime in December 1949.

Two mechanisms were at work here in forging this conceptualization about India. The first was that the CCP had no trouble inheriting all viewpoints about the Tibetan question from its foe in civil war, the Nationalist Party of China. The change of regime in China proper only

[335] "Negotiations on Tibet," 21 June 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 476.
[336] "The Chinese today, on the other side of our border in Tibet, are putting up Tibetan schools for the Tibetans, and not interfering with their ways." "To Bisnuram Medhi," 4 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 363; "Negotiations on Tibet," 21 June 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 476.

altered the carrier of these nationalist ideas, such as the belief that Tibet was part of China, that British interference had created and sustained a separate Tibet, and that Nehru's India had succeeded Britain in maintaining that policy. The second mechanism was that the party was a communist party. From a communist point of view, Nehru and his government could not be trusted at all. The Lhasa incident in the summer of 1949 therefore appeared not only to verify Comrade Stalin's "kind" warning about foreign intervention, but also prompted Mao to accelerate the party's endeavours to incorporate Tibet. The latter resulted in the CCP's military operations on its southwest front in the autumn of 1950, aimed at ending nearly four decades of virtual Tibetan independence.

For Beijing, the diplomatic struggle with India over Tibet in the second half of 1950 — the First Tibet Crisis — only confirmed its understanding of Tibet and India. The use of the term "sovereignty" by Panikkar in August and by Menon in October showed that the Indians agreed with the Chinese government about the nature of China's relationship with Tibet. In other words, while Tibetan autonomy from China was a fact from Nehru's perspective, Chinese sovereignty in Tibet was a fact from the Chinese communist standpoint. India's subsequent shift to the term Chinese suzerainty, therefore, was equivalent to rejecting an established reality. The timing of this shift — after the party's sweeping victory at the Battle of Chamdo — only showed that India had been meddling until then and stopped only when China demonstrated its commitment and power. All the diplomatic notes from Delhi during the Tibetan crisis, meant to advise and reassure Beijing, became evidence of Indian interference and reflected Delhi's "ulterior motive." Indeed, in the exchange of notes from late October to early November, almost every Indian message was met with a tit-for-tat Chinese counter-message. After Beijing's note on November 16th, this argument over Tibet through diplomatic notes was called to an end, which, in the eyes of Beijing, was a success of its unwavering diplomatic struggle with Delhi. "Victors should not be judged and those who have achieved victories must be correct."[337] The existing Chinese premise about Nehru's India was therefore not only unchallenged, but also reinforced after the First Tibet Crisis.

The process of establishing sovereignty in Tibet based on the peace agreement in 1951 led the Chinese government to further explore what India meant to Communist China. Delhi actually proved useful in helping consolidate China's re-integration of Tibet. This was because, for any force alien to the Tibetan plateau, it was always easy to defeat the Tibetans in one or two decisive battles but hard to establish an effective and permanent rule there. The

[337] For the alleged Stalin's saying in one meeting with Liu Shaoqi in Moscow in 1949, see Shi, *Zai lishi*, p. 414.

logistical difficulties that the party's expeditionary force experienced after their entry of Tibet proper and which deteriorated into a food crisis in the spring of 1952 forced Beijing to turn to Delhi for facilitation. The timely food transit deal reached with Nehru's government in May 1952 and the subsequent large quantity of supplies to Tibet gained by stimulating trade with India proved that India was not just valuable, but actually indispensable. Overall, however, the longer the Chinese communists stayed in Tibet, the more they found about what was perceived to be India's interference and unjustified interests there. The CCP noticed that at the time of Tibet's liberation, Bhutan stopped exporting rice to Tibet and Tibet's wool received a high tariff in India. The party suspected that Nehru's government was the one behind these developments with the aim of adding difficulties to the party's endeavour to recover Tibet, an assessment that was also used to explain the so-called "Indian embargo" on Tibet in the end of 1952. Furthermore, the gradual spread of Beijing's rule across the Tibet proper brought the Chinese into direct contact with India's presence in Tibet. And these encounters — from the Indian trade agent carrying weapons and undesirable printing materials in Ali, West Tibet, to the freely strolling Indian garrison force in Gyantze, South Tibet — were all annoyances for Communist China. From the double prism of nationalism and communism, India's presence in Tibet was viewed as a continuation of British imperialism. That India did not surrender its interests there before China's campaign in Tibet in 1950 and still kept them afterwards proved, from Beijing's standpoint, India's "ulterior motive" over Tibet.

The seeds of the border dispute between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China were also planted in this period. The CCP vaguely realized that a potential border dispute existed between India and China in the summer of 1950, and in early 1951 the term "McMahon Line" entered the party's lexicon surrounding Tibet through a friendly talk between Chinese and Indian officials. But before the Chinese entry of Tibet proper, Beijing's own research on the border issue carried the regime only to the point of concluding that China was not bound by the Simla Convention, given the absence of a signature from the Beiyang government's representative; the McMahon Line remained a mystery. It was after a consultation with the director of the Tibet Foreign Bureau in November 1951 that the party finally gained a preliminary understanding of the McMahon Line. The Tibetan testimony confirmed not only the party's earlier evaluation of the Simla Convention, but also depicted India, at the time the that Tibetans were starting to negotiate with Beijing in early 1951, treacherously seizing a considerable swath of Tibetan territory south of the McMahon Line, an area that Tibet had ruled for nearly four decades almost without challenge. However, until

the end of the Korean War, the CCP did not probe further into the border issue, because the new Chinese state had more than enough on its plate. The imperatives of supplying its personnel in Tibet and struggling with the Americans in Korea caused the party to hide grudges against Nehru's India on matters regarding Tibet, including the border issue. In short, however close China's relationship with India might have appeared by the middle of 1953, the premise of China's approach to India remained the same as it had been from the beginning.

Comparing the Sino-Indian relationship at the end of the Korean War with that at the turn of 1949/50 generates the following general observations. First, the dynamics of this bilateral relationship were set by the People's Republic of China, which was vigorously pursuing national integrity and security; by comparison, India, feeling secure, generally chose to adjust to Beijing's geo-strategic moves, which included occupying Tibet and intervening in Korea. Second, on the surface, the two new Asian giants were transformed from strangers into acquaintances after the period in discussion. They seemed to have overcome the biggest hurdle between them — the Tibetan question — and found common ground in ending the military conflict in Korea. Third, with the benefit of hindsight, it feels bizarre and ironic to see how this hurdle was overcome. The core of the Tibetan question was handling Tibet's status vis-à-vis China. Nehru's India attached less importance to what China's right was called, be it suzerainty or sovereignty, than to the preservation of the substance of Tibetan autonomy. Mao's China certainly wanted to win over the Tibetans, but re-establishing China's sovereignty in Tibet was the overriding pursuit. What hardened the division between Delhi and Beijing was that, for the Indians, Tibetan autonomy from China was a *fact* in the dispute between Lhasa and any Chinese government, while for the Chinese, the *fact* was Chinese sovereignty in Tibet. Unfortunately, no evidence shows that either side was fully aware of the degree of difference between their views of Tibet. The irony of history is that, toward the end of November 1950, both sides became convinced that their understanding of fact had been accepted by the other side. It was this bizarre misunderstanding, which both parties were unaware of, that led to the later amelioration of Sino-Indian relationship on the surface.

Chapter 3: The Honeymoon, 1954-57

Introduction

Awaara, also known as The Vagabond, is an Indian all-time classic film produced in 1951. After the movie was introduced to China in 1955, it became an instant success, leaving a life-long impression in the minds of the generation of Chinese born after 1949. Possibly, it was the first time that the ordinary people of the two new Asian giants found an echo of themselves in the other. This movie's success in China was a small footnote to the honeymoon period of the Sino-Indian relationship, which generally covered the period from 1954 to 1957. This era was marked by the absence of open Chinese criticism of India and by an unprecedented level of cultural, economic, and political exchange between the two countries. This chapter discusses how India and China formed such a relationship by exploring their governments' respective deliberations at various key moments. These moments include the Sino-Indian negotiation on Tibet in spring of 1954, Zhou's visit to India in the summer, and Nehru's visit to China in autumn. The ensuing Sino-Indian friendship and cooperation, as demonstrated by the success of the Bandung Conference of 1955, will be outlined. As in every relationship, conflict in one form or another was always present. Therefore, the primary question regarding the Sino-Indian honeymoon period is: to what degree did the two countries trust each other? Finally, the evolution of the border conflict, which would lead to the 1962 War, is also a focus of this chapter.

China's Approach to India

Beijing did not receive Delhi's proposal to discuss Tibet in the early autumn of 1953 well.[338] The Chinese Foreign Ministry interpreted the proposal to settle for good "all remaining problems" about Tibet as India despicably "going after some small gains in Tibet."[339] The Chinese believed that Delhi was attempting to capitalize on China's dependence on India to provide supplies for its personnel in Tibet and to mediate the Korean War. However, China accepted the Indian proposal. Of course, China did not intend for the negotiation to unfold on India's terms; its reply to India stipulated that what would be discussed was not Tibet, but the "Tibet Region" of China, a new term adopted in the CCP's Seventeen-Point Agreement with

[338] "Message from Nehru to Zhou Enlai," 2 September 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00032-01, pp. 3-5.
[339] "The Government of India Notified Our Country and Requested to Solve Pending Issues Regarding Tibet," 7 October 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00032-22, p. 75.

the Tibetans.[340] Meanwhile, Beijing ordered its officials in Tibet to study possible intentions of India and obtain information about the "imperialist privileges" left there by Britain.[341]

Within two weeks of receiving Beijing's order, the Tibetan front produced a detailed reply. On October 21st, Zhang Jingwu, the plenipotentiary of the central government in Tibet, cabled a long telegram to Beijing. He agreed with the ministry's initial overall assessment, furnished it with critical information from meticulous research, and offered recommendations. Zhang also believed that India had "an ulterior motive," given that China did not have full knowledge of the imperialist legacy in Tibet, was unable to control the frontier, and depended on supplies from India.[342] On the basis of interviews with former Tibetan officials, Zhang reported that Nehru, in his proposal, had withheld several crucial facts that pointed to the existence of a Sino-Indian border dispute in Tibet.[343] He therefore urged Beijing to adopt an express stand by stating categorically that China viewed the Simla Convention as illegitimate and India's occupation of the territory south of the McMahon Line as illegal. In short, Delhi should be informed that the Sino-Indian border in Tibet should be re-negotiated in the future. Although he agreed that it remained beneficial for China to delay the border negotiation at present, Zhang stressed that such a statement must be made, because otherwise "it would be seen as our acquiescence, which would play into the hands of India and leave us in an unfavorable future position."[344] Overall, Zhang endorsed Beijing's decision to negotiate with India, as he felt that the incessant frictions with India, which derived from British imperialism and pestered Communist China's rule in Tibet, could be exploited by "bad elements" to the detriment of Sino-Indian relationship.[345]

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[340] 15 October 1953, *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 1, p. 331.
[341] "The Government of India Notified Our Country and Requested to Solve The Pending Issues Regarding Tibet," 7 October 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00032-22, p. 75.
[342] "Regarding Various Questions of the Sino-Indian Relationship about Tibet," 21 October 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00032-23, pp. 76-82.
[343] According to the Tibetans, the current status of the Indo-Tibetan border rested on the Simla Convention of 1914, which, however, was signed only between the Tibetan and British Indian representatives and behind the back of the Chinese representative. One Tibetan official said, "if India recognizes Tibet [always] as an integral part of China, it should abrogate the treaty." Furthermore, the Tibetans claimed that they lodged several protests, soon after the Simla Conference, on the exact location of the Indo-Tibet border, or the McMahon Line. It was because they found the British Indian government had seized two borderland mountains, scared to the Tibetans, when applying the line on ground. They were indignant at the current Indian occupation stretching as north as incorporating the Tawang area. "Regarding Various Questions of the Sino-Indian Relationship about Tibet," 21 October 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00032-23, pp. 76-82.
[344] "Regarding Various Questions of the Sino-Indian Relationship about Tibet," 21 October 1953, *CFMA,*105-00032-23, p. 78.
[345] "Regarding Various Questions of the Sino-Indian Relationship about Tibet," Telegram from Zhang Jingwu to Chinese Foreign Ministry, 21 October 1953, W531021,105-00032-23,76. For examples of frictions, see "Opinions on How to Deal with the Indian Garrison Force's Reckless Actions," 17 August 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00114-16, pp. 35-36; "Note to Tibet Work Committee Secretary Zhang Jingwu regarding the Indian Business

On the basis of Zhang's telegram, the Chinese Foreign Ministry compiled a report for the upcoming negotiations on Tibet.[346] Apart from dividing the issues to be discussed into twelve categories and outlining China's corresponding positions — all to the effect of pushing out India's presence in Tibet — this report forged Beijing's understanding of the basics of the Sino-Indian border. For example, the border was divided into the "eastern sector," the "middle sector," and the "western sector."[347] The report concluded that no border at any section had ever been delineated.[348] This conclusion reflected Communist China's position that the Simla Convention was an illegitimate treaty. Echoing Zhang's opinion, the report argued that China must "in whatever way" send a clear message to India that it disproved of the current border status.[349]

Zhou did not adopt this recommendation. But the final decision of not raising the border problem was not made until the first three rounds of negotiation finished. The Indians, surprisingly, did not raise the border issue. On January 7th, one day before the fourth Sino-Indian talk, the Sino-Indian Negotiation Committee had its first meeting. Established to provide consultancy to the Chinese negotiators, this committee was comprised of nine senior officials from the concerned departments of the party-state, including the Foreign Ministry, the Tibet Work Committee, the Central Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the Central United Front Work Department. Two Tibetans were appointed by the Dalai Lama and represented the old civil and military authorities of Tibet before liberation. At this meeting, Zhou announced how Communist China saw the Tibet Question and how it would negotiate with India. [350]

According to Zhou, the problem between India and China arose from India's attempt to inherit British imperial privileges in Tibet. Delhi's agreement to withdraw Indian military personnel from Tibet was the result of Tibet's "return to the big family of the motherland" and India's inability to retain its standing under the new conditions there. India was reluctant, rather than eager, to treat China on an equal footing, and was still tempted not to relinquish

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Affairs Representative Bringing Weapons, Radios, Reactionary Magazines to Tibet," 30 July 1952, *CFMA*, 105-00095-01, pp. 3-5.

[346] "A Brief Account of Indian Privileges in Tibet," 19 December 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00153-02, pp. 10-13.

[347] Dai, "Zhongguo dui yindu zhanling, continued," p. 63.

[348] "While the eastern and middle sectors have never been delimited, the western sector, except a small proportion, hasn't been delimited either." Dai, "Zhongguo dui yindu zhanling, continued," p. 63.

[349] Dai, "Zhongguo dui yindu zhanling, continued," p. 63.

[350] The committee consisted of eleven people, who were selected from the Foreign Ministry, the Tibet Work Committee, the Central Ethnic Affair Commission, the Central United Front Work Department, and the Dalai Lama's government of Tibet.

its privileges in Tibet. In other words, the problem came from India instead of China. However, the border problem was not classified by Zhou as one of the "issues that were ripe for settlement," because the materials collected on it were insufficient; instead, it was treated as a "pending case" to be discussed with India in future negotiations. The overall approach to the negotiations was to deal with India according to the Five Principles introduced by Zhou on the Indian delegation's arrival. On a global level, China should seek to build a United Front with India to oppose the United States.[351] In retrospect, it appears that, at least on the matter of Tibet in early 1954, Beijing also adopted a "friendly and firm" approach to India.[352]

The best illustration of this approach is how Zhou handled the arrival of the Indian delegation on December 31st, 1953. He proved himself an equal match to Nehru in terms of being diplomatic. In front of the Indians, he gave little indication that he disliked Nehru's message four months ago, despite having already concluded that Nehru "tried to trap" China into accepting India's established facts in the Himalayas.[353] After a warm welcome to the Indian delegation, Zhou explained to the Indians what he called "the guidance of New China's India policy," which consisted of five principles. The Chinese Prime Minister reassured Nedyam Raghavan, head of the Indian delegation, that "as long as [we] always refer to these principles… any pending problem ripe [for settlement] could all be raised and discussed." Raghavan apparently failed to grasp the implication of this change in wording. By reducing the scope of negotiations from "all remaining problems" to "any pending problem ripe [for settlement]," Zhou successfully removed the border issue from the negotiations.

Despite the limited scope of discussion and an agreed-upon framework of negotiation, however, the subsequent talks did not go smoothly. The negotiation, which had been scheduled to play out for only six weeks, carried on for four months. The reason behind this slow progress was Beijing's obsession with establishing sovereignty or direct control in Tibet. It entailed an overhaul of the existing Indo-Tibetan relationship in daily life. No more trade should be allowed outside designated locations. No more direct contact should be permitted between Indian trade representatives and Tibetan producers, such as wool farmers. Indian trade representatives should no longer be allowed to co-chair judicial hearings that

[351] *Zhou Enlai nianpu 1949-1976,* p. 342; Yang, *Cangsang jiushinian,* pp. 215-16; Yang, *Zhongguo fandui waiguo*, p. 265.
[352] For the India's "friendly and firm" attitude toward China adopted as early as in the end of 1952, see "To G.L. Mehta," 10 December 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 20, p. 459; "To Thakin Nu," 6 March 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 21, p. 535; "To N. Raghavan," 19 April 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 22, p. 355.
[353] Letter from N. Ragavan to Zhou Enlai, 2 September 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00032-01, pp. 3-5; Harder, "*Defining Independence,"* p. 121.

involved Indian expatriates in Tibet. Pilgrims should travel only through the few designated passes in the future. And the Indian hospitals in Tibet should henceforth be open only to Indians.[354] In short, Beijing strove to regulate every aspect of the existing Indo-Tibetan relationship, almost to the point of insulating Tibet from India. This approach, at the expense of the commercial interests of India in particular, was naturally resisted by the Indian side. Raghavan protested once mildly that the Chinese were actually "mechanically applying" the equality principle to the detriment of the mutual benefit.[355]

To Beijing's delight, the two sides finally reached an agreement on April 29th, 1954. It was largely in China's favour, with virtually all Indian presence and rights being removed. Furthermore, these achievements did not come at the expense of the Sino-Indian relationship. On the contrary, India proved happy to continue supporting China and its presence in Tibet, particularly in terms of supplying food to the large number of communist troops there. Probably due to the difficulty of reaching an agreement during the course of negotiations and a fear of potential complications, Beijing did not issue a statement about its stance on the Sino-Indian border. But again, Zhou probably thought he had patched this loophole by stating at the very beginning that only "pending problems ripe [for settlement]" would be dealt with this time. In other words, there were *un*-ripe pending questions and China would and could legitimately raise them in the future for further negotiation.

Before long, Beijing realized that India's value for China lay not just in Tibet but also in Southeast Asia, where the United States was building an alliance system against China.[356] In May, Nehru invited Zhou to visit India and in June, he repeated it. After weighing the pros and cons, the CCP's fear of "a great loss" in building an international United Front in Asia outweighed its fear that India might raise the thorny border issue.[357] Zhou accepted the invitation, and his visit to India from June 25-28th, 1954 proved successful on many aspects. First, he earned a kind of personal friendship or fondness from Nehru. "He strikes one as a

[354] "The Record of the Sixth Meeting regarding the Sino-Indian Relations on the Tibet Region of China," 11 January 1954,105-00136-06, pp. 44-50; "The Record of the Tenth Meeting regarding the Sino-Indian Relations on the Tibet Region of China," 2 February 1954, *CFMA*, 105-00137-03, pp. 25-36.
[355] See "The Record of the Ninth Meeting regarding the Sino-Indian Relations on the Tibet Region of China," 21 January 1954, *CFMA*, 105-00137-02, pp. 14-24; also see "A Brief Account of Indian Privileges in Tibet," 19 December 1953, *CFMA*,105-00153-02, p. 11.
[356] Niu Jun, "Chongjian 'zhongjian didai' – zhongguo yazhou zhengce de yuanqi 1949-55[Reconstruct the 'Intermedia Zone' – The Rise of China's Asia Policy 1945-55]," *The Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 2 (2012), pp. 61-80.
[357] "Comment on the Central Committee's Telegram to Zhou Enlai regarding the Approach to Winning Actively Over Southeast Asian Countries," June 1954, Liu Shaoqi, *Jianguo yilai Liu Shaoqi wengao* [*Liu Shaoqi's Writings since the State's Establishment*] [hereafter: *JYLSW*], vol. 6, (Beijing: Central Literature Press, 2008), pp. 268-69.

frank and forthright person."[358] Second, he discovered a convergence of the two countries' strategic interests in Asia. Nehru was, in fact, devising an "Area of Peace" in Indochina by applying the code of conduct that China and India recently agreed on Tibet: The Five Principles.[359] This idea naturally made a good match for Beijing's plan to forge the so-called "Asia Peace Convention," a tool that was intended to counter Washington's move to build an anti-communist bloc in Asia, which later became the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.[360] Third, India proved its diplomatic value not in the distant future but right away. On knowing Beijing's wish to establish contacts with China's Asian neighbours, Nehru immediately laid out a workable blueprint for Zhou: China would first issue a statement with India to declare the application of the Five Principles to their bilateral relationship; it would be followed by similar moves between China and Burman, and then between China and Indonesia, with India's facilitation.[361]

The encouraging prospects that emerged from Zhou's trip to India infused China's foreign policy with new momentum in the summer of 1954. Immediately after Zhou's return to China on July 6th, an enlarged CCP Politburo meeting convened to discuss China's future foreign affairs. Zhou summarized his diplomatic work since the opening of the Geneva Conference and told his colleagues with joy that "originally, our door was expected to remain closed for another year, but now it no longer appears to be so."[362] Mao added: "In fact, a propitious situation is compelling us to go out," after he expressed his satisfaction with Zhou's diplomatic achievements. At this meeting, Mao brought out the old concept of an "intermediate zone" which he had proposed in 1946. Mao told his audience that in the future, China should reach out to the countries in the "intermediate zone" by applying the principle of "peaceful co-existence," thereby isolating the United States and ultimately "protecting our country and socialism."[363] The next day, at the Standing Committee of the Political Consultative Conference, Mao coined a new term for the target of China's diplomacy in the future: "International United Front for Peace."[364] Embedding the Five Principles into the

[358] "To U Nu," 27 June 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 26, pp. 408-9; see also "Conversation with Chou En-lai I," 25 June 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 26, pp. 366-76.
[359] "Conversation with Chou En-lai II," 25 June 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 26, pp. 376-83.
[360] Niu, "Chongjian 'zhongjian didai'," p. 75.
[361] "Conversation with Chou En-lai V," 27 June 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 26, p. 398.
[362] "Record of the Report by Zhou Enlai on the Enlarged Meeting of CCP Politburo", 7 July 1954, indirectly quoted from Jin Chongji, "Zhou's Biography, 1949-1976", Central Party Literature Press, 1998, p.189.
[363] "To Cooperate and Seek Solidarity with All Countries Wishing for Peace", 7 July 1954, Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong wenji* [*Mao Zedong's Papers*] [hereafter: *MZWJ*], vol. 6, (Beijing: People's Press, 1999), pp. 332-37.
[364] "Gist of Mao Zedong's Speech at the Fifteenth Meeting of the First National Political Consultative Conference", 8 July 1954, Pang Xianzhi and Jin Chongji*, Mao Zedong zhuan 1949-1976* [*Biography of Mao Zedong, 1949-1976*], vol. 1, (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2003), pp. 562-63.

traditional "International United Front" theory, this term reconciled the logical contradiction that previously existed between waging revolution in Asia and conducting diplomacy with Asian states.[365]

To ensure the success of this new policy, China began to attach great importance to India's friendship. Beijing's handling of Nehru's visit to China in October 1954 was the best illustration of this change in the approach to India. The CCP gave Nehru an unprecedented mass welcome in Beijing, the preparation for which was the product of Zhou's direct and meticulous supervision. A day before Nehru's arrival, for example, he convened a staff meeting to explain the significance of this event. According to him, it formed a part of China's endeavour to build an "International United Front of Peace" against the "warmonger" United States; given India being "the leader of the neutral and peaceful group of capitalist countries" and "another Asian country," China should "double efforts" to seek solidarity with its "people" and "ruling class."[366] In the meetings with Nehru, the Chinese leaders, in an apparent effort to highlight the common ground between India and China, talked extensively about applying the Five Principles.[367] This investment on Nehru paid off handsomely. India played an instrumental role in Beijing's dealing with Washington in the following year, on issues like releasing the American "spy" crew and opening the ambassadorial talks in Europe.[368] With Nehru's full backing, Zhou performed a dazzling show at the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955, significantly improving Beijing's image in the world.

However, despite China's close diplomatic cooperation with India, which characterized the three golden years after the 1954 Agreement, Chinese leaders kept reservations. During the days of the "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai [India and China are brothers]," the CCP still positioned India only as a "friend" rather than "brother" of China. On the eve of Nehru's visit to Beijing in October 1954, Zhou explained to the relevant officials why they had invested so much in preparing an unprecedented welcome for the Indian Prime Minister:

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[365] Niu, "Chongjian 'zhongjian didai'," p. 77.
[366] The speech about Nehru's visit on 18 October 1954, *ZENP 1949-1976*, p. 420.
[367] In his first encounter with Nehru, Mao, for example, began his talking with that "We, Orientals, have all been humiliated by Western imperialism." See "The Four Talks with Indian Prime Minister Nehru", 19, 21, 23, 26 October 1954, *MZWJ,* vol. 6, pp. 361-73; also "Foreign Policies of America and China," 20 October 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 27, pp. 11-20.
[368] "Reply on the Thank Dinner to Menon and the Gist for the Upcoming Talk with him," 20 August 1955, *CFMA*, 105-00058-17, pp. 57-59

> "The reason was simple: To brotherly countries [i.e. socialist countries], [we] don't have to do that, just as one person does not line up his whole family to welcome his true brother. Nehru is no brother to us and we, therefore, treat him differently from brotherly countries."[369]

A second example is Beijing's reading of the Avadi Resolution, which the Indian Congress Party announced in early 1955 as a means of transforming India into a "society of socialistic pattern." But from the regime's eyes, this project was anything but socialism. That this resolution still opposed class struggle and relied on parliamentary democracy betrayed its nature of "capitalist revisionism." [370] In short, from Beijing's standpoint, Nehru was not a communist nor would India become communist under his leadership.

This assessment of India's fundamental character and domestic politics inevitably affected Beijing's interpretation of India's general foreign policy. In early 1956, the Foreign Ministry produced a comprehensive evaluation of India, including a review of its foreign policy since independence in 1947. It recognized that India had adopted an overall policy of peace and neutrality, and described the bilateral relationship between China and India since 1949 as one of healthy progression marked by close cooperation on various issues, including Taiwan, Indochina, Korea, and the Sino-American ambassadorial talks.[371]

The second half of the review was, however, devoted to explaining the "double-faced policy" adopted by India toward China. It noted that Nehru at one public occasion claimed that China "might have kept something malicious" behind its public endorsement of the Five Principles. It criticized the Indian government for even toying with the "ridiculous" proposal of maintaining the status quo across the Taiwan Strait, which "in effect would create two Chinas." As for Tibet, the review interpreted India's proposal of negotiation and its procrastination as India attempting to retain the privileges of the British Raj. It also warned that India had never ended its interference with the affairs in Tibet, given its sluggish implementation of the treaty that the two sides reached in 1954. The review suggested that "a struggle to some extent" would continue to exist in China's relationship with India, due to lingering frontier problems including "Ladakh's status," "Sikkim's status," and the "so-called McMahon Line."[372] As to the Five Principles, the review acknowledged their contribution to the improvement of the Sino-Indian relationship, but offered no comment beyond that.

[369] 18 October 1954, Li, *Dai waijiaojia,* vol. 3, p. 142.
[370] Untitled, 11 July 1955, *CFMA*, 105-00291-02, pp. 23-24.
[371] "Fundamentals about India," 25 February 1956, *CFMA,* 102-00055-01, pp. 44-51.
[372] "Fundamentals about India," 25 February 1956, *CFMA*, 102-00055-01, pp. 60-64.

Alongside Beijing's secret view of India's approach to Nepal — "consistently adopting a policy of interference …while claiming not to have interfered in Nepal's domestic politics" — this lack of further comment on the Five Principles suggests that Beijing never believed India was as genuinely committed to China as it claimed.[373]

This deep-seated distrust of India was taxing the Sino-Indian relationship on issues especially about Tibet. Shortly after the 1954 Agreement, India started to establish its border with Tibet by sending personnel to the middle sector, believing that the two sides had agreed on the relevant mountain passes there being international passes. These efforts annoyed China. According to the latter's understanding of the talks in Beijing in 1954, China had only agreed to avoid discussing the ownership of these passes. From China's standpoint, India's move to establish the Indo-Tibetan/China border in this sector amounted to Indian unilateralism. On July 17th, 1954, Beijing protested against the perceived Indian encroachment with a note to Delhi, thereby starting the dispute of Sino-Indian border in the middle sector.[374] For the next two and a half years, the dispute simmered in the form of military standoffs and periodic exchanges of diplomatic notes. While still pursuing a strategy of delay on the border problem, Beijing spared no effort in a diplomatic struggle with Delhi in defending every inch of land that the Tibetans claimed as theirs.[375] The rebellions in Khampa, which increasingly became a problem for Beijing in the second half of 1956, further complicated Beijing's relationship with Delhi. The CCP became paranoid about India colluding with the Tibetan ruling class, especially the Dalai Lama. The fact that during the 2500th Buddha Jayanti the Indians appeared to treat the Dalai Lama better than the Panchen Lama was interpreted by Beijing as a deliberate move reflecting an ulterior political motive.[376]

India's Approach to China

[373] "Fundamentals about Nepal," 25 February 1956, *CFMA*, 102-00055-06, pp. 298-300.
[374] Yang Gongsu, Zhongguo fandui, pp. 267-99; "Memorandum from Chinese Embassy in India to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs," 17 July 1954, *ZYLW*, vol. 1, p. 366; Lv Zhaoyi and Sun Jianbo, *Zhongyin bianjie wenti, Yinba lingtu jiufen yanjiu* [*Sino-Indian Border Problem and Indo-Pakistan Territorial Dispute*] (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2013), p. 111
[375] "Note Given by the Chinese Counsellor in India to the Ministry of External Affairs," 13 August 1954, *WP*, vol. 1, pp. 6-7; "Note Given by the Chinese Counsellor in India to the Ministry of External Affairs," 11 July 1955, *WP*, vol. 1, pp. 9-10; "Note Given by the Chinese Foreign Office to the Counsellor of India," 8 June 1956, *WP*, vol. 1, pp. 18-19.
[376] Chen Juping and Zhang An, "Shisishi dalai lama qitu yaoqing nihelu visit xizang shijian shulun: jiyu zhongguo waijiaobu jiemi dangan de shuli yu fengxi [Discussing the Incident of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Attempting to Invite Nehru to Visit Tibet: Reconstructing and Analyzing Based on Declassified Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives]," *South Asian Studies*, no. 4 (2015), p. 140, footnote.

Nehru's proposal to negotiate over Tibet, which he raised with Beijing in the autumn of 1953, was the corollary of "a set policy pursued from the beginning."[377] In the early 1950s, Nehru arrived at the conclusion that the unification of China under a communist regime had become a defining feature of the world order and would play an indispensable role in reducing global tension, which India's well-being as a country hinged on as well.[378] Not to accept this development in China meant "shutting our eyes to reality."[379] India should actively adjust to this change instead of resisting it; therefore, Nehru's approach to China was designed to be "firm but friendly."[380] It required India, in general, to befriend and cooperate with Communist China, but to be unyielding on interests that India considered vital.[381] This adjustment policy was, however, disrupted by the outbreak of the Korean War. Nehru found greater importance and urgency in stopping a new world war, which was the basis of "all other policies" of India, by mediating between the warring parties in Korea.[382] The condition for resuming the adjustment policy toward China returned once the Korean Armistice was signed on July 27th, 1953.

By this moment, India had already finished prioritizing its interests via-à-vis China. Those in Tibet were "not vital or important."[383] There was no reason justifying the support of the "feudal elements in Tibet" and therefore India "cannot interfere in Tibet."[384] Nehru believed himself and also tried to convince his government that the inhospitable climate and terrain of Tibet would automatically thwart any attempt to organize a major attack on India from there.[385] In his opinion, India's vital interests emerged only where its national defense rested. The latter contained two components. First, it saw the smaller Himalayan states as part of Indian national defense. Similar to Britain's attitude toward the Netherlands and Belgium before the WWI, India would not permit Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim to drift away from its diplomatic orbit, much less tolerate any intrusion into them.[386] Second, India must maintain the old border arrangements left by the British in 1947. The McMahon Line was, therefore, a

[377] Letter on 1 July 1954, *LCM,* vol. 3, p. 587.
[378] Letter on 27 January 1953, *LCM*, vol. 3, p. 235.
[379] "Letter to Chief Ministers," 2 August 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 694.
[380] Letter on 1 July 1954, *LCM*, vol. 3, p. 587.
[381] "Cable to Indian Mission, Lhasa," 6 September 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 652.
[382] "Letter to Chief Ministers," 2 August 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 696; Letter on 1 July 1954, *LCM*, vol. 3, p. 595.
[383] "Letter to Chief Ministers," 2 August 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p.695.
[384] "Friendly Policy toward China," 25 October 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 24, p. 596.
[385] "Letter to Chief Ministers," 2 August 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 695.
[386] "Cable to Indian Mission, Lhasa," 6 September 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 652.

"vital matter," on which India should give "no compromise."[387] In short, India would stand firm in the Himalayas as the general end of whatever regime in control of Tibet.

Nehru made many efforts to prepare Indian society for the possible exchanges in the negotiations with China, particularly in December 1953. In a parliamentary debate one week before the departure of the Indian delegation, Nehru addressed concerns about China's threat and categorically dismissed the rumour that Beijing was amassing a huge army within Tibet.[388] He reminded those Members of Parliament (MPs), who had been questioning the legitimacy of China's occupation of Tibet, that "at no stage in history… was the suzerainty of China denied."[389] Meanwhile, he also sought to reassure the Indian people. "There is nothing to discuss about the frontier," Nehru said unequivocally in a parliamentary debate, "so far as we are concerned, it was fixed long ago." By stating openly that no one across the Himalayas had questioned India's existing frontiers, Nehru seemingly also wished to sound out Beijing about the key interest that India must protect in the end.[390]

To diplomats, Nehru issued more specific instructions. He reminded T.N. Kaul, a key member of the delegation to Beijing, that India's policy toward China was "one of friendliness and co-existence, allied with firmness in regard to any interference with our basic rights" which "ultimately… is the preservation of the frontier." The task for the Indian delegation was therefore to have China agree to "India's well-declared policy that the line is a settled one and not open to discussion."[391] However, the Indian delegation should not raise this issue and should "express our surprise" if the Chinese do so and must walk out of negotiations if Beijing insists on discussing it.[392] Regarding the other issues, Nehru instructed the delegation to deal with China in "a friendly manner." For example, it could consider lifting the prohibition on some items such as petrol.[393]

On April 29th, 1954, after four months of hard bargaining, the Tibet Agreement was finally sealed with China. Its conclusion was rather late and would have been even later if Nehru had not pressured the Indian delegation to finalize the negotiations before the start of the Geneva Conference. He hoped that the treaty would create a "salutary effect" on international opinion

[387] "Letter to Chief Ministers," 2 August 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 19, p. 695
[388] "A Realistic Approach to Problems," 24 December 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 24, pp. 570-79.
[389] "The Indo-Tibetan Frontier Issue," 24 December 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 24, pp. 579-83.
[390] "A Realistic Approach to Problems," 24 December 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 24, pp. 570-79.
[391] "Friendly Policy toward China," 25 October 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 24, pp. 597-98.
[392] Bhutan's external relations was also on the forbidden list of India. See "The Beijing Conference," 3 December 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 24, p. 598.
[393] "The Beijing Conference," 3 December 1953, *SWJN*2, vol. 24, p. 598.

with the effect of promoting reconciliation.[394] But the treaty with China came at a considerable expense of India's interests in Tibet. Delhi gave away virtually all Indian assets and rights there, including military escorts, trade agencies, bungalows, and telegraph lines. Thus, Nehru's government immediately faced criticisms from within India, as it appeared to have conceded much more than it had received from Beijing.[395]

However, Nehru saw the situation from quite the opposite point of view. He was convinced that India merely surrendered what she "could not hold" in Tibet under the new circumstances and gained in return "a friendly frontier and an implicit acceptance of that frontier."[396] The first achievement resulted from Nehru's assessment of the significance of the Five Principles having been written into the preamble of the Tibet Agreement. The principles of peaceful coexistence had been recommended as the framework of negotiation by Zhou, who claimed that they had defined China's India policy beforehand, despite the fact that the principles were contradicted in China's lofty dream of supporting the communist revolution beyond national boundaries. While these values in effect delegitimized India's existing rights in Tibet — such as the right to have military escorts and to participate in judiciary processes — they also included a constraint that India hoped to impose onto China: Beijing should confine its activities to its own national boundaries, which, to Delhi, meant north of the Himalayas. In other words, the Five Principles provided an answer to all of India's worries about Chinese expansionism — be it invasion, aggression, infiltration, or intervention — that might emerge at the northern frontier. It was likely for this reason that the Indian delegation bargained hard to make the Chinese side agree to write these principles into the preamble of the agreement, instead of just stating them in a communiqué.[397]

The question remained as to whether China would accept the Himalayan crest line as its boundary. But it appeared to Delhi that Beijing had quietly agreed. Until the negotiation, the PRC had not protested India's declared view on the Sino-Indian border either informally or on record. And at the critical juncture deciding the fate of Tibet, Beijing remained, by and

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[394] "Cable to N. Raghavan," 16 April 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 25, pp. 467-68; The Chinese also did the same to their negotiators, see "Conversation with Wang Ping Nan," 15 May 1954, *Library and Archives Canada* [hereafter: *LAC*], RG25, vol. 3262, 6083-40 pt.1, pp. 1-2.

[395] "To G.L. Mehta", 29 June 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 26, pp. 355-57; Claude Arpi, "On China, When Shall We Learn the Lessons?" *The Pioneer*, 22 September 2016, www.dailypioneer.com/2016/columnists/on-china-when-shall-we-learn-the-lessons.html, accessed on 10 December 2019.

[396] "To G.L. Mehta," 29 June 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 26, pp. 355-57; Letter on 1 July 1954, *LCM*, vol. 3, p. 587.

[397] One of the major disagreements between the two sides was Zhang Hanfu, China's leading negotiator, insisting on acknowledging the five principles in a separate press communique. The Indian side, however, demanded that these principles be a must-have for the final agreement. The stalemate was broken finally by Zhou En-lai's personal intervention, which resulted in Zhang dropping his previous position. Besides, the Chinese originally wanted the agreement to be valid only for five years, while the Indian proposed twenty-five years. See T.N. Kaul, *A Diplomat's Diary 1947-1999* (Delhi: McMillan India Ltd, 2000), p. 62.

large, silent. In this context, Zhou's redefinition of the scope of the negotiation, from Nehru's "all remaining problems" to "all remaining issues that are ripe for settlement," was in retrospect more wishful thinking than successful communication. A similar problem occurred with China's concession on the clause regarding the mountain passes for international pilgrimage. At first, both sides claimed the sovereignty of these passes, but eventually they turned to a phrasing that did not mention ownership. Once again, because China did not explicitly protest India's declared border positions, the Indians were led into believing that the two countries had both surrendered their claims to sovereignty over these passes, thereby implicitly agreeing on the Sino-Indian border.[398]

In general, Nehru was happy with the result of the Beijing negotiation. In the aftermath of the negotiations regarding Tibet, Nehru sought to promote the significance of the Sino-Indian agreement about Tibet at every possible occasion. For example, only three days after its signing, he could not wait to inform other Commonwealth countries that India and China had successfully removed those "petty difficulties" between them and that the agreement had "a stabilizing effect" on the region as well as on Asia.[399] Parallel to these efforts was Nehru's unchanged sobriety toward the Sino-Indian relationship. In fact, the agreement did not eliminate his deep-seated fear that Chinese civilization was "expansive" in nature, a fear that was confined to himself and his confidants. While he appeared to take Beijing's signature on the Tibet Agreement as a *bona fide* agreement with India, he did not rule out the possibility that the bilateral relationship might turn sour one day, "although there is no immediate likelihood of that." It was not a "permanent guarantee," because he correctly reckoned that China might well hold suspicions toward India. But because the agreement reduced China's sense of insecurity, thereby enabling it to follow more "objective and realistic thinking" — the short supply of which Nehru believed was responsible for the current state of international relations and the creation of unnecessary inter-state conflicts — the agreement was considered by him a success. It was "one major step" for him toward achieving peace for India and world.[400]

The next step for India's China policy was to build on the 1954 agreement. In Nehru's words, it would be "an observance, in letter and spirit, of our agreement with China in regard to Tibet." First, the agreement meant that "whatever happens in Tibet proper is beyond our

[398] The Chinese saw adopting new expression as a mere change in wording rather than one in their position. Kang Minjun, "1954nian zhongyin xieding yu zhongyin zhengduan [Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954 and Sino-Indian Border Dispute]," *Contemporary China History Studies* 11, no. 6 (2004), p. 55.
[399] "Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet," 2 May 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 25, pp. 468-69.
[400] "Prime Minister's Secretariat," 18 June 1954, *Nehru Memorial Museum and Library* [hereafter: *NMML*], Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject Files, File 6, pp. 4-5.

reach" and that "we can neither help nor hinder it." For Tibetans, including the "backward and feudal" ruling class, their best bet to maintain their freedom was to let the inhospitable terrain and climate do the job of expelling the Chinese. An active rebellion, Nehru predicted, would not only be "ruthlessly put down" but would also lead to a complete loss of their remaining autonomy, which was exactly what would happen five years later. Second, for affairs related to Tibet but occurring south of the Himalayans, Nehru stressed that "we cannot permit our territory to be used as a base of operation against the Chinese." Despite India's continued "friendly feelings for Tibet and her people." The Tibetans, especially those seeking asylum in Kalimpong, which Nehru considered "a nest of intrigues and spies," would be allowed to live in peace, but would be dealt with immediately "if they indulge in any aggressive action" against China.[401]

The following twelve months witnessed a series of events that arose from the 1954 Agreement and strengthened Nehru's confidence in his China policy. The first crucial development was Nehru's two invitations to Zhou during the Geneva Conference and the latter's subsequent visit to India on June 25th, 1954. During Zhou's short stay in Delhi, Nehru developed a good personal impression of his Chinese guest, whom he described to U Nu as being "a frank and forthright person… rather unusual in the average communist leader… receptive to ideas."[402] To a statesman who did not build his foreign policy on personal likes or dislikes, what truly gratified Nehru was the discovery that Zhou echoed his idea to build "an area of peace" in Indochina and China's readiness to apply the principles that were stated in the recent agreement on Tibet to this region.[403] Furthermore, by the end of June Nehru had successfully committed China, which he believed was expansionist in nature, to internationally reiterating its commitment to peaceful co-existence in two joint declarations, one with India and the other with Burma.

With the success of Zhou's visit to India, Nehru had rallied enough domestic support to reach out further to China. On October 19th, 1954, he visited China. In talks with Mao and Zhou, Nehru occasionally found himself in disagreement with his Chinese hosts. But those moments did not surprise him, as he had long anticipated the unrealistic and subjective views that characterized the Cold War's rivalling camps' views toward each other. The

[401] Balraj K. Kapoor, India's political officer in Sikkim, responsible for India's affairs with Tibet and Bhutan, recommended that India turn a blind eye on these activities, even if they are detected. He suggested that India "should allow them to simmer and not die out". A similar tendency was probably kept also by Malik, Director of Intelligence Bureau of India, see "Prime Minister's Secretariat," 18 June 1954, *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject Files, File 6, pp. 5-7.
[402] "To U Nu," *SWJN*2, vol. 26. p. 407.
[403] "Conversation with Chou En-lai II," 25 June 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 26, pp. 376-83.

conversations enhanced his understanding of China's positions and he used the opportunity to signal to China those concerns to which India attached great importance. He asked his host to correct those Chinese maps which he believed incorrectly showed part of Indian territory as China's. This was, indeed, an attempt to probe the Chinese stance on India's declared border policy. Again, China evaded the issue. Zhou replied that the circulation of these maps was due to China not yet having time to deal with the matter.[404] Beijing therefore managed to lead Nehru to believe that an informal border agreement did exist between India and China.

However, what Nehru likely found most rewarding from this trip was the experience he gathered there. Since 1949, Nehru had been grappling with the challenge of understanding the new Chinese state led by the CCP. Was it fundamentally Chinese — nationalist in character, just like India — or communist, like the Soviet Union? He could not find a satisfactory answer, because it was easy to know the "government opinion" of China while difficult to learn the "public opinion" there.[405] The visit to China in 1954 therefore became his field study. It led to his discovery of the perceived "essential Chineseness… from leaders to the public." He was exhilarated to find that Mao could even cite "some lines of a Chinese poet of a thousand years ago."[406] He finally concluded that "they were all Chinese, in spite of communism and the like."[407] Nehru was also struck by the enthusiasm of his mass welcome.[408] The jubilant feelings he witnessed were so intense that Nehru was convinced that there must be "something emotional in it." And he believed that this feeling, different from the communist fellow-like feeling, erupted from "a sense of Asian cooperation" because "a great country like India… was friendly to them." It is worth adding that on finishing his stay in China, Nehru started to visit several Southeast Asian countries. His unpleasant experiences there — "Lao was a sleepy depressing place" and "Saigon was a mess" — likely made China look more promising in the eyes of the Indian Prime Minister.[409]

The year 1955 witnessed the continuation of Nehru's adjustment policy toward China. He supported Beijing in major international events that involved India. On the Taiwan Problem, Nehru's position was unequivocal, particularly to his own government officials: "As regard

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[404] "Foreign Policies of America and China," 20 October 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 27, pp. 11-20.
[405] Letter on 15 June 1954, *LCM,* vol. 3, p. 560; "Prime Minister's Secretariat," 18 June 1954, *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject Files, File 6, pp. 4-7.
[406] Implications of China Visit," 14 November 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 27, p. 85
[407] "To Edwina Mountbatten," 2 November 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 27, p. 68; "Long Term Policy in the Far East," 8 February 1955, *SWJN*2, vol. 28, p. 165; "The Position of China," 2 July 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 34, p. 250.
[408] "To Edwina Mountbatten," 2 November 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 27, p. 67; Two hundred thousand people were organized to welcome Nehru in Beijing, "The Current Affairs Report by Mao Qianfen on Sino-Indian Relationship and Nehru's Questions on China," 25 October 1954, *Shanghai Municipal Archives* [hereafter: *SMA*], A76-2-132-20.
[409] "To Edwina Mountbatten," 2 November 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 27, p. 67.

to law, constitution, and justice, we are in favour of Chinese claim to Formosa."[410] He also found the Guomindang regime "thoroughly corrupt and inefficient," an impression that was probably strengthened because of his trip to China in 1954.[411] However, Nehru differed from Beijing in terms of how China should realize its claim to Formosa. Nehru believed that once Chiang Kai-shek's regime lost support from both within and without — which would only be possible if Beijing stopped pressuring it with military means — it would "crumble" by itself "in the not distant future.[412] India's role in the Taiwan Problem was therefore to provide sufficient room for this self-disintegration process to happen by dissuading Beijing from taking any radical steps that would push the United States and Taiwan together. He asked Raghavan, India's Ambassador to China, to maintain close cooperation with Beijing on this issue and to inform them that "we look to China to assist us" in India's endeavour to avert war while helping China regain its rights.[413] The Bandung Conference was yet another example of Nehru's pursuit of his China policy, which, in retrospect, was the pinnacle of the Sino-Indian partnership. Thanks to India's strong support, Communist China was invited. The latter's reconciliatory manner during the conference, demonstrated especially by Zhou's speech on April 19th, 1955, not only improved China's own international image, but also contributed to India's world policy for peace and added credence to Nehru's friendly China policy.

Entering the year 1956, several international developments came to affect the trajectory of Nehru's adjustment policy to varying degrees. First was the arrival of news of the Secret Speech by the new Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev. While Nehru thought the speech marked the historical beginning of "a new process of gradual return to normality" in the Soviet Union, he believed that China would remain in "its revolutionary phase," one that was characterized by a cult of personality.[414] However, starting in late spring, negative developments began to overshadow Sino-Indian cooperation. The Sino-American ambassadorial talks, which started in the summer of 1955 after India's mediation, had entered into a "complete deadlock" by May.[415] Not long afterward, Nehru's closest international friend, U Nu, informed him that the communist rebels in Burma might have received some

[410] "Cable to N. Raghavan," 4 February 1955, *SWJN*2, vol. 28, pp.162-63.
[411] "Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on his visit to the Soviet Union and other countries in June - July 1955," *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject Files, File 16, p. 113.
[412] "To A. Krishnasawmi," 11 March 1955, *SWJN*2, vol. 28, p. 175; also See "Talks held at Belgrade on 2 July 1955," *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject Files, File 82, p. 12.
[413] "Cable to N. Raghavan," 10 February 1955, *SWJN*2, vol. 28, p. 168-70.
[414] "To Josip Broz Tito," 3 April 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 32, p. 366.
[415] "Sino-US Deadlock," 18 May 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 33, p. 467.

form of assistance from China.[416] In this context, China's reprinting of its old maps that did not show the Sino-Indian border falling on the Himalayan crest-line became an issue for Delhi.

Two years after the signing of the 1954 Agreement, it dawned on Nehru that Beijing had never explicitly endorsed India's border position at any formal or informal occasion. He started to suspect that India might have "taken for granted" the Chinese ambiguity as an implicit agreement. This idea became more unsettling when he recalled that, in the previous year, the maps that he had received from the Soviet Union also contained Chinese claims at the Sino-Indian border and that there were continued reports about Chinese incursions in the middle sector, which the Indian side ascribed to Chinese ignorance of the border line.[417] Further complicating Nehru's understanding of the situation at India's northern frontier were the rumours of uprisings against Beijing that were spreading across parts of Tibet.[418]

Nehru was therefore confronted with the question of whether India needed to treat China differently. His initial response was to continue viewing Chinese activities, especially in Tibet, in good faith. Nehru saw Beijing's construction of roads up to the Sino-Indian border and airports nearby as a "natural development" of a quest for better communication, which was necessary for China to "hold and develop Tibet." In his assessment, China still carried no ill intentions against India. He instantly vetoed radical military measures to counter Chinese moves in Tibet, such as recommendations to develop long-range bombers. He approved only some responses with a rather defensive nature: building up check posts along the border, preparing troops with mountain warfare training, and constructing roads and other communication infrastructures. In fact, he felt that India could "do little" from a military perspective. Diplomatically, Nehru instructed his government to take up the map issue only with the Soviet Union.[419]

Before long, he had to face a new complication: the Sino-Burma border dispute erupted in July 1956. Strictly speaking, the problem had already emerged eight months prior, when the border troops of both China and Burma exchanged fire during their encounter at Huangguoyuan, a place with an ambiguous position near the international border. Despite Beijing and Rangoon's efforts to deescalate the tension, *The Nation,* an influential Burmese newspaper, finally discovered and revealed to the public this suppressed story on July 31st, 1957. Pressured by an outraged Burmese public, the Burmese government requested Nehru's

[416] "Cable to R.K. Nehru," 7 June 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 33, p. 451.
[417] "Chinese Maps of the Frontier with India," 6 May 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 33, pp. 475-76.
[418] "Countering Chinese Moves on the Frontier,"12 May 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 33, p. 477.
[419] "Countering Chinese Moves on the Frontier," 12 May 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 33, pp. 477-78.

India to intervene in this matter on Burma's behalf. For both Burma's sake and India's own interests, Nehru agreed. But although he raised the issue to the Chinese by delivering an aide-memoire, Nehru charted a cautious and reluctant course in pressuring Beijing. He stressed that it should be done "informally," that the wording of this aide-memoire was supposed to be carefully dealt with, and that "we shall have to decide what we should say and what should not say." Nehru believed that this aide-memoire should not raise the issue of India's frontier with China. Nor should it drag the Colombo Powers — Ceylon, Indonesia, Burma, India, and Pakistan — as a whole into the settlement of Burma's border dispute with China. Instead, the memoire should focus on providing reasonable and practical principles for both parties to negotiate an agreement. The spirit was to highlight that "no previous treaty or agreement can be denounced or altered unilaterally" and "possession, history, tradition, customs and natural geographical features are factors of considerable importance."[420]

In September of 1956, it was India's turn to experience China's commitment to defending its claimed territory. On September 20th, south of the Shipki La Pass, one of the five mountain passes in the middle sector that had been designated by the 1954 Agreement for pilgrimage and trade, Indian border troops stopped a contingent of Chinese soldiers who attempted to patrol further south.[421] While there had been similar Chinese moves in the past two years, what made this incident unique and intolerable to Nehru was the report from the frontline personnel that the Chinese soldiers not only refused to return after being notified that they were on the Indian soil, but also threatened the Indian soldiers, saying that if the Indians ever marched further north, they would "be opposed with arms."[422] This incident, in Nehru's eyes, showed that these Chinese incursions were not done out of ignorance and that the Chinese, at least those on the frontline, were ready to use force to enforce China's territorial claims.

However, Nehru's responses to China, though noticeably harsher than before, remained by and large restrained. For example, his immediate order upon hearing of this incident was for the government to deliver a strong protest to Beijing and that India's ground forces along the border should not withdraw from where they were, "even at the cost of conflict". However,

[420] "Chinese Incursions into Myanmar," 26 August 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 34, pp. 385-86.
[421] This incident was closely preceded with two similar events near the Shipki La Pass, respectively on 1 September and 10 September 1956. In the latter, there was an encounter of two countries border troops. The Indian record claimed that the Chinese troops threatened to use grenades and claimed that they received the instruction to patrol the area between Hupsand Khad and Shipki La Pass. See "Note Verbale of the Indian Government (Shipki)," 8 September 1956, *WP*, vol. 1, p. 17; "Aide-memoire of the Indian Government (Shipki)," 24 September 1956, *WP*, vol. 1, p. 18.
[422] "The Shipki La Pass Incident," 21 September 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 35, p. 515; "Aide-memoire of the Indian Government (Shipki)," 24 September 1956, *WP*, vol. 1, p. 18.

he also forbade Indian personnel from marching north of the Shipki La Pass, which "would presumably mean a conflict with the Chinese." He instructed Indian troops to act quickly to check any further Chinese advance, but emphasized that "before doing so, the Chinese should be clearly informed" of their transgression and aggression.[423] Nehru's preference for the crisis to be solved in a diplomatic framework according to the Five Principles was demonstrated again later, in his reaction to recommendations from a meeting of representatives of the Ministries of External Affairs, Defense, and Home, and the Himachal Pradesh Government (at the western sector): "The fate of Shipki La is not going to be decided by fighting or by a large show of force."[424]

For the remaining months of 1956, despite disquieting developments that called into question India's two most important achievements from the 1954 Agreement, Nehru continued his adjustment policy without the intention of exploiting China's domestic and international difficulties. On the Sino-Burma border problem, he reassured U Nu of China's good intentions and encouraged the matter to be resolved between China and Burma according to the Five Principles.[425] Although Nehru involved India in the matter, he refused to do so in a manner that would arouse China's concerns.[426] Compared to his concerns over India's stake in the dispute — the McMahon Line also formed a part of the Sino-Burma border — Nehru was more worried about the possibility of "difference and apprehension" between Burma and China being exploited by outsiders and ultimately endangering Asia's peace.[427] With regard to Tibet, he continued to honour the 1954 Agreement with his policy of non-interference. The Dalai Lama seized the opportunity to visit India at the end of 1956 during ceremonies celebrating the Buddha's 2500th birthday. There, he complained to Nehru about Chinese rule in Tibet and requested political asylum in India. Nehru disappointed him. The Indian Prime Minister instead advised that he return to Tibet to "sit with the Chinese and talk on the basis of the Seventeen-Point Agreement."[428]

Conclusion

[423] "The Shipki La Pass Incident," 21 September 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 35, p. 515.
[424] "The Fate of Shipki La," 8 October 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 35, p. 518.
[425] "Message to U Nu," 4 September 1956, "To U Nu," 4 September 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 35, pp. 597-10.
[426] He supported the Ministry of External Affairs' recommendation of not raising the border issue with China. Because in conjunction with the ongoing dispute between Rangoon ad Beijing, this topic would "prove embarrassing" to Burma and China. "India-China Boundary Questions," 7 September 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 35, p. 514.
[427] "Chinese Incursions into Myanmar," 26 August 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 34, p. 387.
[428] *NMML*, Oral History Transcript, The Dalai Lama, p. 7.

The honeymoon period of the Sino-Indian relationship from 1954 to 1956 was closely connected to the historic agreement regarding Tibet, reached in Beijing on April 29th, 1954. Indeed, the opening of this window for the two countries to deal with the Tibet Problem was largely thanks to India's initiative and Nehru's policy of actively adjusting India to Communist China. Nehru expected his policy to help bring peace and security to India and the world. By comparison, the communist regime in Beijing seized the opportunity to consolidate its rule in Tibet, rather than seeking a major partnership with India. Through prolonged negotiations, both sides believed that they had met their respective needs. To Beijing, the 1954 Agreement liquidated the privileges left by British imperialism in Tibet and helped to establish Chinese sovereignty, as the treaty's name demonstrated. By comparison, Delhi found assurance in the Five Principles of peaceful coexistence written into the treaty's preamble and was led to believe that an unspoken consensus on the Sino-Indian border existed beyond the treaty's clauses.

As the saying goes, it often takes two to tango. The Sino-Indian partnership did not really develop until Beijing realized the great potential in using Delhi to achieve its primary diplomatic goals. Zhou's acceptance of Nehru's invitations and his subsequent visit to India in June 1954 led to Beijing's re-evaluation of India's usefulness to China in widening China's contacts with Southeast Asian countries and in isolating China's archenemy, the United States. It was after this moment that Beijing decided to upgrade its relationship with India to one of strategic cooperation. The new India policy was to build a united front with India by upholding the Five Principles in international affairs. The unprecedented welcome given to Nehru during his visit to China in October 1954 demonstrated this change in China's India policy. In short, peace and high-level cooperation between the two largest Asian countries in these years was the combined effect of Delhi's adjustment policy toward China and Beijing's united front policy toward India.

One of the biggest problems between India and China, which overshadowed the future of this partnership, was Beijing's ingrained distrust of Delhi. The Communist ideology that conditioned China's understanding of the external world was largely responsible for this situation. In Beijing's eyes, Nehru's neutral and peaceful foreign policy and constant diplomatic support to China could not alter the capitalist nature of India. As Zhou said internally on the eve of the party's unprecedented welcome to the Indian Prime Minister in 1954: "Nehru is no brother to us."[429] Beijing was therefore always vigilant toward what it

[429] Li, *Dai waijiaojia*, vol. 3, p. 142.

believed to be the potential hazards of opportunism and appeasement in Nehru's policies. This attitude caused many misjudgements of India's intentions. China, for example, misjudged Nehru's motivation for proposing negotiations about Tibet in 1953 as mere opportunism. Since India was understood to be opportunistic in character and reluctant to relinquish the benefits left by the British imperialism in Tibet, Beijing conducted "a struggle to some extent" with India when implementing the 1954 Agreement, especially on the border question. This was very much the logic behind the assertive behaviour of China's ground forces, especially in the Shipki La Incident in 1956.[430] This mistrust grew even stronger toward the end of 1956 because of the Khampa Rebellion and of Beijing's fear that the Dalai Lama would seek external intervention.

The second critical flaw of the Sino-Indian partnership was that the two countries had dangerously different assumptions about the Sino-Tibetan-Indian border arrangement. One of the pillars of Nehru's China policy was that the two countries divided their sphere of influence generally along the Himalayan crest line, which meant, for example, that the McMahon Line would be recognized as part of the Sino-Indian border. It was the foundation for the support of his adjustment policy by the government officials and Indian people, who had little sympathy toward Communism or China, but considerable interest in preserving India's unchallenged position in South Asia. In the same way as he treated Beijing's occupation of Tibet — his sympathy went to the Tibetans and his government policy to the Chinese — Nehru probably believed that Beijing should and would consider reciprocating on the border issue. To him, preserving the general peace between major powers was more imperative than anything else. Unfortunately, Beijing did not subscribe to this worldview. But the need to build a united front to achieve various domestic and international goals caused China to not make its border position clear to India. Instead, China used ambiguous wording to retain its claims on the border at almost every crucial meeting with the Indian government. Therefore, from 1954 to 1956, Nehru's largely wishful thinking on the border problem, alongside Beijing's efforts to indulge this thinking, created and sustained India's belief that China had implicitly accepted India's declared frontier.[431] While this strange situation safeguarded the Sino-Indian partnership, it was just a matter of time before the differences on the border question surfaced. The longer this situation lasted, the more damage it would ultimately do to India's trust toward China.

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[430] "Fundamentals about India: Section VI-I, India's Relationship with and Attitude toward China," 25 February 1956, *CFMA*, 102-00055-01, p. 64.
[431] "To G.L. Mehta," 29 June 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 26, pp. 355-57; Letter on 1 July 1954, *LCM*, vol. 3, p. 587.

Overall, the Sino-Indian relationship remained healthy on the surface toward the end of this period. India's role in supplying Chinese civil and military personnel in Tibet continued to be irreplaceable and its support in various international issues was indispensable. India continued to be a friend worth winning over for China. On the Indian side, negative developments like China's reprinting of old maps, the rise of the Sino-Burma border dispute, and India's increased border friction with China were certainly disquieting. But they merely cracked, rather than crumbled, the foundation of Nehru's faith in his Chinese policy: China's commitment to Panchsheel, or Five Principles. Unsurprisingly, the meeting between Nehru and Zhou at the turn of 1956/57 succeeded in patching the Sino-Indian friendship.

Chapter 4: Transition, 1957-59

Introduction

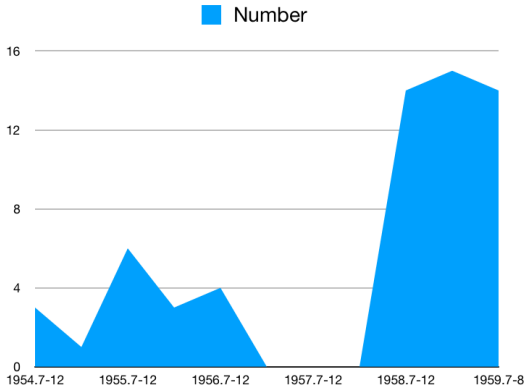
For Delhi and Beijing, the three years after the conclusion of the Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet in 1954 was the honeymoon period, while, after the Tibetan Uprising in 1959, they marched on the road to the Sino-Indian Border War in 1962. This chapter explores the period between Zhou's visit to India in December 1956 and the eve of Tibetan Uprising in March 1959. A preliminary study of the diplomatic notes exchanged between the two sides from 1954 to 1959 gives a general outline of this period. First, the year and half immediately following Zhou's visit at the turn of 1956/57 witnessed a complete absence of diplomatic strife between India and China. This constituted a marked difference to the previous period from the mid-1954 to the end of 1956, when the two governments were arguing over the border issue intermittently but with a low intensity. Second, a dramatic rise of the diplomatic correspondence occurred in the second half of 1958, reaching an unprecedented level. This suggests that the Sino-Indian relationship underwent some change of substantial importance around the mid-1958. Third, it is worth highlighting that the Tibetan Uprising in March 1959 did not significantly increase the number of notes exchanged between Beijing and Delhi. This indicates that, while the upheaval in Lhasa was undeniably a milestone, the real turning point had already happened, probably in 1958. With these findings from the diplomatic record in mind, this chapter will explore the following questions: what role did the Nehru-Zhou meeting at the turn of 1956/57 play in maintaining the Sino-Indian friendship? What happened around the summer of 1958, and how did it affect this bilateral relationship? What was the status of the Sino-Indian relationship on the eve of the Tibet Uprising? The answers to these questions will ultimately help us understand how the transition — the Sino-Indian relationship turned from being generally good to generally bad — happened.

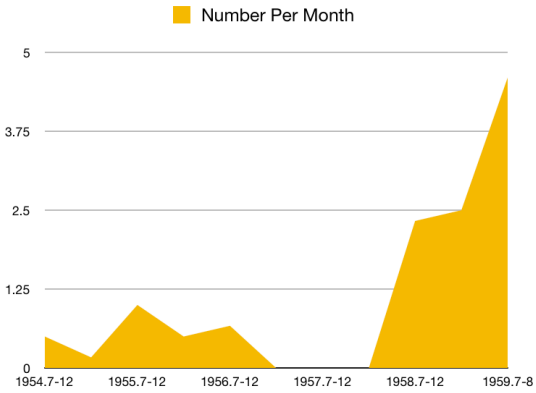
In Transition, 1957-59
Notes Exchanged

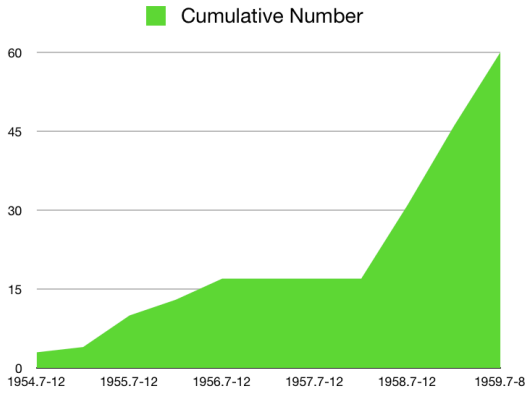
Notes Exchanged between Beijing and Delhi from July 1954 to August 1959

Period	Number	Cumulative Number	Number Per Month
1954.7-12	3	3	0.5
1955.1-6	1	4	0.17
1955.7-12	6	10	1
1956.1-6	3	13	0.5
1956.7-12	4	17	0.67
1957.1-6	0	17	0
1957.7-12	0	17	0
1958.1-6	0	17	0
1958.7-12	14	31	2.33
1959.1-6	15	46	2.5
1959.7-8	14	60	4.6

Source: *White Paper* Vol. 1







China's Approach to India

The second Indian general election in 1957 left a heavy imprint on Beijing's assessment of the future of India's domestic politics. While the Congress was still the leading party, its new gain in the popular vote — of merely 6 percent — was eclipsed by the stunning achievement of the Indian Communist Party, which increased its share of the vote by 171 percent.[432] In a public statement after the election, 68-year-old Nehru expressed his worry that in the future he might be too exhausted to fulfill the premiership. These developments led the Chinese Foreign Ministry to believe that Nehru and his "middle faction" had become "wavering and frustrated" and were caught "in panic" in this "new situation."[433] Toward the end of 1958, a similar tone emerged in a classified report by the Investigation Department of the CCP Central Committee, which was titled "Watching India's Political Situation from Nehru's Present Agony." The Chinese embassy and foreign ministry were convinced that "the inherent contradiction of [Nehru's] reformist policy is being exposed and approaching its dead end, which is in a sharp contrast to China's Great Leap Forward."[434] Indeed, it was difficult to conceal a belief that had become so popular within the regime. As Indian diplomats reported back from Shanghai in the spring of 1958, those Chinese officials with whom they were in contact appeared to think that "the Congress is moribund."[435]

Regarding foreign relations, Beijing saw India drifting toward the right, led by a frustrated prime minister scrambling for possible solutions to tackle domestic difficulties. For example, China interpreted Nehru's visit to the United States at the end of 1956 as aimed at receiving more American investment and financial aid. "He wanted to show his neutrality and to reduce the discontent from monopolist capitalists and the rightists in the Congress membership."[436] China's anxiety toward a right-drifting India was deepened in 1957 by a major investment agreement between Delhi and Washington and a business delegation led by the Indian Financial Minister to the United States in the end of 1957.[437]

The PLA headquarters compiled a full review of Indo-American relations since 1947 by early 1958. It warned that the "rightists and pro-American forces in India" had taken

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[432] Election Commission of India, *Statistical Reports on General Election* [hereafter: *SRGE*], 1957, vol. 1, p. 30; *SRGE*, 1951, eci.gov.in/statistical-report/statistical-reports, accessed on 10 December 2019.
[433] "The Current Struggle in the Indian Domestic Politics and its Impact," 26 April 1958, *CFMA*, 105-00891-10, pp. 149-53.
[434] "Watching India's Political Situation from Nehru's Present Agony," 9 December 1958, *CFMA*, 105-00891-09, p. 145.
[435] Report from Consul General of India in Shanghai, 9 May 1958, *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject File 32, pp. 104-5.
[436] Untitled, 17 January 1957, *CFMA*, 105-00837-03, pp. 30-38.
[437] "Summary of Indo-American Relations," 15 January 1958, *CFMA*, 105-00837-02, pp. 21-28.

advantage of the country's famine and shortage of foreign currency that had occurred in the second half of 1957 to force Nehru to "swing rightward" in diplomacy.[438] More than unsure as to whether India would remain largely neutral vis-à-vis China's archenemy, the United States, as Beijing had believed one year before, the CCP suspected that amelioration of the Indo-American relationship had become Indo-American collusion by 1958.[439] Beijing therefore started to be concerned for the security risk posed to its southwest front.[440]

Beyond its general interest in India's domestic situation and foreign affairs, Beijing paid particular attention to India's approach to and influence on Tibet. In mid-1957, the PRC was anxious that India still seemed to have not accepted that Tibet was an integral part of China, three years after the Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet. For example, the Chinese embassy in Stockholm monitored Nehru's state visit to Sweden and reported to Beijing that "at a government banquet (to which we were not invited) Nehru referred to Tibet as a country." Furthermore, Nehru also appeared to see Chinese activities in Tibet as an "invasion."[441] While Nehru did say these things on one or two occasions, the speech as a whole stressed an apolitical theme — that the world was becoming increasingly intermingled because of scientific and technological developments.[442] By singling out the reference to Tibet and other matters that the embassy believed were of concern in Beijing, the report to Beijing (perhaps unwittingly) distorted Nehru's speech and presented the Indian prime minister as maintaining ulterior motives in his policy toward China.[443] Multiple hand-made pen lines beneath these sensitive words and expressions in the physical copy of the report show that the Foreign Ministry did accept the assessment of its Swedish embassy.

This message was one of many that confirmed pre-existing Chinese fears about India's dubious commitment to Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. There were already reports that, during the visit of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama to India in late 1956, Indian officials and newspapers had not treated Tibet as a region of China.[444] In 1958, the Chinese found more erroneous depictions of Tibet in Indian publications. Some of these depictions

[438] "Summary of Indo-American Relations," 15 January 1958, *CFMA*, 105-00837-02, pp. 21-28.
[439] Untitled, 17 January 1957, *CFMA*, 105-00837-03, pp. 30-38.
[440] A report from the intelligence department from the PLA General Staff Headquarter, reporting the signing of a tripartite agreement between Nepal, the US, and India in building highway in Nepal, is another footnote to Beijing concern over Indo-American collusion. See "Regarding the United States and India 'Aiding' Nepal in Constructing Highways," 15 February 1958, *CFMA*, 105-00948-02, pp. 45-47.
[441] "Report of Nehru's Visit to Sweden," 29 June 1957, *CFMA*, 105-00590-02, pp. 17-21.
[442] "The Approach to Peace," 22 June 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 38, pp. 560-68.
[443] Other matters include India's influence over the Chinese public opinion and democratization. See "Report of Nehru's Visit to Sweden," 29 June 1957, *CFMA*, 105-00590-02, pp. 17-21.
[444]"Summary of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama's visit to India, No. 6, " *CFMA*, 203-00188-11, indirectly quoted from Chen and Zhang, "Shisishi dalailama qitu," p.147; "Dalai Lama of Tibet," 2 December 1956, *Times of India*; "Indo-Tibetan Ties Stressed at City Reception," 9 December 1956, *Times of India*.

originated with the Defense Ministry and the Education Ministry, while others were from weighty figures like the general secretary of the Congress Party.[445] They all treated Tibet as separate from China. India as a whole, therefore, remained in Beijing's eyes a subversive force against its efforts to consolidate the "Tibet Region of China" according to the 1954 Agreement.[446]

Thwarting India's perceived attempt to undermine the integration of Tibet with the rest of China became the guiding Chinese principle for dealing with affairs between the Tibet Region and India. This is best illustrated by the CCP's handling of the Dalai Lama's invitation of Nehru. This invitation was first extended by the Dalai Lama orally during his stay in India in December 1956, then in written form on his way back to Lhasa and was accepted by Nehru five months later. Beijing was upset because it was kept in dark about the invitation until the summer of 1957. In early August 1957, the Dalai Lama sent people to notify Yang Gongsu, Beijing's watchdog responsible for the Tibet Region's external affairs, that a visit of Nehru to Tibet had already been agreed upon to occur in the autumn of 1958 and that the Dalai Lama expected the Tibet Foreign Office to extend a formal invitation to Nehru.[447] Yang was surprised at this news and replied that he had to report this to Beijing and let "the two governments of India and China" deal with it.[448] The arrival of this news in Beijing could not have been more annoying to the CCP. Only a few days earlier, on August 3rd, Zhou had received Ngagpo, now the Secretary-General of the Tibet Autonomy Preparation Committee, and told him to forward the following message to the Dalai Lama: "[India and China] after all are two countries; so politically, economically and religiously, Tibet's dealing with India should all occur through the Central Committee, through the Foreign Ministry; a line should be drawn."[449]

Unsurprisingly, Beijing was not interested in helping the Tibetans make this visit happen. At first, it turned a deaf ear to the Tibetan request and remained silent for five months. Only after the word began to spread through Western and Indian media did Beijing accept the unpleasant fact established by the Dalai Lama.[450] On January 12th, 1958, Zhou met the Indian Ambassador R.K. Nehru and asked him to forward China's message to Nehru: "We welcome

[445] "A Collection of Unfriendly Remarks from the Indian Government and Press," *CFMA*, 105-00590-01, "Other Anti-Chinese Cases in India," *CFMA*, 105-00590-05, partially disclosed in Chen and Zhang, "Shisishi dalailama qitu," p. 148.
[446] "India and People's Republic of China Agreement (with Exchange of Notes) on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India, on 29 April 1954," *WP*, vol. 1, p. 98.
[447] Chen and Zhang, "Shisishi dalai lama qitu" p. 139.
[448] Yang, *Cangsang jiushinian*, p. 276
[449] *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 65.
[450] Chen and Zhang, "Shisishi dalailama qitu," p. 140.

his visit to Tibet."[451] And by appearing to mention casually that it was "the Dalai Lama's report to the Chinese government" that commenced everything, Zhou asserted again China's sovereignty in Tibet in front of the Indian guest. He, indeed, withheld the fact that instead of consulting Beijing first, as he should have done in Beijing's eyes, the Dalai Lama asked directly the Tibet Foreign Office to invite Nehru. It was Yang Gongsu, one of the CCP's principal representatives in Tibet after 1950, who notified Beijing of this matter on learning this news.[452] It is also worth noting that in this meeting, Zhou suggested that Nehru visit not just Lhasa but also Shigatse, because "we saw them [the Dalai Lama and the Panchan Lama] equally." Finally, Zhou added that "I myself would love to accompany him to Tibet."[453] Clearly, the CCP was concerned about a repetition of what happened during the 2500th Buddha Jayanti in 1956, when the Dalai Lama on the loose was only one step away from creating a legitimacy crisis to China's rule in Tibet by seeking asylum in India. By March 1958, the two sides had agreed on all details about Nehru's visit. However, the trip was ultimately aborted. In early July, the CCP Central Committee instructed the Foreign Ministry to cancel Nehru's trip. On July 15th, 1958, the Chinese Ambassador Pan Zili officially notified the Indian Ministry of External Affairs that the Indian Prime Minister's trip to Tibet would not be possible. The stated reason was that "the American and Jiang Jieshi spies and Tibetan reactionaries were colluding in plotting riots in Tibet."[454]

What Delhi did not realize, even on the eve of the Tibetan Rebellion of 1959, was that the CCP also viewed India as one source of that instability in Tibet. Two months before the outbreak of rebellion in Lhasa, Deng Xiaoping submitted to Mao a draft directive regarding the dispatch of two thousand young men to Tibet for the purpose of farming. Deng reported that the ongoing riot by the "Tibetan reactionary ruling class" would expand in the future due to "public support from America and Jiang Jieshi, and covert one from India."[455]

The Border Problem

While China's relationship with India approached its nadir in 1957 and 1958, China's border and territorial policy underwent a fully-fledged revision in 1957 in relation not only to India

[451] *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 120.
[452] Chen and Zhang, "Shisishi dalailama qitu," p. 140.
[453] The Panchen Lama was historically based in Shigatse. "Indian Defense Minister Menon Explaining the Issues regarding the Visit of Head of Indian Kalinga Airlines to China to Negotiate over Opening Airlines between China and India," *CFMA*, 105-00586-02, indirectly quoted from Chen and Zhang, "Shisishi dalailama qitu," p. 140.
[454] Chen and Zhang, "Shisishi dalailama qitu," p. 141.
[455] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 3, pp. 574-75.

but to all neighbours. Until the mid-1950s, the young communist regime had adopted a "strategy of delay," dodging any formal discussion with its neighbours on the boundary issue.[456] While Beijing maintaining an ambiguous diplomatic stance between 1954 and 1957, on the ground it actively pushed for Chinese sovereignty to be gradually established along the perceived Sino-Indian border, a process that was deepened by its control of Tibet at the same time.[457] In the summer of 1957, Zhou announced the final version of China's approach to the Sino-Burma border dispute, which also outlined how China would deal border disputes in general.[458]

The new border policy contained four principles. The first was the unwavering commitment to the territorial legacy left by the previous Chinese government. For Communist China, it was irrelevant whether those territories were effectively administered or only claimed. In Zhou's words, "not a single inch of land [would] be given away" by China. In the case of dispute, the government would turn to peaceful negotiations and never to military means. Yet there was always an exception. "When imperialists provoke, it will become another question." The second principle was the aim of "attaining peace with China's neighbours." Boundary treaties were certainly a goal to be pursued, but not at the expense of good relations with neighbours. Therefore, if raising a border issue would cause tension, China would keep it on the back burner. The third principle was that border affairs should be managed according to the principle of Peaceful Co-existence, with the goal of breaking America's strategic encirclement of China and socialism. Zhou believed that Burma and India were two potential "gaps" of the American chain of containment in Asia. In contrast to the first principle, which outlined what China would do *before* border negotiations, the final principle defined what China wanted to achieve *in* these talks. "The point is that we should solve [border disputes] on the basis of equality, mutual benefit, and friendship; it is not about [the idea] that we must seize a bit more land."[459]

Beijing's approach contained, so far as the party was concerned, a reconciliatory attitude. It would not roll out the entire history of China, which was recorded not in hundreds but in thousands of years. Zhou considered it unwise to press excessive historical claims, such as the ones dated by some Chinese officials back to the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). Such a move would accomplish nothing except "shaking the world." It was unreasonable because

[456] Dai, "From 'Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai'," p. 69.
[457] Yang, *Cangsang jiushinian*, p. 244.
[458] Shen Zhihua and Julia Lovell, "Undesired Outcomes: China's Approach to Border Disputes during the Early Cold War," *Cold War History* 15, no.1 (2015), pp. 89-111.
[459] "Premier Zhou Enlai's Report in the Fourth Meeting of the First People's Congress" [hereafter: "Premier's Report"], 9 July 1957, *Jiangsu Provincial Archives* [hereafter: *JPA*], 3023-3-161, no page number.

China in its own history, in Zhou's words, had "invaded" its neighbours, which delegitimized any claims based on such activities. Therefore, Beijing set for itself a temporal threshold for admitting historical evidence: the late Qing period. Only from this period onward would Communist China produce "objective facts" to bolster its territorial claims. Furthermore, Beijing did not consider all old maps to be objective facts, a stance communicated to Nehru in the summer of 1954 and again in 1957, as well as to the Chinese people regarding the Sino-Burma border. Speaking to over one thousand delegates in the Fourth Meeting of the First People's Congress in July 1957, Zhou reminded his audience that in some old maps "a patriotic sentiment" had resulted in China being depicted as larger than it actually was, a problem inherited by Communist China that needed to be solved through future border negotiations.[460]

One defining characteristic of China's border policy was to treat boundary delimiting as a political issue. Historical evidence, along with many other factors like benefits for economic development and national defense, were evaluated against the most important factor: China's present-day relationships with its neighbours. For example, Beijing reasoned that there was "no more need to audit the bill" with Russia, because Russia was a socialist country like China. States like India and Burma, classified as "nationalist countries" according to Mao's Three-World theory, deserved a different treatment from that reserved for the "imperialist countries." Surprisingly, Beijing was willing to accept the McMahon Line, the imperialist legacy left between China and these countries. Instead of seeing this as "succumbing to the imperialist arrangement," China believed that accepting the line would be "defeating the imperialist plot" to create tension and conflicts among the newly independent countries of Asia.[461]

This approach to border disputes, however fair as it might appear from Beijing's standpoint, entailed undesirable effects in practice. The first principle — to take whatever had been claimed by Nationalist China first and engage in peaceful negotiation afterward — was the source of troubles. This principle, in essence, meant that China had to negotiate from an advantageous position. And to obtain this advantageous position, China must first seize those disputed territories, which would inevitably be seen as Chinese unilateralism or imperialism in the eyes of China's opponents. In fact, this mechanism had already led the CCP to interpret India's seizure of Tawang in the early 1952 as an underhand move. Further amplifying the

[460] Unfortunately, this detail was not touched in the *People's Daily* editorial published the next day. The paper was instructed to only "explain the spirits and significance of Comrade Zhou Enlai's report." See "Premier's Report," *JPA*, 3023-3-161, no page number; "An Instruction," 21 September 1957, *JPA*, 3023-3-161.
[461] "Premier's Report," *JPA*, 3023-3-161, no page number.

adverse impact of this principle was that the party-state was in a constant anxiety in Tibet. Unlike dealing with the Sino-Burma border dispute, in which the pressure from the local elites or ethnic groups was insignificant, the CCP regime in Tibet was saddled with the tremendous burden of proving to the two million Tibetans that it was able to defend every inch of perceived Tibetan land.[462] In other words, the CCP was compelled to act decisively — in India's view, "truculently" — on the Sino-Tibetan-Indo border dispute.[463] The party's room to manoeuvre was significantly limited and remained so until the Tibetan Rebellion in 1959, which notably undermined the Tibetans' relative political power vis-à-vis the Chinese. But by 1959, the damage to India's confidence in China had already been done. As Beijing continued to postpone a genuine talk with India on the matter while permitting its frontline person to seize disputed areas, it inevitably created, or at least contributed to, a vicious cycle of tit-for-tat actions that only succeeded in making things worse.

Second, being reconciliatory was different from being seen as reconciliatory. As there were few channels through which India could comprehend, not to mention to appreciate, China's new border policy, Delhi watched Beijing's handling of the Sino-Burma border dispute closely, which Beijing prioritized among all its border affairs before the Tibetan Rebellion.[464] In early 1957, China proposed transferring the sovereignty of a piece of land, which Burma had administrated on the basis a "perpetual lease" reached between Qing China and Britain. China, however, asked for compensation: the sovereignty of two villages in the southern sector of roughly the same size. This proposal, which the PRC considered reasonable, alarmed Burma. In a communication to Delhi, Yangon wrote that China's proposal created the impression that Beijing "was not fully adhering" to what it had said previously.[465] The impasse continued for thirteen months beyond mid-1958.[466] Beijing's reconciliatory border policy before 1959 thus neither forged a precedent of peacefully solving

[462] Yang, *Cangsang jiushinian*, p. 199.
[463] In June 1958, on the final meeting over the dispute in the middle sector, the Chinese negotiators definitely rejected the Indian proposal raised two months back that during the interim period, both sides should not send even civilian officials to the disputed area. See *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject File 54, pp. 82-3; Amit Das Gupta, "Foreign Secretary Subimal Dutt and the Prehistory of the Sino-Indian Border War," in *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives,* eds. Amit Das Gupta and Lorenz M. Luthi (New Delhi: Routledge India, 2017), p. 52.
[464] Zhou delivered a report on the Sino-Burma border dispute on July 9, 1957, that contained at least 67 paragraphs; the *People's Daily* on July 10 covered this report but with only 18 paragraphs, leaving substantial amount of information undisclosed.
[465] The previous agreement reached in the late 1956 was that the "perpetual lease" would be cancelled; but it did not specify how exactly it would be cancelled. Burma interpreted it as an unconditional surrender of the residual sovereignty while China expected this transfer of sovereignty to be compensated. Also see "To U Nu," 22 April 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 37, p. 507.
[466] On 30 July 1958, Zhou wrote to U Nu, reasserting China's position. When China touched on this issue again, it was in Zhou's reply to Ne Win's proposal on September 4, 1959.

border disputes, nor did it create any good impressions in India other than clouding Delhi's expectations of its future dealings with Beijing.

The most problematic of four principles was the third, according to which "nationalist countries" like India should be treated differently from "imperialist countries."[467] In 1958, the Chinese diplomats working in or on India, however, confronted a thorny issue: how should China respond to a *nationalist* India that was presenting *imperialist* evidence to defend its claims? In April 1958, a small group of Chinese officials reached Delhi and began eight rounds of talks with their Indian counterparts on a dispute over a tiny pasture, called Wu Je by the Tibetans and Bara Hoti by the Indians, in the middle sector of the border. They quickly realized that many differences between the two sides existed. The most outrageous one, from the Chinese point of view, was that most of India's evidence came from *imperialists*. They were "a few British explorers… who thought these [disputed] areas were good… for India's development in economy, commerce, and frontier security." In contrast, the Chinese evidence was consisted of testimonies, collected by Chinese cadres through face-to-face talks, from the Tibetan *people* — "a county head, chiefs, tax collectors, and rangers" — as well as documents written in the Tibetan language.[468] In this conflict of evidence of differing origins, the Chinese communists naturally concluded that India had advanced a largely baseless case, although they did not make this point explicitly to the Indians.[469] Unsurprisingly, the Wu Je talks bore no fruit in the end.

This result, however, reveals a disturbing defect in Beijing's new border strategy that overshadowed the trajectory of the border issues between the two countries: China's willingness for reconciliation decreased in relation to the growth of what it considered imperialist reactionary elements in the country with which it had a territorial dispute. However, the assessment of such an increase was based purely on China's own perception and evaluation. After the futile Wu Je talks Beijing increasingly saw Delhi as a threat to the "Tibet Region of China," and as a collaborator of China's archenemy, the United States. In this context, while the regime was still committed to maintaining border peace with India, it was ready to adopt a harder line in practice, for example, arresting perceived hard-core Indian trespassers in the western sector, when necessary.[470]

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[467] "Premier's Report," *JPA*, 3023-3-161, paragraph 35.
[468] Yang, *Cangsang jiushinian*, p. 246.
[469] Instead, the Chinese found a quite indirect, but traditional, way to express their disproval. Fu Hao told his Indian counterparts on the first talk on 29 April 1958: "Either side can produce whatever he wants according to their own convenience." *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject File 32, p. 421.
[470] Yang, *Cangsang jiushinian*, p. 247.

India's Approach to China

In comparison, India's approach to China was shaped heavily by the Nehru-Zhou meeting at the turn of 1957. This meeting consisted of a series of informal and formal discussions between the two prime ministers. The most important exchange of opinions happened on the very last day of 1956, [471] and in retrospect, the talks on December 31st had two highlights.

The first was a fierce debate on the Hungarian Revolution. Nehru put the Soviet intervention of Hungary in the same category as the French and British invasion of Egypt. He argued that there had been a "national uprising of the workers, students and the youth" yearning for the removal of "foreign domination," namely the Soviet presence, in Hungary Moscow's intervention had therefore "harmed the cause of socialism" and distressed India, one of the countries that was "friends of the Soviet Union." For Nehru, the whole incident pointed to a fundamental question: whether or not socialism should be imposed ever unto any country. In Zhou's opinion, however, this was not the crux of the matter. The core issue was that the socialist world was left with "only two roads — either to allow Hungary to go West or to preserve the socialist system." He believed that Moscow had made the right choice by squashing the nationalist movement that had become hijacked by "anti-revolutionary elements" and was driving toward "anti-revolutionary ends," namely, toppling socialism in Hungary. Although Zhou agreed to Nehru that it was persuasion that won over people, he stressed that the use of force was justified in circumstances of "foreign aggression and internal subversion." The disagreement on assessing the Hungarian Revolution actually forced Nehru to change the topic abruptly, after the conversation appeared on the verge of turning into a polemic.[472]

The two statesmen, however, did find common ground regarding the Indo-China partnership. After Zhou's monologue-like description of the relationship between Tibet and China, Nehru generally agreed, rather than arguing, as in the case of Hungary. "We recognize that China has, in law and in fact, suzerainty over Tibet even though it may not have been exercised sometimes." In view of Nehru's cooperative stance on the Tibet question, Zhou expressed China's position on the Indo-China border issue, which was to the great delight of Nehru: "So, although the question [of the McMahon Line] is still undecided and it is unfair to us, still we feel that there is no better way than to recognize this Line."[473] Later on in a letter to Sampurnanand, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Nehru described the significance of

[471] "Talks with Chou En-lai - I, II, III, IV," 31 December – 1 January 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 36, pp. 583-619.
[472] "Talks with Chou En-lai - I," 31 December 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 36, pp. 588-92.
[473] "Talks with Chou En-lai - I," 31 December 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 36, pp. 599-601.

Zhou's words: "The major border issue has already been settled."[474] However, despite Zhou's words, Nehru was fully aware of the lingering delicacy of the situation. He reminded Sampurnanand that still, "this could not be treated as an agreed border," and that "the question might be raised at any time by China." However, the greatest relief that the 1956-57 meeting brought to Nehru appears to not to have been from China's assent on particular issues that favoured India. In more general terms, Nehru seems to have taken the meeting as a litmus test for China's commitment to Panchsheel — the fundamental code of interaction in the Sino-Indian partnership. "We were not greatly worried about these particular places… a few miles this way or another. What we objected to was what appeared to us to be an aggressive way on the part of the Chinese."[475] Zhou's reconciliatory stance on the McMahon Line revitalized Nehru's faith in China acting according to Panchsheel. This faith had been diminishing as a result of the interminable minor border frictions over the past three years and the persistent skepticism toward China from Indian officials.[476] The 1956-57 meeting therefore seemed to re-forge a golden period of Sino-Indian partnership.

In the following sixteen months, India's policy toward China displayed a range of characteristics. First, India continued promoting Communist China on the world stage. During the visit to Japan in the autumn of 1957, Nehru stressed to Tokyo the importance of admitting People's Republic of China to the United Nations and the inevitability of Japan establishing a trade relationship with China.[477] Second, on the Taiwan question, Nehru's government continued to emphasize his commitment to the One China policy, as illustrated in Nehru's handling of the International Red Cross Conference in October 1957. India hosted this event and Taiwan was originally on the list of regions being invited. Beijing's protest left considerable pressure on Nehru, who had to stress again on this particular issue: "We cannot associate our Government in any way with invitation to Taiwan and more especially in order to give direct or indirect support to two China theory. [478]

Third, and most importantly, Delhi continued to maintain a very cautious line on the Tibet question, which lay at the heart of Indo-China partnership. He had no objection to those non-government projects, for example, opening new air routes between India and Tibet, which

[474] "To Sampurnanand," 14 May 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 38. pp. 399-401.
[475] "To Sampurnanand,"14 May 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 38, pp. 689-90.
[476] Gupta, "Foreign Secretary," pp. 51-52
[477] "Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon," 15 October 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 39, p. 626.
[478] "Cable to S. Dutt", 15 October 15 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 39, p. 699; "Message to Chou En-lai", 15 October 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 39, p. 700; "Message to Chou En-lai," 23 October 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 39, pp. 700-701; "To Lord Mountbatten," 1 November 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 40, pp. 678-80; see also Untitled Telegram from Subimal Dutt to Nehru, 15 May 1958, *NMML,* Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject File 32, p. 319.

would enhance India's connection with Tibet. But he did appear to know that such endeavours might bring trouble to the Indian government given Beijing's concern of Indian influence in Tibet. Nehru, therefore, had his government maintain an agree-but-not-sponsor attitude toward the requests from Indian institutions which were interested in bringing India and Tibet closer to each.[479] The same attitude of restraint was also applied to individual requests involving Tibet. Nehru was concerned that indiscreet speeches and activities, especially from people with sympathies toward Tibet, would cause damage to India's relationship with the P.R.C.[480] Toward the end of 1957, with unrest and rebellion beginning to spread to Khampa (the territory at the border of China proper and Tibet proper), Nehru faced increasing domestic pressures on him to support the Tibetan insurgents against China. On one hand, he sympathized with the Tibetans and agreed actually with people like Apa Pant, India's Political Officer in Sikkim and Bhutan, that China's presence in Tibet was one of "forcible occupation" against the will of "a considerable majority of the Tibetans."[481] It was not moral. On the other hand, he also believed that the occupation would continue "even if that goodwill is not gained" — a conclusion Nehru drew from his observation of the past between Tibet and China.[482] For the government of India, the wise choice was to accept this pattern of history and remain as a bystander.

This amicable Sino-Indian relationship, characterized by Delhi's all-out diplomatic support for Beijing's cause, reached an impasse in the summer of 1958. The futile talks on the middle sector of the Indo-China border were only a minor reason for this impasse. Between April and June of 1958, the Chinese representatives ruled out the validity of the Indian evidence, since it came from British colonialists. Interestingly, the Indian side did the same to the Chinese evidence, but for a different reason: the interviews by Chinese communist cadres were supposedly manipulated. Nehru expressed this concern to Dutt, long known to be a China-sceptic and the leader of the Indian negotiation team. Dutt rejected China's proposal to conduct a joint local investigation because "both sides could produce any number of supporters."[483]

What undermined the foundation of Sino-Indian partnership — Panchsheel in India's eyes — came from three developments *outside* this bilateral relationship. First were the endless

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[479] "Kalinga Airlines Services to Tibet," 31 August 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 39; "Air Services to Lhasa and Beijing," *SWJN*2, vol. 41.
[480] "To Rajendra Prasad," 16 November 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 40.
[481] For more of Nehru's realistic thinking about Tibet, see "A Perspective on Tibet," 26 December 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 40.
[482] A Perspective on Tibet," 26 December 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 40.
[483] Gupta, "Foreign Secretary," p. 54.

Sino-Burma border negotiations.[484] The negotiations began with Burmese Prime Minister U Nu's visit to Beijing, which happened one month before Zhou's visit to Delhi on December 31st, 1956. In fact, before the U Nu-Zhou meeting, Nehru had played an instrumental role in making this happen.[485] U Nu had once harboured a deep-seated suspicion toward Burma's giant northern neighbour. He was hesitant to accept Beijing's invitation until he received Nehru's assurance of diplomatic and political support.[486] Despite a promising start in the form of a general agreement reached in this meeting, Yangon was surprised in 1957 to discover that the way Beijing interpreted this agreement differed considerably from Burma's. One point of contention was the cancellation of the "Nanwan Tract." Burma believed that China's cancellation was simply a surrender of residual sovereignty of this land, but was caught by surprise by the fact that China actually expected to be compensated by Burmese land somewhere else.[487] Yangon spared no time in airing to Delhi its indignation at the Chinese counter-proposal and received a quick reply from Nehru. "I confess that I do not very much like the attitude of Premier Chou En-lai in this matter. The impression created upon me is that he was not fully adhering to what he had told you … previously."[488] Indeed, the Burmese chose to insist on their interpretation of the initial agreement, as did the Chinese, who further indicated their preference for a package deal by stressing that all concessions and counter-concessions in the negotiations "formed an indivisible whole." [489] These "interminable arguments" between Beijing and Yangon inevitably caused Nehru to downplay the prospects of the yet-to-begin Sino-Indian border talks.[490] There were another two rounds of back-and-forth between China and Burma before the negotiation virtually broke down in the summer of 1958.[491]

The second development that undermined the basis of Sino-Indian partnership was Beijing's ideological attack on Yugoslavia. It began with the *People's Daily* editorial on May 5th, 1958, which announced that "the clique of Yugoslavian leaders had viciously vilified the

[484] For a description of the Sino-Burma border dispute and its connection with the Sino-Indian border dispute, see "C.C.A.O (Burma)," 18 January 1944, *National Archives Department of Myanmar* [hereafter: *NADM*], series 10/1 acc-248, p. 37.
[485] "Message to U Nu," 4 September 1956, "To U Nu," 4 September 1956, "Message to Chou En-lai," 12 September 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 35, pp. 507-12.
[486] U Nu's letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, August 29, 1956, partially revealed in "To U Nu," 4 September 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 35, p. 509.
[487] Guan Peifeng, "Zhongmian bianjie tanpan yanjiu: jiyu waijiaobu jiemi dangan de yanjiu [A Study of Sino-Burma Border Negotiation Based on Declassified Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives]," *Historical Review* , no. 1 (2014), p. 166.
[488] "To U Nu," 22 April 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 37.
[489] Guan, "Zhongmian bianjie," p. 166.
[490] "Trade and Travel Agreement between China and Nepal," 23 August 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 39, p. 654.
[491] After Zhou's letter to U Nu on 31 July 1958, which was a reiteration of China's position, there was no more contact between the two sides on the border matter until Ne Win's new proposal in June 1959.

proletarian dictatorship" in the same way as "those Counter-revolutionaries in the world and the Capitalist Rightists in China."[492] Viewing it as a "vicious article," India's first reaction was to struggle to understand Beijing's purpose behind this accusation.[493] After a second Chinese article written by Chen Boda, one of Mao's most trusted secretaries, was published on June 1st, more written Chinese materials attacking Yugoslavia were released.[494] India assessed this development in the context of the Sino-Indian relationship. Nehru found China's entry into the controversy between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia incomprehensible because China was not a neighbour, nor did it have close connections to Balkan politics. As a result, he saw China acting "wholly without justification." What distressed him the most, however, was the violation of the spirit of Panchsheel, the overarching code that had been promoted for years by him and now had been abandoned by China as well as the Soviet Union. "Therefore, the Five Principles have gone by the board. If the Soviet Union or China can do this in regard to Yugoslavia, there is no particular reason to imagine that they cannot or will not do so in the case of India."[495]

There was, however, yet a third major blow to Nehru's faith: the execution of Imre Nagy. Charged with treason and subversion against the Hungarian democratic state, Nagy, the prime minister of Hungary during the Hungarian Uprising, was tried, sentenced to death, and executed by hanging along with his comrades in the late spring of 1958. He died on June 16th, only one day after Nehru lamented the dissipation of Panchsheel. What appalled Nehru was that the world only learned about Nagy's sentencing and hanging after the fact. "That was a cold-blooded act done no doubt after full consideration," Nehru wrote KPS Menon, India's ambassador to the Soviet Union. He believed that the Soviets, fully aware of the reaction such an act would incite, demonstrated "an amazing callousness" that left blood on their hands.[496]

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[492] "Must Criticize Modern Revisionism," *People's Daily*, 5 May 1958, www.laoziliao.net/rmrb, accessed on 10 December 2019.
[493] "Was it inspired by Moscow or was it intended to force the hands of the Soviet Government and party against Yugoslavia?" "Report for the Month of April 1958," 13 May 1958, *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject File 32, pp. 186-92. It actually was a concerted campaign with Moscow against Belgrade that had long been planned. On 2 April 1958, Khrushchev communicated with Mao that the CPSU would not send delegates to the upcoming Seventh Party Congress of Yugoslav League of Communists. The stated reason was that this meeting's draft guideline showed that the gathering was revisionist and anti-Marxist in nature. A few days later, the Soviet Ambassador to China Yudin sought a meeting with Mao in Wuhan. In this conversation, Mao condemned Tito as an agent of American imperialism and following his Soviet comrades by instructing to send no Chinese delegate to Belgrade. For more, see Lorenz Luthi, *Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 82.
[494] Chen Poda, "Imperialist Policy Gives Birth to Yugoslavian Revisionism," *Red Flag*, 1 June 1958, pp. 11-19.
[495] "Prime Minister's Secretariat," 15 June 1958, *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject Files, File 32, p.48
[496] "To K.P.S. Menon," 28 June 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 42, p. 654.

In this juncture, China again entered into the picture, thanks to Dutt. The foreign secretary wrote to Nehru on June 20th, 1958, that the deaths of Nagy and his supporters were applauded by Chinese newspapers as "glad tidings."[497] This message likely caused Nehru to seriously consider a message that he had received two days before, again from his foreign secretary. Dutt had alerted him that the time had come for India to "review the position" toward China.[498] Nehru did not reply to this point instantly. Apparently, the delay was not because the warning was baseless.[499] Instead, he was probably searching for a deeper explanation for the various observations about a "general stiffening of the Chinese attitude toward India in recent months."[500] The Chinese hailing of Nagy's execution, therefore, likely served as a keyhole through which Nehru believed he discovered a significant change in the state of China. "This indicates even more than some earlier developments a certain change in Soviet and Chinese policies, which means rigidity and to some extent a reversion to older methods which we thought had been given up."[501] In the Lok Sabha two months later, Nehru shared his disheartening discovery with MPs: "Panchsheel had been broken in various parts of the world by those who said they adhered to it."[502]

Once Panchsheel was believed to no longer exist, the Indian Prime Minister became far less poised than before in facing China, especially regarding the lingering border dispute. This change can be nicely illustrated by comparing his notes to Dutt's regarding the incorrect Chinese maps *before* and *after* June 1958.

> On the whole, I am inclined to think that we need not at this stage ask our Embassy in Peking to take up this matter. Thus, our present approach need not be too formal and at the same time the Chinese Government will know what we feel about the issue of such maps."[503]

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[497] "Execution of Imre Nagy," 20 June 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 42, p. 650.
[498] Untitled note from Subimal Dutt to Nehru, June 18, 1958, *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject Files, File 32, p. 109.
[499] In February 1958, a note about Chinese communications in Tibet, compiled by the Historical Division of the MEA, warned that China was "no longer a fire-emitting dragon but a suave python". In May, the Indian consul-general in Shanghai reported that in contrast to the situation six months ago, there was "a certain cooling off [of China] toward Indians generally and certainly the Indian government". See "Communications in Tibet Under China Rule," 28 February 1958, *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Paper, Subject File 96, pp.71-83; Report from Consul General of India Shanghai, 9 May 1958, *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject Files, File 32, pp. 104-5.
[500] Untitled note from Subimal Dutt to Nehru, June 18, 1958, *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject Files, File 32, p. 109.
[501] "Execution of Imre Nagy," 20 June 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 42, p. 650.
[502] "International Situation - II," 20 August 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 43, p. 439.
[503] "Inaccurate Maps issued by the Chinese Government," 8 April 1957, *SWJN*2, vol. 42, p. 655.

> I do not think that we should allow this matter to go pass without some kind of protest. To ignore this repetition of inaccurate maps showing large parts of India in China, in a sense, means to accept them… We need not make a formal protest but… hand… an aid-memoire or… an unofficial note."[504]

After August, support of the governmental apparatus for Nehru's previous approach to China started to disintegrate. On September 4th, 1958, two weeks after his public announcement that Panchsheel had perished, members of the Lok Sabha began to hammer Nehru with questions about India's border with China.[505] This was truly a historical moment for India. The last time when the Lok Sahba discussed the border issue was six years ago. In these years, Nehru had managed to forestall this topic in any open debate. He always preferred the border problem to be handled informally and confidentially, as he advised U Nu to do regarding Burma's border problem with China in 1956.[506] But by the autumn of 1958, the trust of his audience had considerably dwindled. It was in this domestic political atmosphere that Nehru made that famous, or infamous, public statement: "It [the border with China] is a fixed thing. There is nothing to talk about." It was a gesture of asserting sovereignty and in an apparently uncompressing manner. But in retrospect, it is clear that he was not speaking to Beijing with this statement at that moment. It was the ever-restless Indian Parliament at the moment that Nehru intended this message to reach. Many MPs like Hem Barua from Assam and N.G. Goray from Bombay State expressed during parliamentary debates a great amount of anxiety toward the security of India's northern border with the Chinese state.[507]

To Nehru's disappointment, the border issue with China became further complicated in the remainder of 1958. First, in October, one of the two reconnaissance parties sent to Ladakh in the summer of 1958 confirmed previous suspicions about unilateral Chinese steps. China's Xinjiang-Tibet highway, reported to have been completed a year ago, did in fact traverse Aksai Chin. Meanwhile, the other Indian reconnaissance party, with which Delhi lost contact in August, turned out to have been arrested by Chinese border troops five weeks earlier. Although these Indian soldiers were released and returned to India with supplies, the Chinese authorities did not bother to inform its Indian counterparts at all until after receiving Delhi's

[504] The July issue of China Pictorial showed again a large area of NEFA and Assam as within China. See "A Repetition of Inaccurate Maps," 12 August 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 43, p. 536.
[505] "Indian Territory Shown in Chinese Maps," 4 September 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 44.
[506] *SWJN*2, vol. 43, vol. 44.
[507] "Indian Territory Shown in Chinese Maps," 4 September 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 44, p. 567.

inquiry.[508] This all happened against the background of the rebellions, which had originally occurred in the Khampa area, growing in intensity and spreading throughout Tibet. The Indian government began to face the grave challenge of how to deal with the Khampa and Tibetan rebels who sought shelter within India as well as Bhutan.[509]

With Panchsheel having been broken and the "fixed" border about to be violated by either Tibetan rebels or Chinese border patrols, Nehru found himself running out of patience.[510] On December 14th, 1958, he wrote to Zhou in an extremely humble manner: "My purpose in troubling you with this letter… is in regard to the border between India and China."[511] He reminded Zhou that the border, especially in the middle and eastern sectors, had yet to be settled.[512] There was no immediate reply from Zhou, however. After one month, the fretting Indian prime minister decided to press China for an answer. On January 17th, 1959, a diplomatic protest was lodged against a Chinese intrusion that was reported to Delhi nearly four months prior.[513] The alert worked, and Beijing finally replied six days later. The letter from Premier Zhou did not appear blunt in outlook, given the many words devoted at the beginning to highlight the "friendly co-operation between China and India". Nor did it seem to be dodging any facts, especially Zhou's nodding in his meeting with Nehru at the turn of 1956/57. The key message, however, was dismaying to Nehru: "The Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited."[514]

Conclusion

In retrospect, the one and a half years following the Nehru-Zhou meeting at the turn of 1956/57 was a golden period of the Sino-Indian relationship. There were no diplomatic frictions on the border issue. In Indian eyes, the reason for this was that Nehru had achieved a result that he had sought for years. In return for his continued recognition of Tibet as a part of China, Zhou appeared to give his oral approval on the contentious McMahon Line, which

[508] According to Yang Gongsu, through interrogation of the 15 Indian soldiers, the Chinese learned that this operation was reconnaissance in nature and conducted under the order directly from the Indian army headquarter.
[509] "Entry of Khampa Rebels into India," 8 October 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 44, pp. 570-71; "To B.C. Roy," 27 November 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 45, p. 363; "Mimangs and Khamps in Bhutan," 10 December 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 45, p. 701.
[510] "Indian Territory Shown in Chinese Maps," 4 September 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 44, pp. 567-68.
[511] "To Chou En-lai," 14 December 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 45, pp. 702-705.
[512] In Nehru's logic, the middle sector was settled in the conclusion of the 1954 Agreement and the eastern sector was agreed in his meeting with Zhou at the turning of 1956/57.
[513] The intrusion occurred in late September of 1958, but India did not protest until mid-January 1959. "Informal Note Given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in India," 17 January 1959, *WP*, vol. 1, p. 33.
[514] "Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India," 23 January 1959, *WP*, vol. 1, pp. 62-66.

Nehru considered to be the major issue in India's border dispute with China. This meeting also enabled the two sides to agree to open formal talks over some minor border problems in the middle sector. Therefore, with the major issue solved and a solution to minor problems in the works, Delhi no longer found reasons to argue with Beijing on the border issue. For China, its new approach to border disputes not only prioritized negotiations with Burma, but also emphasized solving other territorial disputes through a reconciliatory attitude. In this period, the Sino-Indian border dispute was on a healthy trajectory, seemingly heading toward an ultimately peaceful settlement.

This golden period ended in the summer of 1958. The futile border negotiations on Wu Je/Bara Hoti certainly were one reason. The Chinese found the Indian evidence — originally from the British colonialists — ridiculous, and the Indians found the Chinese evidence — based on recent interviews by Chinese communist cadres among the newly-ruled Tibetans — unreliable. Therefore, in June each side concluded that it had a much stronger case than its opponent. This reason alone, however, could not explain the intensity of diplomatic friction after the middle of 1958 compared to any previous period.

After the summer of 1958, the foundation of Sino-Indian relationship crumbled quickly. Since 1954, this relationship had rested on India's faith in China's commitment to follow the spirit of Panchsheel, and on China's belief that India was largely supportive of its rule in Tibet. A reason for India's loss of faith was the interminable series of Sino-Burma border negotiations that started in late 1956. By the summer of 1958, these talks had already entered a quagmire, which created the impression that Zhou was not a man of his word. Second, in May and June, India witnessed China launching ideological attacks on the Yugoslavian communists. While previously Nehru had not bothered to question what China's firm defense of the Soviet intervention in the Hungarian Uprising meant, it now dawned on him that China appeared to have swept the Five Principles overboard. And finally, China's public support for the execution of Nagy was a disappointment for Nehru. The execution undermined Nehru views of the Soviet Union and China's rejoicing at Nagy's death confirmed his suspicions that the Chinese were no longer committed to Panchsheel. These factors combined caused a great anxiety in Nehru's mind toward the outstanding issues between India and China, particularly the border issue.

In contrast to India, China's belief in India, especially as a partner in consolidating its rule of Tibet, had always been inadequate. It resulted primarily from Beijing's overall assessment of Nehru's leadership in domestic politics, which it considered weak, and Delhi's foreign policy, which it saw as drifting toward the West. Meanwhile, the status of Tibet, despite

being in theory the Tibet Region of China, continued to be a problem in daily politics. As in the case of the Dalai Lama inviting Nehru to visit Tibet, India's respect for Tibet's autonomy was seen by China as an attempt to undermine Beijing's rule. The more Delhi entertained such interactions, the less China trusted India. In the end, this affected China's handling of the Sino-Indian border dispute because of deficiencies in Beijing's new border policy. Although this policy was characterized by a reconciliatory tendency, it also contained markedly uncompromising elements; for example, the principle of "not-giving-a-single-inch-of-land-away." Most importantly, the degree of reconciliation with any neighbour depended on China's assessment of how progressive that neighbour was. China would let disputes with socialist countries go while treating nationalist countries differently from imperialist countries. The problem for India was that, in Beijing's eyes, it had been gradually displaying increasingly reactionary tendencies.

The direct result of the loss of faith in the Sino-Indian relationship was that the border issue became a legal dispute between the two strangers. Both sides became more vocal about their national interests and more willing to document their claims or counterclaims through diplomatic notes. There were other factors that so many notes were exchanged after the middle of 1958. They included the emergence of the Aksai Chin road issue, the return of the dispute about the McMahon line, and increased attempts by both Indian and Chinese forces to strengthen their positions in the borderland areas. But emphasizing these factors would prevent us from correctly understanding the future developments in the Sino-Indian relationship, such as Nehru's uncompromising, or in Maxwell's words, "intransigent," approach to the bilateral border dispute.[515] This toughness proved to be the result of his loss of belief in China, which, as he previously felt, possessed a *bona fide* trust in India in the same way as Nehru had in China, especially in the early 1950s. As to Zhou's reply in January 1959, it was not a grave distortion of reality. But his interpretation of the tacit agreement, which Nehru believed to exist on the matter of the McMahon Line, proved that Zhou was not of the sort of gentlemen that Nehru had met in England, for instance. Zhou was playing with words. This Chinese leader was perhaps more like a small businessman in the Yangtze delta, where people traditionally made fortunes by bargaining every penny.

[515] Maxwell, *India's China War*, pp. 123, 248.

Chapter 5: The Road to War, 1959-62

Introduction

In the spring of 1959, the Sino-Indian relationship entered turbulent waters. The Tibetan Uprising caused the bilateral relationship to deteriorate drastically. During this period, the Dalai Lama fled to India, where he has established residence ever since. Also, Beijing officially stated that it did not recognize the McMahon Line, destroying the tacit agreement that Nehru thought he had secured. In the autumn of 1959, two border skirmishes, first at Longju and then at Kongka Pass, demonstrated that the days of the "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai [India and China are brothers]" were gone. The repeated bloodshed on the Sino-Indian border disappointed both Delhi and Beijing — but in different ways. For Delhi, the bloodshed bankrupted India's China policy, which had emphasized cooperating with and understanding China. For Beijing, the disappointment came mainly from Moscow, which failed to be as supportive to China as the CCP had expected from a fraternal ally. The Prime Ministers' meeting in 1960, however, failed to generate a meaningful agreement, although it was followed by roughly two years of peace along the Sino-Indian border. As is well known, this tranquility ended in 1962.

This chapter explores the road to the outbreak of the 1962 war. It attempts to answer the following questions: what was the nature of the Tibetan Uprising of 1959? How did India respond to this crisis? How did this event shape India's attitude and policy toward China afterwards? How did the Tibetan question transform into the Sino-Indian border dispute in the autumn of 1959? Why did the Nehru-Zhou meeting in April of 1960 fail? Was it due to, as Neville Maxwell claims, Nehru's intransigence? What caused Delhi to adopt the so-called "Forward Policy" in late 1961, which is often cited to bolster the claim that China was forced to wage a "self-defensive war?" As for China, what was Beijing's mind-set and calculation toward India in the drastic deterioration of Sino-Indian relationship in the spring of 1959, especially after the Dalai Lama was given asylum in India? What dictated the pace of Beijing's approach to Delhi toward the end of 1959? Did Beijing really have an open-minded or flexible attitude in the Nehru-Zhou meeting of 1960? What was Beijing's attitude toward India in general and on the border matter in specific between the spring of 1959 and the winter of 1961? Finally, how do we understand China's resort to war in 1962, in terms of those major domestic and external challenges that China faced in that year?

India's Approach to China

On the eve of the Tibetan Uprising, India's approach to China was based on three assessments. First, China had abandoned the spirit of Panchsheel and reverted to a Stalinist communism characterized by rigidity and inhumanity. This view belonged primarily to Nehru and his senior government officials since the summer of 1958.[516] Second, China was exercising suzerainty, not sovereignty, over Tibet.[517] This understanding was held by the Indian society as a whole, rather than just the government. It formed the basis of the society's acceptance of Communist China's occupation of Tibet since 1951. Third, the bottom line of the Indian government's approach to China — maintaining the McMahon Line — was on a slippery slope. Zhou's letter to Nehru on January 23rd, 1959 shattered the latter's belief that Beijing had acquiesced the present border between India and the Tibet Region of China.[518] This reasonable belief was established based on the absence of any formal challenge from Beijing toward Delhi's stand on the McMahon Line since 1950 and on Zhou's informal nod on the border matter at the Prime Ministers' meeting of 1956-7. But the disappointment caused by Zhou's letter was yet to transform into disillusionment. There was still a chance for the government to persuade Beijing to accept the McMahon Line. This was, indeed, what Nehru did in his reply to Zhou on March 22nd, 1959.[519] Nehru's government therefore did not disclose this setback in securing India's northern border to Parliament or the press after receiving Zhou's letter in January .[520] Consequently, the bomb of the Sino-Indian border dispute did not explode.

The Tibetan Uprising in March 1959 opened a new era. On March 10th, thousands of Tibetans gathered outside the Dalai Lama's residence in Lhasa and prevented him from attending a cultural performance at the headquarters of the Chinese military force. The situation quickly spun out of control. On March 12th, the crowd began to declare Tibetan independence. Then on March 20th, after quietly watching the riot for over a week, the Chinese authorities in Tibet finally acted with force, ending the rebellion with a sweeping victory. In retrospect, there is little evidence to substantiate the view that the Chinese planned to kidnap the Dalai Lama by inviting him to their headquarters in Lhasa. But the Tibetans' fear was understandable given the developments that they had witnessed in the past few

[516] "International Situation - II," 20 August 1958, *SWJN*2, vol. 43, p. 439.
[517] "In the Lok Sabha: MEA Grants," 16 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, pp. 441-42.
[518] "Letter from Premier Chou En-lai to Prime Minister of India," 23 January 1959, *WP*, vol. 1, pp. 52-55.
[519] "Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China," 22 March 1959, *WP*, vol. 1, pp. 55-58.
[520] "I think it should be possible, as you say, to give an answer to the question without embarrassing ourselves or the Chinese." "To Subimal Dutt," 6 February 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 46, p. 593.

years. The party-state had carried out socio-economic reforms in the neighbouring Kham area, which was met with the stubborn resistance from the Khampas. The Khampas were overwhelmed by China's drive to implement this reform, and by 1959 new Chinese restrictions had been placed on the Tibetans, which could have been interpreted as meaning that the Tibetans would meet the same fate as the Khampas. The uprising revealed an incessant conflict that had been submerged since the apparent acceptance of the Seventeen-Point Agreement in 1951: The Tibetans always believed that Tibet was a nation itself and China should exercise only suzerainty or indirect rule over it, while the Chinese communists were committed to re-establishing Chinese sovereignty or direct rule. Therefore, China's use of force upon the Tibetans in 1959 was similar to its use of force in 1950, because both instances were dictated by the logic that Tibet was part of China. In this sense, Nehru's India was actually facing the Second Tibet Crisis. This time, however, the Dalai Lama was on the Indian side of the Indo-Tibetan border with thousands of exhausted Tibetan refugees following him. The image of China as a benevolent suzerain power, which Nehru had sketched for Indian society and maintained over the past eight years, evaporated.[521]

The month before Nehru met the Dalai Lama in Mussorie on April 24th was a "fluid and uncertain" period for Nehru and his government, during which they were caught in a "difficult and delicate" position.[522] The press coverage of the Tibetan Uprising by Western and Indian journalists stirred all of India.[523] Society-wide resentment toward the Chinese and sympathy with the Tibetans, the apparent underdog in this struggle, reached Nehru in the form of sharp questions from the restless watchdogs of the Indian parliament. Members of Parliament pressured the government to take more active steps to help Tibet, and some of them later started to question India's approach to the Tibet Question from the beginning.[524] At the debate in the Rajya Sabha on April 23rd, for example, an MP asked if the Indian government had assisted Beijing "in overrunning Tibet in 1950."[525]

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[521] "The Chinese today, on other side of our border in Tibet, are putting Tibetan schools for the Tibetans, and not interfering with their ways." See "To Bisnuram Medhi," 4 April 1952, *SWJN*2, vol. 18, p. 363; in the Lok Sabha debate on March 30,1959, a MP equated denying asylum to the Tibetan refugees with "cooperating [with the Chinese] in their butchery." See "In the Lok Sabha: Refugees from Tibet," 30 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 463.

[522] "To M.C. Chagla: Fund for Tibetan Refugees," 5 April 1959, p. 440; "To the Maharaja of Sikkim: Tibet a Sensitive Matter," 8 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 444.

[523] "In the Lok Sabha: MEA Grants," 16 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 442; "To Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit: On Western Press Reports," 15 April 1959, p. 457.

[524] "In the Lok Sabha: Refugees from Tibet," 30 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 469; "In the Rajya Sabha: Prince Peter of Greece on Tibet," 23 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 472.

[525] "In the Rajya Sabha: Prince Peter of Greece on Tibet," 23 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 472.

Besides the pressure from within India, there was further trouble from China. On March 28th, Xinhua News Agency released an official communiqué about the rebellion, which was essentially a Chinese version of the crisis. The communiqué not only implicated India by asserting that the Indian city of Kalimpong had served as the "commanding center of the rebellion," but also produced a purported correspondence between the Dalai Lama and the highest Chinese military commander in Tibet, General Tan Guansan, which appeared to show that the Dalai Lama had been coerced and abducted by a so-called Tibetan "traitorous clique" and that his later exile happened against his will.[526] "If these letters had really been written by him, then it does give a different color to the picture."[527] Overall, until he was able to verify facts through the Dalai Lama himself, Nehru felt that his hands were bound.[528]

Another critical constraint on Nehru was his respect for the Seventeen-Point Agreement of 1951. This peace agreement between the Kashag government of Tibet and the communist government of China had established Tibet as part of the new China as the "Tibet Region of China." Based on this agreement, India had concluded the 1954 Agreement with China, which confirmed the new status of Tibet and which had been a cornerstone of the Sino-Indian relationship ever since. Nehru's stance on the Seventeen-Point Agreement had been clear since the Tibetan Uprising was first discussed in the Lok Sabha on March 17th. "Maybe it was that the agreement itself was under stress of circumstances, but there was an agreement."[529] His adherence to existing agreements regarding Tibet was expressed again in his letter to Indian President Rajendra Prasad, who had just returned from his overseas trip. "The position of Tibet has been, for a long time past, that of an autonomous region of the Chinese State." The questions confronting India, Nehru explained to the 75-year-old president, were not just the absence of "full facts" but also "what we can do about them," given the state of things in Tibet.[530]

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[526] "The Communique on the Incident of the Tibetan Rebellion" *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 470.
[527] "To Rajendra Prasad: On Tibet," 30 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 480.
[528] "Again, it is rather embarrassing to discuss events happening in a neighboring country about which we know something of course, but naturally what we know is limited." See "In the Lok Sabha," 17 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 441; "At the present moment we have a mass of statements in the Press, rumors, allegations, statements of the Chinese Government, from which it is little difficult to sort out exactly the truth of what is happening." See "In the Lok Sabha: Tibet," 30 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 470; "There should be no question of our suppressing our conscience or doing anything patently wrong for fear of consequences. But it is not at all clear first what the full facts are." See "To Rajendra Prasad: On Tibet," 30 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 480.
[529] "In the Lok Sabha," 17 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 441.
[530] "To Rajendra Prasad: On Tibet," 30 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 480.

Therefore, for various reasons, "restraint and wisdom" defined the Nehru government's reaction to this unexpected crisis.[531] It did not publicly denounce Beijing's suppression of the uprising, as most Western and Indian press commentators and many members of the Indian Parliament expected it to do.[532] Nehru feared that any direct move would be interpreted by a paranoid Beijing as Indian intervention in China's internal affairs, which would further jeopardize the "interests of the Tibetans" and compromise India's work for "good relations with China."[533] He was unwilling to even informally approach Zhou about Tibet.[534] The Indian government did not dramatize or exploit the Dalai Lama's exile in India. Instead, Nehru urged both the Indian people and his government officials to keep "a cool and calm mind," to speak with "a sense of responsibility," and not to make "too much a fuss" of it.[535] Through his officials, Nehru also politely and repeatedly advised the Dalai Lama to speak with discretion in public and not to give interviews, particularly those that would be an "embarrassment to him and to us."[536] To avoid complicating the situation for the Tibetan refugees, Nehru rejected repeatedly foreign relieving offers, particularly from the United States. As he stressed privately, the relieving task is the "Government of India's responsibility,"[537] adding "a wrong step by us will injure the Tibetans apart from other consequences."[538] In retrospect, given the fuss that Beijing made after an Indian crowd in Bombay defaced a picture of Mao, Nehru was not overcautious in his attitude on the refugee relief issue.

In helping those Tibetans in India, Nehru demonstrated not only a high degree of caution, but also an admirable commitment to what he considered right. His principled statesmanship led him to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama, although he was well aware that this move would in no way please Beijing. Meanwhile, he consistently sought to downplay the Chinese threat,

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[531] "In the Lok Sabha: Tibet," 30 March 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 47, p. 475; "To Sampurnanand: The Dalai Lama's Accommodation at Mussoorie," 13 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 456-57.
[532] "To Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit: On Western Press Reports," 15 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 457.
[533] "To the Maharaja of Sikkim: Tibet as a Sensitive Matter," 8 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 444; "To C. Rajagopalachari: Khampa Revolt," 8 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 445.
[534] "To the Maharaja of Sikkim: Tibet a Sensitive Matter," 8 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 444.
[535] "The Congress Workers: Be Calm," 24 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 477-78; "To Sampurnanand: The Dalai Lama," 25 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 501.
[536] "To the Dalai Lama: Welcome," 3 April, 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 438; "To the Dalai Lama: Advice on Meeting the Press," 13 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48 pp. 455-56; "Talk with the Dalai Lama," 24 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 497.
[537] "To M.C. Chagla: Tolstoy Foundation Help for Tibetan Refugees," 10 April 1959, pp. 450-51; "To MEA: Talk with Ellsworth Bunker on Tibet," 22 May 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 49, p. 579.
[538] "To Sampurnanand: The Dalai Lama's Accommodation at Mussoorie," 13 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 456.

especially when confronting restless MPs in both houses of Parliament.[539] One position that is particularly worth highlighting, given its popularity both within and outside India, was the equation of the Second Tibet Crisis with the Hungary Uprising of 1956.[540] "Hungary was in international law an independent state," Nehru protested in his letter to British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, "[but] Tibet has been recognized to be a part of the Chinese State."[541] Overall, Nehru saw his government as adopting an independent approach, or, in his words, "a balanced outlook," by embarrassing neither side — particularly China — in the crisis.[542]

The meeting with the Dalai Lama at Mussoorie on April 24th, 1959, ended the "fluid and uncertain" period for Nehru.[543] The four-hour-long conversation provided Nehru with a full picture of the Second Tibet Crisis. The Dalai Lama's account confirmed his earlier feelings that China did not intend to have this crisis and that the beginning of this upheaval could in medium term be traced to China's reform in the Kham area years ago. Indeed, this talk also confirmed his assessment that in the long term, the "broad and gradual development" resulting from Beijing's efforts to consolidate its rule "made a conflict [between China and Tibet] inevitable."[544] The keys to appraising the crisis were the alleged three letters from the Dalai Lama to General Tan Guansan during the riots, which had been cited by Beijing as evidence that the Dalai Lama supported China and had been abducted by rebels. Nehru patiently collected every piece of the Dalai Lama's testimony about these letters, in terms of whether the Dalai Lama wrote them, how he wrote them, and why he wrote them. For example, the Dalai Lama wrote in the final letter, dated March 16th, that he wished to join the Chinese secretly, but he told Nehru that "the intention was to delude the Chinese," although

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[539] Regarding China deploying troops on border, see " In the Lok Sabha: Refugees from Tibet," 30 March 1959, vol. 47, p. 471; regarding Chinese violation of Indian air space, see "To the Lok Sabha Secretariat: Violation of Air Space," 12 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 454; regarding Indian diplomats in Lhasa virtually under house arrest, see "In the Lok Sabha: Restrictions on Consul-General in Lhasa," 22 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 472; regarding Indian trader's increasing difficulties in Tibet, see "In Rajya Sabha: Indian Traders in Tibet," 23 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 474-77.

[540] "To Subimal Dutt: Tibetan Refugees, Heinrich Harrer," 4 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 439; "To Harold Macmillan: Explaining Tibet Events," 5 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 441; "To UN Dhebar: Tibetan Refugees," 11 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 452.

[541] "To Harold Macmillan: Explaining Tibet Events," 5 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 441.

[542] "To C. Rajagopalachari: Khampa Revolt," 8 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 446.

[543] "To M.C. Chagla: Fund for Tibetan Refugees," 5 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 440.

[544] For Nehru's earlier analysis of the cause of crisis, see "To Harold Macmillan: Explaining Tibet Events," telegram, 5 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 442; in another letter, Nehru acknowledged China's effort to lessen the conflict with the Tibetan, i.e. postponing the reforms in Tibet, but also stressed that "inherent contradiction" in the Sino-Tibetan relationship. See "To C. Rajagopalachari: Khampa Revolt," 8 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 445-46; "The whole foundation of Tibetan tradition is based on religion, and if they cannot carry on that basis, they would become like a people without their souls. If any changes are to be brought about in Tibet, they should be brought about by the Tibetan people themselves and not by foreigners and especially the Chinese, who were non-religious." For the complete Dalai Lama's account of the crisis, see "Talk with the Dalai Lama," 24 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 478-90.

he had not yet given up the hope of a peaceful settlement. His flight from Lhasa on March 17th was a sudden decision with only "hours' preparation." However complicated the runaway story was, one thing that was crystal clear to Nehru was that the Chinese assertion that the Dalai Lama was "abducted" was false. As the Dalai Lama had already stated in his Tezpur statement on April 18th, he had fled Tibet by "his own free will and not under duress."[545] Unless Beijing could provide further evidence for their story, from India's standpoint as a spectator, the Dalai Lama obviously had a better case.

After this meeting, Nehru changed the Indian government *attitude* to "firm though not unfriendly" toward China, although government *policy* remained as before.[546] In the Lok Sabha debate on April 27th, Nehru explained why non-interventionist Tibet policy should remain in place in light of the new circumstance in Tibet. This was because India's "broad policy" was "governed" by three factors. They were "the preservation of the security and integrity [of India], our desire to maintain friendly relations with China, and our deep sympathy for the people of Tibet."[547] India would therefore remain a spectator in the controversy between Tibet and China and would work only to facilitate a peaceful settlement, a point that Nehru made clear to the Dalai Lama in their latest meeting, as he had in their meeting in 1956. Most importantly, despite the tragic event in Tibet, Chinese friendship would still be a fundamental aim of India's foreign policy.[548] However, reiterating this was not the focus of Nehru's speech on April 27th. Its weight actually fell on two other matters. One was refuting what he called "fantastic" allegations toward India. Beijing claimed that Kalimpong was the "commanding center of rebellion," that the Dalai Lama was kept under duress in India, and that the Indian Government was practicing "expansionism." All of these were "wholly unjustified." The other focus of his speech was expressing India's view of the rightful way to end this bloody chapter between Tibet and China with a spillover effect already on the Sino-Indian relations. The Indian Prime Minister emphasized that China should not impose its will, however beneficial it is from China's standpoint, upon the Tibetans. Instead, China should try to understand the "fears and apprehensions" of the Tibetan people, and the Indian people's "sympathy [toward Tibet]" that was "based on

[545] "The Dalai Lama's Press Statements: Statement Issued at Tezpur," 18 April 1959, www.archieve.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/590418_Tezpur_Statement.pdf, accessed on 10 December 2019; "Talk with the Dalai Lama," 24 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 485-89.
[546] "To G. Parthasarthi: China and the Dalai Lama," 29 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 512.
[547] "In the Lok Sabha: Statement on Situation in Tibet," 27 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 507.
[548] "Talk with the Dalai Lama," 24 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 490-92; *NMML*, Oral History Transcript, The Dalai Lama, pp. 3-7.

sentiment and humanitarian reasons."[549] Behind this systematic verbal response to Beijing's handling of the Tibet Question was a new mindset toward Beijing, which Nehru elaborated in his letter to the Indian Ambassador to China G. Partharathi two days later:

> We realized the importance of these friendly relations, but friendship cannot be obtained by threats and coercive attitude. If Chinese friendship is necessary for India, so is Indian friendship for China. The time for any country to display arrogance in dealing with India is long past…We shall, therefore, continue to be polite and seek friendship and at the same time to hold firmly to the policy we consider correct. [550]

However, Pandora's box had already been opened. The situation was evolving in a direction beyond Nehru's expectation or control. With respect to China, the CCP did not appear eager to have the Dalai Lama back this time. It was in sharp contrast to what happened in 1956, when Zhou flew to Delhi and made considerable efforts to persuade him to return. As to Tibetan refugees in India, their number had gone far beyond Nehru's initial estimation, reaching as many as twelve thousand in August 1959. The Indian Government was therefore saddled with a challenging task of accommodating these helpless souls.[551] Meanwhile, their presence in India apparently complicated the process, in which a deal between the Tibetan side and the Chinese side could again be brokered. It was because this time, it took more than just one person — the Dalai Lama alone, as it was the case in 1956 — to be persuaded to return to Tibet, if by any chance this approach was still feasible. Nehru also did not expect the dynamic that erupted from within India because of the crisis in Tibet. Indeed, he well knew that having the Dalai Lama in India meant "keep[ing] alive the question of Tibet in the minds of the world."[552] But the sympathy, or to be accurate, the *degree* of the sympathy from the ordinary Indian people toward Tibet surprised him. This passion was compromising the government's efforts to tread a fine line on the Tibet Question, which was epitomized by the establishment of the All India Convention on Tibet in May 1959. Its founder Jayaprakash Narayan declared that this organization was dedicated to promoting Tibet's right of "self-determination" based on "willing consent." This perspective on the Tibet Question

[549]"In the Lok Sabha: Statement on Situation in Tibet," 27 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 504-9.
[550] "To G. Parthasarthi: China and the Dalai Lama," 29 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 512.
[551] "In the Lok Sabha: Tibetan Refugees," 11 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, p. 440-42.
[552] "Talk with the Dalai Lama," 24 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 494.

effectively challenged Nehru's preaching that China had "suzerainty" over Tibet, meaning that Tibet should be part of the Chinese state.[553] By the end of June, Nehru had to admit privately that the pro-Tibet activism within India had made his China policy much more difficult to maintain.[554]

In terms of severity, however, none of these troubles matched the issue created by the Dalai Lama. Well aware of the weight that the Dalai Lama's words could carry with the help of the press, Nehru repeatedly requested, either personally or through his officials, that the Dalai Lama not meet with any journalists or political representatives.[555] But these requests and advice were in the nature of a gentleman's agreement, meaning that Nehru could not force the Dalai Lama to stay silent. Moreover, as a liberal statesman, Nehru distinguished between political activities and religious activities and believed that the Dalai Lama could speak freely, even in public, if he did so as a religious leader.[556] So, on May 16th, the Dalai Lama issued a third statement after entering India. It was an appeal to "all Buddhists of the world" to "pray for the thousands of people in Tibet, who were either dead or undergoing horrible spiritual and physical miseries."[557] The call invited China's instant response. On the same day, the Chinese Ambassador to India handed a statement to MEA Foreign Secretary Dutt, alleging that the "armed rebellion" in Lhasa was "caused by India."[558] This accusation further eroded Nehru's faith in Beijing's commitment to the Five Principles. "We have seen repeatedly cases of the violation of these Five Principles by those very countries which spoke loudly in their favor."[559] On June 20th, the Dalai Lama held his first press conference since entering India, in which he declared, among other controversial things, that he would not return to Lhasa unless Tibet's status before 1950 was restored and the Chinese withdrew from Tibet.[560] This event was widely covered by the Indian as well as the foreign press, giving an impression to the world that the Dalai Lama was leading a "government in

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[553] "In the Lok Sabha: 'Discussion re: Situation in Tibet'," 8 May 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 49, p. 562, footnote.
[554] "To Sundarlal: JP is Troublesome," 28 June 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 49, p. 585.
[555] "To Subimal Dutt: No Political Activity by the Dalai Lama's," 9 May 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 49, p. 569.
[556] "It did not seem proper to us to put any undue restrictions on the Dalai Lama. He is a man of note and position, ability and intelligence, and he is anxious not to embarrass us. At the same time, no about he suffers from inner compulsions to say what he feels." See "In the Rajya Sabha: Dalai Lama's Press Conference," 10 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, p. 439; for the exception Nehru gave to religious activities, see "To Subimal Dutt: No Political Activity by the Dalai Lama's," 9 May 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 49, p. 569.
[557] "Tibetan Rebels' Activities in India since the Tibetan Counter-revolutionary Rebellion," 27 May 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00944-01, p. 47.
[558] "To Subimal Dutt: Continuation of Panchsheel," 22 May 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 49, p. 577.
[559] "To Suniti Kumar Chatterji: Panchsheel Ignored," 15 June 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 49, p. 583; he also personally drafted the protest to Beijing, see "To Subimal Dutt: Continuation of Panchsheel," 22 May 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 49, pp. 576-78.
[560] About this press conference, see "To Subimal Dutt: On Visiting China," *SWJN*2, vol. 49, p. 584, footnote; "About the Dalai Lama's Press Conference," 21 June 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00406-01, pp. 33-34.

exile."[561] Although Beijing did not make a fuss by escalating its criticism of India and the India government refrained from commenting on this event, Nehru admitted privately that "the presence of the Dalai Lama in India does come in the way of normal friendly relations with China."[562]

Toward the autumn of 1959, the Second Tibet Crisis's spillover effects on Sino-Indian relations developed a new dimension. After a perceived "lull" in China's criticism of India in early summer, border frictions on the ground between the two states increased noticeably.[563] On July 28th, a small Indian reconnaissance police party was apprehended by a larger Chinese force in East Ladakh within what India claimed as its territory. August 25th, 1959 marked the so-called Longju Incident. An Indian check-post at Longju, a place near the ambiguous McMahon Line, was attacked and overrun by Chinese forces. For the first time since 1950, fire was exchanged between India and China. On August 26th, the *Times of India* revealed to the Indian public that by as early as 1958, Beijing had already completed a highway across the northern part of Ladakh.[564] All these developments and news placed the Nehru government in an even more difficult position in Parliament. He faced an enlarging cohort of dissatisfying MPs, who bombarded him with questions for the "real situation" at India's northern border.[565] While he admitted that the border situation had become serious, Nehru was not convinced that his country would face an "immediate grave crisis" from a security perspective. In other words, there was no sign of a Chinese invasion in his eyes. What he saw from these border incidents was just "culmination of progressive Chinese unfriendliness," which largely resulted from India providing asylum to the Dalai Lama.[566]

The moment of transformation for the Tibet Question from being an issue mainly between Tibet and China into one mostly between India and China, finally came — thanks to the Dalai Lama again. On September 7th in Delhi, the Dalai Lama delivered an eloquent speech at the Indian Council of World Affairs. Discussing Tibet's history in the 19th and early 20th centuries, including its conclusion of international treaties, he explained why "Tibet was a separate and sovereign state" before 1950. By invoking precedents in international law, he

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[561] "About the Dalai Lama's Press Conference," 21 June 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00406-01, pp. 33-41; "In the Rajya Sabha: Dalai Lama's Press Conference," 10 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, p. 439.
[562] "To Sundarlal: JP is Troublesome," 28 June 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 49, p. 585.
[563] "To Diwan Chaman Lall: Chinese Impertinente," 3 July 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 50, p. 206.
[564] "In the Rajya Sabha: Chinese Road Construction in Ladakh," 31 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, p. 495.
[565] "In the Rajay Sabha: China at Sikkim Border and in Ladakh," 4 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 166; See also "In the Lok Sabha: Chinese Occupation of Ladakh Territory," 28 August 1959, "In the Lok Sabha: Situation on the Northern Border," 28 August 1959, "In the Rajya Sabha: Chinese Incursion in NEFA," 31 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, pp. 478-84, pp. 489-91, pp. 500-3.
[566] "To Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit: China, Eisenhower, Macmillan," telegram, 30 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, pp. 493-94.

reasoned why Tibet retained its "international personality," despite it coming under the suzerainty of China after 1951. "An extremely important question" for India, as the Dalai Lama pointed out, was the inseparability of supporting the cause of Tibet and maintaining India's northeast frontier:

> If Tibet did not enjoy international status at the time of the conclusion of the [Simla] Convention, she had no authority to enter into such an agreement. Therefore, it is abundantly clear that if you deny sovereign status to Tibet, you deny the validity of the Simla Convention and, therefore, you deny the validity of the McMahon Line.[567]

After only one day, Beijing responded — not to the Dalai Lama but to Nehru. It was a reply to the letter Nehru had sent almost six months ago. In that letter, Nehru had explained why the Sino-Indian border, or in his words, "the frontier between India and the Tibet Region of China," was, although not fully demarcated, "well defined."[568] Zhou's letter on September 8 disappointed Nehru. It stressed in China's terminology that "the Sino-Indian boundary" had never been settled properly. Differing from Zhou's message on January 23rd, which emphasized that no agreement had been reached between India and the "central government" of China, the reply on September 8th highlighted that Tibet was only "nominally independent" before 1949:

> From the early days, Britain harboured aggressive ambition toward China's Tibet region. It continuously instigated Tibet to separate from China; in an attempt to put under its control a *nominally independent* [italicized by author] Tibet. When this design failed, it applied all sorts of pressure on China, intending to make Tibet a British sphere of influence while allowing China to maintain *so-called suzerainty* [italicized by author] over Tibet… All this constitutes the fundamental reason for the long-term disputes over and non-settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary as a question.[569]

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[567] "Speech Delivered by Dalai Lama under the Auspices of the Indian Council of World Affairs," 7 September 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00406-01, pp. 52-59.
[568] "Letter from Prime Minister of India to Premier Chou En-lai," 22 March 1959, *WP*, vol. 1, pp. 55-58.
[569] "Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India," 8 September 1959, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 184.

It is questionable whether the Indians fully appreciated the dilemma that confronted them, as revealed by messages from the Dalai Lama and Zhou. Upholding Tibetan autonomy and maintaining China's friendship had become mutually exclusive goals because of Beijing's unwavering commitment to establishing sovereignty in Tibet. What they did know from the plain text of Zhou's letter was that, by now, China challenged not only the validity of the McMahon Line, but also India's jurisdiction over Aksai Chin and its special position in Sikkim. On top of that was an incomprehensible and unacceptable account of Tibet's history before and after 1950.[570]

The Indian government was therefore thrown into a new and deeper crisis. Until then, in order to maintain the domestic support for the existing China policy, which was disintegrating since the spring, the government had sought to preserve the image of China. A multitude of issues emerged from the Second Tibet Crisis, but whenever possible, the government always tried to avoid discussing them in Parliament for the fear of bringing adverse impact on the Sino-Indian relationship.[571] It almost became a game of whack-a-mole. Take the lingering problem of incorrect Chinese maps for example. Nehru barely managed to assuage MPs' fears toward Chinese "cartographical encroachment" by telling them that there were only "one or two minor frontier disputes" with China concerning "tiny tracts of territory… a mile this way or a mile that way." [572] Zhou's letter in September 1959 showed that the case was not at all as Nehru described. If India's foreign policy was "governed" primarily by the pursuit of national security and integrity, as Nehru told the country solemnly

[570] Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India, 8 September 1959, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, pp. 184-90.

[571] These issues included the restrictions of movement on Indian diplomats and merchants in Tibet verging on "virtual house arrest", shrinking Indo-Tibetan trade, alleged Chinese "war of nerves" against Bhutan and Sikkim, the nationality issue of persons of Indian origin in Tibet, Chinese highway in Ladakh, lingering problem of Bara Hoti, fear of "cartographical encroachment" because of incorrect Chinese maps concerning India's northeast frontier, building up of Chinese troops on border. For restrictions on Indian diplomats and traders, see "In the Lok Sabha: Restrictions on Consul-General in Lhasa," 22 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 471-72; "In the Lok Sabha: Indians in Tibet," 24 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, pp. 461-64; for the impact on Indo-Tibetan trade, see "In the Rajya Sabha: Indo-Tibetan Trade," 25 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, pp. 468-73; "In the Lok Sabha: Indian Traders in Tibet," 6 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, pp. 433-37 (shrinking Indo-Tibet trade, and restrictions on Indian traders) ; "In the Lok Sabha: Permits for Trade with Tibet," 27 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 503; for the fear of Chinese intention on Bhutan and Sikkim, see "In the Rajya Sabha: Activities of Chinese Authorities against India," 25 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, pp. 465-68; "in the Lok Sabha: Chinese Statement on Ladakh, Sikkim and Bhutan," 13 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, pp. 451-55; for the fear of Chinese activities on the three sectors of the Indo-China/Tibetan border, see "In the Rajya Sabha: Chinese Road Construction in Ladakh," 31 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, pp. 495-500; "In the Lok Sabha: The Bara Hoti Plateau," 28 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, pp. 474-78; "In the Lok Sabha: Situation on the Northern Border," 28 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 51, pp. 484-92; "In the Lok Sabha: Chinese Map," 22 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 468-71; "In the Lok Sabha Secretariat: Violation of Air Space," 12 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, pp. 454-55.

[572] "In the Lok Sabha: Chinese Map," 22 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 467.

in the spring, this policy was by the autumn, as one MP observed, already "in the melting pot."[573]

In the new circumstances, Delhi's attitude toward Beijing began to undergo the following changes. First, there was no more confidence in China's words and promises, especially for Nehru. He had been the pivotal link between the two countries until the autumn of 1959. The fact that Nehru made this point even in public demonstrated his disillusionment with the CCP.[574] Second, China was no longer viewed as a reasonable player. It started to be seen as one with a "pathological outlook" that was "very unfair" to India.[575] Nehru was infuriated by China's unreasonable criticisms of India after the Tibetan Uprising, its frequent use of the term "British imperialism" to delegitimize the treaties reached between Britain and Tibet, and its unwillingness to recognize the role of "Chinese imperialism" in making Chinese territory so large.[576] Third, China's approach to India was to achieve its goals through "pride and arrogance of might."[577] Toward the clash at Kongka Pass in East Ladakh on October 21st, 1959, which caused multiple Indian casualties, Beijing expressed no regret afterward. The perception of "Chinese imperialism" was therefore reinforced, fuelling greater popular excitement within India.[578]

In these circumstances, the Nehru government's general policy on the Sino-Indian border dispute was established. First articulated by Nehru in Parliament on September 12th, 1959, the new policy was a firm but balanced approach to the border dispute.[579] India would take its existing northeast frontier as "a broad line" based on the principle of watersheds, which were delineated largely under the McMahon Line, rather than as the line itself. "When I say I stick to the McMahon Line, what I mean is that I stick to the broad approach." Meanwhile, through negotiations, India would accept minor adjustments for good reasons. "You may say that you will not give an inch of the McMahon Line; I will give it if I find that it is wrongly there… we have deliberately left the watersheds in one or two places." India did not care about "petty spots" like Bara Hoti. But India resented and would resist any "insulting, aggressive, offensive, violent manner" in making adjustments. Finally, the government was prepared to

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[573] "In the Lok Sabha: Statement on Situation in Tibet," 27 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 507; "In the Rajya Sabha: India-China Relations - 'Motion Re the Present Relations between India and China," 10 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 184.
[574] "In the Rajya Sabha: India-China Relations," 10 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 191.
[575] "To V.R. Krishna Lyer: China Visit," 6 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 170, footnote.
[576] "Rajya Sabha, 'Motion Re Present Relations between China and India'," 10 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, pp. 192-3; "In the Lok Sabha: White Papers on Indo-Chinese Relations," 8 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 203.
[577] "In the Lok Sabha: White Papers on Indo-Chinese Relations," 8 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 200.
[578] "To Krishna Menon: Tension in Eastern Ladakh," 27 October 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 53, p. 500.
[579] "In the Lok Sabha: White Papers on Indo-Chinese Relations," 12 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 200.

compromise if necessary, especially on the western sector. With regard to the "Aksai China area… it is a matter for argument as to what part of it belongs to us… it is not at all a dead matter… it is not clear." Overall, India's border policy as set forth in 1959 reflected a consistent approach traceable to the eve of the Indian power transfer in 1947: being firm on the general alignment but flexible on minor adjustments.[580]

Still, Nehru had no intention of pitting India against China by preparing his country for a general confrontation, just for the sake of the border dispute. He could have played the Tibet card against China, for example. The Dalai Lama's speech on September 7th, 1959 revealed a path that India, in this Tibetan leader's opinion, must take: To defend the McMahon Line, it had to support Tibet openly and unequivocally as a "sovereign and separate state" before 1950. Indeed, it was Tibet in 1914 that on an equal footing with Britain signed the Simla Convention and the Anglo-Tibetan Declaration, thereby giving birth to the McMahon Line. To raise the issue of Tibet's status in history could fundamentally alter the outlook of the border dispute with China, and instantly bolster India's legal case in the eyes of world. However, Nehru did not choose this clear-cut path. In Parliament on September 10th, he claimed that this path was "quite incorrect."[581] As it transpired, to treat Tibet's status as an issue separate from the border dispute with China remained a government policy.[582] In retrospect, it is quite clear why Nehru insisted on separating the two issues. To endorse Tibet's cause in full meant automatically terminating India's relationship with Communist China, which saw Tibet as an inalienable part of its domain, or even worse, a state of general confrontation between the two sides. The latter scenario was too grim for Nehru, especially given his grand design in 1945.[583] "The future is dark if it is to be covered by continuing hostility between India and China."[584] Being in peace with China as a policy on the highest level of India's decision-making was maintained, after 1959, more out of fear rather than friendliness. In a note to Dutt in October 1959, Nehru wrote that China, which would

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[580] MEA Deputy Secretary L.A.C. Fry's letter to India's Political Officer in Sikkim A.J. Hopkinson on April 8, 1947, available at Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem*, pp. 208-209; "To MEA: India-China Border Controversy," 13 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 212.

[581] "Rajya Sabha: Motion Re. Present Relations between China and India," 10 September, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 152.

[582] "In the Lok Sabha: White Papers on Indo-Chinese Relations," 12 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 209; "To U Nu: Border Troubles with China," 29 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, pp. 231-34; also note that for the Indian delegates in the Sino-Indian officials' talks on the border in 1960, "politically the most difficult part…was to face (and skirt) the question of the historical status of Tibet." Jagat S. Mehta, *Negotiating for India: Resolving Problems through Diplomacy* (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 2006), p. 94.

[583] "To U Nu: Border Trouble with China," 29 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52.

[584] "Rajya Sabha: Motion Re. Present Relations between China and India," 10 September, *SWJN*2, vol.52, p. 196; "To MEA: Strategic Analysis," Note to Secretary General and Foreign Secretary, 14 October 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 53, p. 90.

eventually become the "strongest power" over the course of time, was in nature "expensive and even aggressive."[585]

Gradually, India slid into a frustrating debate with China. The last quarter of 1959 was characterized by the endless and fruitless correspondence between Nehru and Zhou. Delhi and Beijing once seemed to work toward solving the border crisis, a tendency which was marked by Zhou's letter on November 7th and Nehru's letter on November 16th, 1959. However, Zhou's letter on December 17th showed that the two countries were actually heading toward a dead end. As Nehru made clear in his reply on four days later, "how can we, Mr. Prime Minister, reach an agreement on principles when there is such complete disagreement about the facts?" Nehru felt that Zhou was imposing China's views, which were disguised as "facts," from the beginning of 1959. That "according to objective history, the entire boundary between our two countries has indeed never been delimited; and it is impossible to deny this," was entirely China's opinion, and not fact from India's perspective.[586]

While Nehru sought to stand firm for his country in the border dispute, he was by no means unreasonable toward China. In November, Nehru proposed to Zhou that the two sides both withdraw from the international borders as defined respectively by the opposite side in the western sector. This peace proposal was, however, dismissed by Zhou as "unfair," because he claimed that India would only have to conduct a "theoretical" retreat accordingly.[587] He ignored, in fact, that by conducting this "theoretical" retreat, India would also theoretically acknowledge the existence of a border defined by China. And this was, indeed, a concession on the part of India. Meanwhile, it was easier for the Chinese side to reoccupy the disputed area given the proximity of its supply line. This advantage vis-à-vis India continued until the spring of 1962, when Delhi started to implement the "Forward Policy."[588] In other words, even with a physical retreat, China would still have Aksai China in its pocket. In early 1960, Nehru finally softened its position by inviting Zhou for a "meeting" in Delhi, although he also insisted that "any negotiations on the basis" of China

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[585] "To MEA: Strategic Analysis," 14 October 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 53, p. 89.
[586] "Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India," 17 December 1959, *WP*, vol. 3, pp. 51-55; "Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China," 21 December 1959 *WP*, vol. 3, pp. 56-57.
[587] "Letter from Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China," 16 November 1959, *WP*, vol. 3, pp. 4-10; "Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India," 17 December 1959, *WP*, vol. 3, pp. 11-18.
[588] "Some Indian Figures Wanted Us to Support Their Liberation of Goa," 19 December 1961, *CFMA*,105-01057-02, pp. 21-22; "Things Discussed during Thapar's Visit to Ambassador Pan and the Embassy's View," 19 December 1961, *CFMA*,105-01057-02, pp. 23-24.

"are not possible still."[589] The invention was extended ten days after the news of China and Burma ending their prolonged border dispute with a preliminary agreement reached in Beijing on January 25th, 1960.[590]

The Nehru-Zhou meeting in April 1960 seems to present an opportunity for the border dispute to end differently. Some scholars believe that Nehru was given a "swap deal" by the Chinese side, which was exchanging India's claim on the McMahon Line for China's claim over Aksai Chin.[591] This belief was based mainly on one of the five "common grounds" that the Chinese side proposed for "friendly negotiations" in the future. In the fourth talk on April 22nd, Zhou suggested, among other things, that "neither side should put forward claims to an area which is no longer under its administrative control." He added what this meant in practice: "For example, we made no claim in the eastern sector to areas south of the [McMahon] line, but India such claims in the western sector."[592] During the days in Delhi, the Chinese delegation spared no effort to demonstrate China's bona fides, particularly through meeting and talking to as many top government leaders as possible. They no longer evaded the map issue, which had been haunting the Indian government in the past decade. In fact, in the sixth talk on April 24th, Nehru even seemed to accept Zhou's explanation of why this problem had been lingering for years.[593] By the seventh talk, it appeared to Zhou that he would achieve yet another reconciliation with the Indian Prime Minister, something that he accomplished at the turning of 1956/57. However, Nehru's saying at the beginning of the seventh talk surprised and disappointed Zhou. On April 25th, the Indian Prime Minister made it clear that he was not prepared to accept China's proposal. His earlier saying that "he did not have much to say about" Zhou's "common grounds," as he clarified this time, did not mean his approval.[594] In retrospect, the senior officials' meeting that happened between the sixth and seven prime ministerial talks already notified in advance this result. The Indian Foreign Secretary Dutt told his Chinese counterpart Qiao Guanhua that he was "not aware

[589] "Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China," 5 February 1960, *WP*, vol. 3, pp. 80-81.
[590] "Prospect and Retrospect: An Early Nehru-Chou Meeting," *Times of India*, 26 January 1960, p. 8. See also Nehru's defense of this move, "In the Lok Sabha: Inviting Chou Enlai for Talks: Alleged Reversal of Policy Toward China," 16 February 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 57, p. 301; "To Khrushwaqt Rai and other MPs: Conditions for Chou Enlai's Visit," 4 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 59, pp. 331-32.
[591] Fravel, *Strong Borders,* pp. 83-84.
[592] "Nehru-Chou Talks IV," 22 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, pp. 67-78; "In the Lok Sabha: Joint Communique of the Indian and Chinese Prime Ministers," 25 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, pp. 223-25.
[593] "Nehru-Chou Talks VI," 24 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, pp. 145-48.
[594] "Nehru-Chou Talks VII," 25 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, pp.156-58.

that our Prime Minister has accepted these viewpoints" of Zhou, and therefore, the two sides "have not met here to draft an agreed joint communiqué."[595]

Why did Nehru not accept the "swap deal"? It seemingly only cost a small piece of barren land in a distant corner of India called Aksai Chin. The calculation would have been so simple, if this deal was really just about adjusting some remote territories. The truth was that it would cause a huge embarrassment to the Indian government. The Chinese "swap deal" contained a premise, which was accepting the "fact" that the whole Sino-Indian border had been as yet "un-defined."[596] Delhi, however, had stated openly and consistently since 1950 that the Indo-Tibetan border was fixed. To accept the Chinese proposal, in other words, meant to scrap a fundamental government policy as well as a consensus between the government and the society. Nehru could not afford this heavy tax on the government credibility.

To accept this "swap deal" might also be interpreted as a national humiliation. In the eyes of the Indian public, Aksai Chin was a piece of Indian territory and so was the vast area south of the McMahon Line, even if most of them had never been these places. To drop the claim on Aksai Chin in order to keep the McMahon Line would likely be depicted as the government allowing Beijing to trade one piece of Indian territory for another piece of Indian territory.[597] It would look too much like appeasement. And India had given away too much since 1950 in order to be in peace with China. A buffer as well as a harmless neighbour was lost after the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950; virtually all Indian assets and rights in Tibet were surrendered after the 1954 Agreement with China; dozens of lives of Indian soldiers were taken away from their families on India's doorstep in the previous year. Nehru knew well that the Indian people would not rally behind him this time to accept yet another compromise with China. The following extract of Nehru's saying during the sixth talk with Zhou is worth quoting in this regard:

> But, as it appears from the talks, there is such basic difference regarding facts and recent developments that big hurdles have arisen. How can we get over them? It is

[595] "Record of Indian and Chinese Official's Meeting," 24 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, p. 153.
[596] "Nehru-Chou Talks IV," 22 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, pp. 67-78.
[597] This likely question would be inferred from the Parliament's reactions to the end of this meeting. See "In the Lok Sabha: Joint Communique of the Indian and Chinese Prime Ministers," 25 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, pp. 221-25; "In the Lok Sabha: Nehru-Chou Talks, Motion Re: Joint Communique Issued on Conclusion of Talks between the Prime Ministers of India and China," 29 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, pp. 240-48.

not a matter of one individual getting over them, because these are national issues affecting vast numbers of people.[598]

However, the Nehru-Zhou meetings put the brakes on the downward spiral of the Sino-Indian relationship. The two sides agreed to stop border patrols and to establish a joint committee of officials to examine documentary materials about the facts of the border. The former decision removed the possibility that another Longju or Kangka Pass incident would make Indian society's blood boil. The agreement offered a reason, or perhaps an excuse, for Nehru to maintain at least a superficial friendship with China and use non-violent methods to solve India's border problem. As Nehru told Indian MPs on April 25th, "if facts differ, inferences differ, arguments differ."[599] Similar to the early 1950s, when Nehru convinced himself and then managed to convince his MPs that China was merely practicing its right of suzerainty in Tibet, Nehru shepherded Indian MPs and the country that they represented into believing that the border dispute could be solved by clarifying facts with the Chinese. After an extraordinarily long and polemic Lok Sabha debate on April 29th, Nehru proved that he still had Parliament's confidence, symbolized by votes against a range of motions that, if passed, would effectively pit Nehru's government directly against China.[600] The border dispute with China, which had exploded in the second half of 1959, now seemed to have been managed.[601]

But the deficit of trust that was accruing in India's dealing with China only increased in the following year. The Nepal-Tibet-China border incident on June 28th, 1960, which left one Nepalese dead from shots fired by Chinese troops who mistook him for a Tibetan rebel, proved to Nehru that a self-righteous China was continuing to bully its neighbours.[602] He felt that this justified India's existing approach, which was being "friendly and courteous and at the same time to be completely firm" with China.[603] In August, there were government reports of Chinese propaganda in Tibet, which, with distorted descriptions of India's economic conditions, appeared to be designed to demonstrate that the communist system was

[598] "Nehru-Chou Talks VI," 24 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, p. 148.
[599] "In the Lok Sabha: Joint Communique of the Indian and Chinese Prime Ministers," 25 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, p. 226.
[600] "In the Lok Sabha: Nehru-Chou Talks, Motion Re: Joint Communique Issued on Conclusion of Talks Between the Prime Ministers of India and China," 29 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, pp. 286-87.
[601] "To Chou Enlai: Greetings," 1 October 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 63, p. 566; "To Pan Tzu-li: Thank You for Birthday Greetings," 22 November 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 64, p. 379.
[602] In pursuit of Tibetan refugees, or rebels in Beijing's standard, Chinese troops accidentally entered Nepalese territory; multiple Nepalese were arrested by China and one killed by Chinese firing. "To V.K. Krishna Menon: China Attack on Nepal Border," 1 July 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 61, pp. 618-19; "To B.P. Koirala: Nepal-China Incident of 28 June," 10 July 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 61, pp. 619-20.
[603] "To B.P. Koirala: Nepal-China Incident of 28 June," 10 July 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 61, p. 620.

superior and seduce Tibetan exiles into returning.[604] Also important to note is the continued withering of Indo-Tibetan trade after the Nehru-Zhou meeting, characterized by a large number of Indian traders ending their business in Tibet because of Chinese restrictions and taxes.[605] There were also occasional reports of Chinese border incursions.[606] With continued distrust toward Beijing, the Indians watched the discussions between Sino-Indian officials, which lasted about five months in three rounds taking place in Beijing, Delhi, and Rangoon. The discussions finally ended on December 12th, 1960, leaving behind a massive report of about 570 pages, plus a full record of conversations six times the length of the report.[607]

Nehru was disappointed that he did not find any further avenues for progress after the discussions. In his view, the report, which had much more evidence in support of India, had established India's case as "almost foolproof" and should have made Beijing realize that its case on the border was weaker. During the first half of 1961, India received only silence from Beijing. In fact, China did not even bother to make the report known to the Chinese people, whose feelings on the Sino-Indian border, Zhou alleged, were as strong as those of the Indian people.[608] R.K. Nehru's visit to Beijing in July 1961, a deliberate detour on his way back from Mongolia, confirmed that China was unwilling to revise its position on the border in accordance with the Indian report. In fact, Zhou claimed that he hadn't even examined the report. Although the situation "remained where it is," the redeeming feature, which Nehru found in R.K. Nehru's report, was that Beijing "has perhaps weakened a little" in its dealings on the border matter with India.[609] This probably made Nehru feel assured enough to state openly in Parliament, on August 10th, 1961, that the officials' report had established a firm Indian case and that his government would press Beijing to accept "these facts."[610] On August 22nd, while presenting the government's foreign policy to Parliament, Nehru restated his belief that the officials' report was "a step forward" and that "it should affect Chinese thinking in this matter." Perhaps to give more time for change to happen on the part of Beijing or to avoid giving too high an expectation to the MPs, Nehru also added: "I cannot conceive of their having read this and not having felt that their position is a weak one." In these parliamentary debates, Nehru always asked the MPs to remember the big picture goal

[604] "(b) B.C. Mishra to Subimal Dutt," 24 August 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 62, p. 603.
[605] "In the Lok Sabha: Indian Traders Flee Tibet," 12 August 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 62, p. 492; "In the Rajya Sabha: Tax on Indian Businessmen,"1 December 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 65, pp. 549-50.
[606] "To Subimal Dutt: Chinese Incursion," 12 August 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 62, p. 492.
[607] "In the Lok Sabha: India-China Officials' Talks," 23 December 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 65, p. 545.
[608] Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), vol. 3, p. 206.
[609] "To R.K. Nehru: Talks with Chou En-lai," 29 July 1961, *SWJN*2, vol. 70, p. 555.
[610] "In the Lok Sabha: Report of Chinese and Indian Officials," 10 August 1961, *SWJN*2, vol. 70, p. 556.

of avoiding a general collision of India and China, which could affect India's "future" and "generations to come."[611]

But India's patience was running out. The conclusion of the Sino-Nepalese Border Treaty on October 5th, 1961 marked the ending of this patience. Since Zhou's visit in April 1960, a view had existed in Parliament that China was merely using the diplomatic channel to "gain time."[612] The Sino-Indian officials' talks in the second half of 1960, a mechanism that Zhou and Nehru agreed as the follow-up of their Delhi meeting, helped most MPs retain their dwindling faith in diplomacy. And after the report of the officials' talk was tabled for discussion in Parliament in February 1961, MPs had waited another half a year for China to submit to the power of the facts, which this report was supposed to deliver. But in the autumn of 1961, there was still no prospect of ending this dispute with China in the foreseeable future. The watchdogs in Parliament could no longer sit idly as before. They demanded answers from the Prime Minister for questions such as why China refused to apply the same principles — customs, tradition, known geographical features, and watersheds — in its border dispute with India, and why both Nepal and Burma had reached border treaties with China while India had not. But Nehru could no longer give satisfactory answers.[613] In the eyes of MPs, he had acted like a player who tries to be "an umpire in a cricket match" while forgetting that his interests are actually at stake.[614]

Against this background, Nehru decided to adopt the "Forward Policy" toward the end of 1961. It was an answer to both the mounting domestic pressure from within India and the new Chinese activities in the disputed areas. China's military presence was reported to have spread even beyond the line that Beijing claimed in 1956 in Ladakh, in the form of new posts and roads that constructed them.[615] On November 2nd, 1961, a meeting was held at the Prime Minister's office with the leading members of the Indian government, including the Defense Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Chief of the Army Staff, and the Director of the Intelligence Bureau. Assuming that Beijing recognized the power of facts, as demonstrated

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[611] "In the Rajya Sabha: The International Situation," 22 August 1961, *SWJN*2, vol. 71, pp. 599-600; "In the Rajya Sabha: Reply to Debate on International Situation," 23 August 1961, *SWJN*2, vol. 71, p. 615.
[612] "In the Lok Sabha: Joint Communique," 26 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, p. 227.
[613] "In the Lok Sabha: Boundary Agreement between Nepal and China," 24 November 1961, *SWJN*2, vol. 72, p. 636; also "In the Rajya Sabha: Sino-Nepal Border Treaty," 27 November 1961, *SWJN*2, vol. 71, p. 640; "In the Lok Sabha: Indian-China Relations," 28 November 1961, *SWJN*2, vol.72, p. 640.
[614] "In the Lok Sabha: India-China Relations," 28 November 1961, *SWJN2*, vol.72, p. 647.
[615] India's Quest for Security: Defense Policies 1947-1865 (San Francisco: University of California Press, 1968), p. 167, indirectly cited from Noorani, A.G., "India's Forward Policy," review of *Himalayan Blunder*, by J.P. Dalvi, *The Untold Story*, by B.M. Kaul, *The Guilty Men of 1962*, by D.R. Mankekar, *The China Quarterly*, no. 43 (1970), p. 137; see also "In the Lok Sabha: India-China Relations," 28 November 1961, *SWJN*2, vol. 72, p. 647-50; "In the Rajya Sabha: India-China Border," 28 November 1961, *SWJN*2, vol. 72, p. 653.

by the officials' report, and that the CCP feared a general war between the two largest Asian countries as much as he did, Nehru ordered the Indian Army to enter a "race" that China had already started.[616] "Whoever succeeds in establishing (even a symbolic) post, would establish a claim to that territory, as possession was nine-tenths of law. If the Chinese could set up posts, why couldn't we?"[617] In early December, the Army Headquarters started to translate the political order into military terms. The commanders of the eastern and western sectors therefore received orders to patrol "as far forward as possible" to the "international border" and to establish additional posts to check future Chinese advances.[618]

China's Approach to India

What was the impact of the Second Tibet Crisis on China's approach to India? The March rebellion reinforced the belief within the CCP that India was pursuing ulterior motives in Tibet. At the Politburo meeting on March 17th, Zhou claimed that India, with active support from Britain and the United States, was behind this rebellion. "The commanding center of the rebellion was in Kalimpong," Zhou told his colleagues.[619]

Initially, Beijing considered the rebellion anything but a crisis. As early as January 1959, the CCP had already anticipated a deterioration of Tibet's public order and had taken some precautionary measures accordingly.[620] From the beginning of the rebellion on March 10th to the eve of the Chinese counterattack on March 20th. The Chinese troops in Lhasa, superior in number and quality, received repeated orders from Beijing to maintain a militarily defensive position. The idea was to embolden the Tibetans to perform more violent activities, with which the party could not only divide the Tibetan society, but also justify the ultimate liquidation of these rebels. "To have a big fight would be better," Mao expressed the wish in his instruction on March 12th.[621] In short, Beijing's crisis management was not about suppression, but rather entrapment. In the middle of the rebellion, it was actually looking forward to using the rebellion as an opportunity to create conditions for implementing its

[616] The Henderson Report, Top Secret, pp. 5-8.
[617] Kaul, *The Untold*, p. 280.
; see also Nehru's public complaint of China's border strategy in May 1961, "Talk with Norman Cousins," 27 May 1961, *SWJN*2, vol. 69, p. 76.
[618] Mankekar, *The Guilty*, p. 39.
[619] Editorial Board, *Zhou Enlai junshi huodong jishi 1918-1975* [*Chronological Record of Zhou Enlai's Military Activities 1918-1975*] [hereafter: *ZEHJ*], vol. 2 (Beijing: Central Literature Press, 2000), p. 490.
[620] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 3, p. 574.
[621] *ZEJHJ*, vol. 2, p. 490; Wu Lenxi*, Yi Mao zhuxi* [*Remembering Chairman Mao*] (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 1996), pp. 119-20; Pang and Jin*, Mao Zedong zhuan 1949-1976*, vol. 5, p. 1894.

long-sought "democratic reform" in Tibet.[622] A week after the ending of the rebellion, on March 28th, Zhou declared that the Government of the Tibet Region was dissolved and replaced by the Preparatory Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region.[623]

Beijing's crisis management in March, however, contained a weak link. The Dalai Lama, with unparalleled influence among the Tibetans despite being only 24 years old, was yet to take a stand in this turmoil. And whichever side won his support would win the public discourse. But his record of fleeing from the party's grasp in history — particularly in 1950 and in 1956 — indicated that he was not at all reliable. The 66-year-old Chairman Mao, a master of politics, knew these only too well. On March 15th, he ordered General Tan Guansan to continue the correspondence with the Dalai Lama, which started with the outbreak of the turmoil on March 10th. These letters, as he explained to Tan, would be publicized in future to demonstrate the party's "forbearance and magnanimity over these years" toward Tibet.[624] Indeed, the supreme leader was interested far less in the Dalai Lama's true intention than in the "surface value" of these letters.[625] On this basis, from March 28th onwards, Beijing spread the word that the Dalai Lama's had been taken "hostage" by the "reactionary upper strata" of Tibet.

The weak link seemed fixed. First, this depiction of the Dalai Lama's situation was not completely baseless. It was a reasonable deduction from the correspondence between Tan and Danzin Gyaco and could therefore withstand questioning. Second, it justified Beijing's actions during and after the rebellion and delegitimized the actions of those opposing Beijing. Third, no one, including the Dalai Lama himself, could henceforth use the name of the Dalai Lama to issue any proclamations, like urging a new rebellion, for example. It is because in theory, he was "hijacked" and became unable to express his free will.[626] Finally, the "hostage" story "kept the door open" to the Dalai Lama. There was still a possibility that the Dalai Lama had been pressured by his fellow Tibetans, a possibility that Beijing did not really believe but also could not yet remove entirely.[627] More importantly, if he were to return to Tibet from India, for whatever purpose, Beijing would have a convenient excuse to re-

[622] *ZEJHJ*, vol. 2, p. 490; Wu, *Yi Mao*, p.120.
[623] Note, the Chinese name of Government of Tibet Region, when being translated back into English, means the Local Government of Tibet.
[624] Before 17 March 1959, Tan Guansan wrote three letters, respectively on 10 March, 11 March, and 15 March 1959. And the Dalai Lama replied accordingly on 11 March, 12 March, and 16 March 1959. See Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong Xizang gongzuo wenxuan* [*Selected Works of Mao Zedong's Writings on Tibet Affairs*][hereafter: *MZXGW*] (Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 2008), p. 165.
[625] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 4, p. 51.
[626] Wu, *Yi Mao*, p. 117.
[627] "On Suppressing the Rebellion in Tibet," 15 April 1959, *MZWJ*, vol. 8, p. 45.

admit him without embarrassing itself too much. On April 19th, the absent Dalai Lama was elected, i.e., selected by the CCP, again as the Vice-Chairman of the National People's Congress of China.

However, Mao's improvisation in legitimizing China's rule in Tibet had three hidden flaws. First, by broadcasting that the Dalai Lama was being held "hostage," Beijing actually lent credence to the Dalai Lama's own words. Because China itself had established him as a victim rather than a perpetrator in this upheaval, any account of the rebellion from his mouth in the future would be understood as truth. Second, the "hostage" story was essentially a product of fact manipulation. Because of this intrinsic flaw, when the whole truth emerged, in the form of a testimony by the Dalai Lama himself, for example, the "hostage" story would face a crisis, as would any propaganda or political arrangement with this story at its core. This leads to the third issue with this political improvisation: namely, its institutionalization. To effectively exploit the "hostage" story, Beijing had to mobilize its whole state apparatus to propagate it.[628] The story was retold toward the external world, but also within the government's internal discourse.[629] The reproduction and dissemination of the untrue "hostage" story was, in short, institutionalized. The cost to change the story, not to mention to overturn it, became too high for the communist regime. Gradually, Beijing's account for the Dalai Lama's exile ceased to be just a perspective. It became also a state policy or a mini ideology for Beijing, meaning that no one would be allowed to question.

The need to maintain the "hostage" story as a policy, along with the sincere belief that Tibet was part of China and that India had an ulterior motive, caused China's conflict with India in the spring of 1959.[630] On April 18th at Tezpur, the Dalai Lama issued his first statement after seeking asylum in India, explaining that he had fled from Tibet under "his own free will."[631] This led Beijing to enrich the "hostage" myth on April 20th by creating the new term "Indian expansionists," who had inherited Britain's "conspiracy of invading Tibet"

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[628] "On Propagating and Reporting the Tibetan Rebellion," 25 April 1959, *MZXGW*, pp. 186-87; "India's Embassy in Sweden Published on its Communique the So-called 'the Dalai Lama's Statement," 27 April 1959, *CFMA*, 116-00249-01, p. 3.

[629] For how a Chinese diplomat in Moscow described the Dalai Lama's situation, when facing an Indian diplomat, see "India's Chargé d'Affaires in the Soviet Union Speaking of Questions in the Sino-Indian Relations," 9 May 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00659-01, p. 43; for how the "hostage" story was repeated internally, see a chronology compiled by the Chinese Embassy in India, "Activities by the Tibetan Rebels in India since the counter-revolutionary military rebellion in Tibet," 27 May 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00944-01, p. 44, p. 46; also an untitled chronology, 30 April 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00650-02, pp. 41-43, p. 58.

[630] "With the Nod of Indian Police Authority, 'Protestors' in Bombay Humiliated Our Country's Leader by Desecrating Blatantly Chairman Mao's Portrait in Front of Our Consulate General," *People's Daily*, 24 April 1959, www.laoziliao.net/rmrb, accessed on 10 December 2019; "Wake up, Indian Expansionists," *Guangming Daily*, 24 April 1959.

[631] "Statement Issued at Tezpur," 18 April 1959.

and forged a "false statement" in the name of the Dalai Lama.[632] India had already been dragged into this crisis between the Chinese and the Tibetans, as Beijing's communiqué on March 28th called Kalimpong the "commanding center of rebellion" in Tibet.[633]

The "hostage" story was essentially not a truth, but a quasi-truth. The closer one approached the truth, the more untenable the story looked, and the more irritated Beijing became. On April 27th in the Lok Sabha, Nehru revealed the result of his personal investigation of the Dalai Lama's exile, based on his meeting with him three days earlier, confirming that he had voluntarily entered India.[634] Because of Nehru's weighty endorsement of the Dalai Lama's story, which contradicted Beijing's account, the CCP had to double its efforts to maintain its side of the story. For example, under Mao's close supervision, the *People's Daily* immediately published an article called "Read Prime Minister Nehru's Talk" and, a week later, added another one, "Tibetan Revolution and Nehru's Philosophy."[635] Beijing could not afford to discredit the Dalai Lama, who was vice-chairmanship of the National People's Congress of China and upon whom hinged the party's hope to succeed with the United Front in the post-rebellion era. But it needed to combat the "traitorous" views by accusing India and the "Indian expansionists" — the Indian press, social groups, and politicians who were not convinced with, beside the view of China always possessing sovereignty over Tibet, the myth of the Dalai Lama being taken "hostage." In the process, India was gradually moving from the periphery of the Second Tibet Crisis to its center, where it faced Communist China's determination to justify its legitimacy in Tibet on its own terms. Beijing did not realize, and likely would not have cared, that its insistence that Delhi accept the "hostage" story had become as abominable and ridiculous as calling a deer a horse, as an ancient Chinese idiom goes. In the eyes of the Indians, such insistence demonstrated nothing but sheer might, arrogance, and deliberate ignorance of facts.[636]

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[632] "On the So-called "the Dalai Lama's Statement," *People Daily*, 21 April 1959; *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 4, p. 25.
[633] "State Council's Order to Dismiss the Government of Tibet Region and Have the Preparatory Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region to Act in the Capacity of Government of Tibet Region," 28 March 1959, *Communiques of the State Council of the People's Republic of China*, no. 6 (1959), p. 96, www.gov.cn, accessed on 20 July 2019.
[634] "In the Lok Sabha: Statement on Situation in Tibet," 27 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 504.
[635] "Read Prime Minister Nehru's Talk," *People's Daily*, 27 April 1959; "Tibetan Revolution and Nehru's Philosophy," *People's Daily*, 6 May 1959, www.laoziliao.net/rmrb, accessed on 10 December 2019; Mao's input on the latter, see *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 4, p. 36; Wu Lenxi, *Shinian lunzhan* [*Ten Years' Polemic*] (Beijing: Central Literature Press, 1999), pp. 197-203; Wu, *Yi Mao*, pp. 127-28.
[636] On 16 May 1959, as an instant reaction to the Dalai Lama's open appeal to the world's Buddhists, Pan Zili informed Subimal Dutt that India was responsible for all "deplorable abnormalities" in the Sino-Indian relations since the March rebellion. Pan also told Dutt that if the Indian government kept insisting on the Dalai Lama being not under duress and "responsible for the two traitorous statements" [on 18 April and 22 April 1959], it would mean that Delhi was welcoming a "Chinese rebel." And it would become "even more inappropriate" for

However, Beijing was unwilling to break with Delhi merely because of the Dalai Lama. Even in late April, the height of China's criticisms toward India after the Tibet Uprising, Mao instructed those in charge of the regime's propaganda work to stick to a principle: "never and ever swear directly at Nehru and always keep a door [for negotiations] open."[637] Mao carefully managed the pace of China's criticism of India, despite his declaration that China feared no "ghost," referring to the uproar in the Indian society that occurred after the rebellion.[638] Before mid-May, Mao had decided to end this "recent quarrel" with India. "It was just an issue as big as a pinkie," he claimed in a meeting with delegations from Asia, Africa, and Latin America on May 15th.[639]

Behind this decision, there were at least the following reasons: First, this fuss with India from its inception was driven by a tit-for-tat logic. "Buwei tianxiaxian [never be the first under heaven]," "tuibi sanshe [retreat thirty miles three times]," and "li shang wangle [courtesy is expressed in reciprocation]" were the three idioms that Mao enumerated when privately explaining his treatment of India on the Tibetan problem to his secretary Lin Ke.[640] Beijing had noticed the various attempts made by Nehru's government to directly and indirectly approach China with the appearance of wanting to mend the Sino-Indian relationship in the wake of damaged caused by the Dalai Lama's exile in India.[641] Second, Beijing felt secure vis-à-vis India at the Tibetan front. This can easily be seen, for example, in Mao's conversation with the Panchen Lama on May 7th. In that conversation, Mao said that when Tibet eventually developed an army belonging to the people, China would reduce its regular force, because "otherwise, the Indian government would get scared."[642] Third, the Soviets expressed their concerns with Beijing's relentless criticisms of Nehru's government.

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the Chinese government to send for the Dalai Lama. "Record of the Chinese Ambassador to India Pan Zili's Talk to the Foreign Secretary of Indian Ministry of External Affairs Subimal Dutt," 16 May 1959, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, p. 61.

[637] "Issues in the Propaganda Campaign regarding Tibet Rebellion," 25 April 1959, *MZXGW*, p. 186

[638] In the morning of 6 May 1959, an article called "Tibetan Revolution and Nehru's Philosophy" was published by the *People's Daily*. In the noon of the same day, when meeting with the 36 delegations from socialist countries Mao claimed that he personally welcame the "ghosts" as grew from the Tibet Question, see *MZNP 1949-1976,* vol. 4, p. 38; but at night, with Mao's order, his Confidential Secretary Lin Ke called *People's Daily* to stop any comment from 7 May 1959 onward, in order to "see how India responds to this comment of ours." Wu, *Shinian*, vol. 1, p. 201.

[639] *MZNP 1949-1976,* vol. 4, p. 41.

[640] *MZNP 1949-1976,* vol. 4, p. 29; see also an unpublished article by Mao for the Xinhua News Agency, "The Tibetan People Support the PLA's Suppression of the Rebellion, as a Family," 28 April 1959, *MZXGW*, p. 190.

[641] "Indian Chargé d'Affaires in Soviet Talking about the Sino-Indian Relationship Problem," 9 May 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00659-01, p. 42; "Gist of Soviet Cultural Attaché's Talk," 6 May 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00657-02, pp. 5-6; "Attachment I to the Memorandum of the Conversation between Deputy Prime Minister Chen Yi and Soviet Ambassador to China Фёдорович Юдин on 8 May 1959," *CFMA*, 105-00657-03, p. 16.

[642] *MZNP 1949-1976,* vol. 4, 1959.5.7, p. 41; Mao's satisfaction with the outcome of the rebellion, "On Tibet's Democratic Reform," his talk with an official delegation from East Germany on 10 May 1959, *MZXGW*, p. 203.

At various occasions, they reminded their Chinese comrades that keeping a friendly Nehru in difficulty would do no good for China.[643] For all these reasons, Beijing kept largely quiet toward India for the following three months, even when the Dalai Lama issued an extremely controversial statement on June 20th calling for the restoration of Tibet's status in 1950.[644]

The Longju Incident on August 25th, 1959, in sharp contrast to its massive impact on Indian domestic politics, received little attention by Beijing. The party leadership did not convene any major meeting in its immediate aftermath. The incident was, as Mao later told the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires S. Antonov, just a "xiedou [gang fight]" on the border.[645] The ensuing Indian furor was viewed by Mao as the second "anti-Chinese movement," which was staged by an "unhappy" Nehru still finding the result of the Tibetan Rebellion a bitter pill to swallow.[646] Beijing had no interest in getting tangled with India on such a matter as before.[647]

However, the Dalai Lama's speech at the Indian Council of World Affairs on September 7th, 1959 spurred Beijing into a new round of struggle with Delhi. This was because the Dalai Lama managed to associate the issue of Tibet's independence with the recent Sino-Indian border clash by claiming that defending the McMahon Line meant supporting Tibet's cause.[648] A Politburo meeting instantly convened on September 8th, generating three guidelines on the Sino-Indian border issue. First, "the Sino-Indian border has never been delimited" and the Chinese government would not recognize the illegal McMahon Line. Second, the recent border skirmish was caused by India crossing the illegal McMahon Line and was therefore not China's fault. Third, the two sides should maintain the current status quo on the border and ultimately solve the problem by negotiation. These guidelines were supposed to demonstrate China's firm stand while leaving sufficient room for negotiation. A letter to Nehru in Zhou's name was formulated at this meeting, sent to the Indian Embassy in the evening, and broadcasted by the Xinhua News Agency the next day.[649] The party's subsequent swift but meticulous moves to gather support both internally and from its allies

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[643] "Memorandum of the Conversation between Deputy Prime Minister Chen Yi and Soviet Ambassador to China Фёдорович Юдин on May 8, 1959," *CFMA*,105-00657-03, pp. 9-12; "Talking with Andrei Gromyko about Tibet and Other Questions," 5 May 1959, *CFMA*, 109-01354-04, pp. 55-56.
[644] "Information about the Dalai Lama's Press Conference," 21 June 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00406-01, pp. 33-34; "Information about the Aftermath of the Dalai Lama's Press Conference," 25 June 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00406-01, pp. 40-41.
[645] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 4, pp. 211-12.
[646] *MZNP 1949-1976,* vol. 4, 1 October 1959, p. 192.
[647] In 1958, Aksai China road, Indian patrol incident. China did not even bother to reply to India's note, because of the firm belief that Aksai was part of China's Tibet.
[648] "Speech Delivered by Dalai Lama on 7 September 1959 under the Auspice of the Indian Council of World Affairs," *CFMA*, 105-00406-01, pp. 52-59.
[649] Wu, *Shinian*, vol. 1, p. 212; "Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India," 8 September 1959, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, pp. 184-90.

demonstrated, as Shen Zhihua observes, that "Mao had been long prepared for, and therefore was not uncomfortable with the anti-Chinese clamour from India and the West."[650]

Likely feeling that everything was under control, once again Mao did not think that it was necessary to deepen or prolonged the confrontation with India. As he told the Deputy Prime Minister of Afghanistan on September 8th, "our dispute with India is just one finger out of ten; the other nine are still friendly."[651] With the tenth anniversary of the P.R.C approaching, a big moment for the regime, the supreme leader's interest was no longer on the struggle with India. "It is probably time to consider ending it for the time-being," he shared this idea with his colleagues in an informal Politburo meeting on September 15th. "But before withdrawing [from the debate]," Mao added, "we have to issue an editorial to expound our attitude toward this grand debate."[652] This led to the *People's Daily* editorial the next day, which was titled "Our Hope." The article's last line was as follows: "We hoped the Indian friends to share a belief with us that the dark clouds on the Himalayas will not stay for long."[653]

But the clouds only grew thicker. On October 21st, another border clash happened. This time, it occurred in the western sector of the Sino-Indian border, causing even more casualties than before. Beijing's response was a proposal to Delhi on November 7th, in which Zhou made two concrete new suggestions to Nehru: a twenty-kilometre withdrawal by both sides and a prime ministerial talk in the near future.[654] Both innovations were in fact the results of Mao's improvisation. In his words in a leadership meeting on November 3rd, "so I have [made] this plate and all I want is peace … [with these measures] our love for peace reaches the pinnacle." However, it is worth noting that this "love for peace" at the moment derived not so much from Mao's wish to maintain China's friendship with India, than his concern for the Sino-Soviet alliance.[655]

That this alliance had "cracks" — disagreements on international issues — became an undeniable fact to Beijing after the Longjiu clash in September.[656] Moscow's TASS declaration on September 10th, 1959, which was published against Beijing's stated wishes and with an ambiguous position on the Sino-Indian border dispute, led the CCP to suspect

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[650] Shen, "Nanyi mihe," p. 13; "Deputy Foreign Minister Zhang Hanfu Introduced to Brotherly Countries' Ambassador to China the Information about the Sino-Indian Border Problem," 9 September 1959, *CFMA*,109-00870-01, pp. 32-39; Zhou's "Report on the Sino-Indian Border Problem" at the Expanded Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Chinese National Congress, 11 September 1959, *ZENP 2949-1976*, p. 252; "The Truth of the Sino-Indian Border Problem," *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 253.
[651] *MZNP 1949-1976,* vol. 4, p. 176.
[652] Wu, *Shinian*, vol. 1, p. 215.
[653] "Our Hope," *People's Daily*, 16 September 1959, www.laoziliao.net/rmrb, accessed on 10 December 2019.
[654] "Premier Zhou Enlai's Letter to Prime Minister Nehru," 7 November 1959, *ZLWH*, vol. 1, pp. 212-23.
[655] *MZNP 1949-1976,* vol. 4, p. 231-32.
[656] Luthi, *Sino-Soviet Split*, p. 156.

that its big brother might have a reservation toward China's handling of this dispute.[657] Khrushchev's later visit to China in October not only confirmed this suspicion. "The Tibetan Incident was the Chinese Communist Party's fault, not Nehru's," Khrushchev said categorically at the summit meeting with the CCP leaders on October 2nd. He made it clear that China's approach to Nehru was full of mistakes, given that it had even caused an unnecessary border clash.[658] These views were strongly resisted by the Chinese side, turning the whole meeting into emotionally charged bickering.

Underneath the difference over India was a fundamental problem with, or a character of, China's foreign policy during Mao's era: peace with capitalism was at most a strategy or expediency; it should never be the highest value of Communism or a "luxian [line]."[659] In Mao's political map, India was a "capitalist-nationalist country" and Nehru belonged to the "middle faction" of Indian capitalist class. Therefore, the overall spirit of China's policy toward Nehru's India should be "winning over, criticizing, seeking solidarity, and conducting struggle." However, what fuelled his full-throated defense of the existing Chinese approach to India at this particular moment was, in fact, the ongoing Soviet-American rapprochement, something that Mao found it difficult to speak of openly when facing the Soviets.[660] This was pursued with enthusiasm by Moscow in 1959 and reached a pinnacle in autumn in the form of Khrushchev's visit to the United States. Mao was upset by Moscow's move to elevate the concept of "peaceful coexistence," in his eyes, from a strategy to a "line" or an end in itself. That was verging on starting to betray the international communist movement. "Khrushchev appeared … [to be] leaning toward Revisionism," Mao said at the Politburo meeting two days later. "[That's why] … regarding the question of India, he could not see our points."[661]

However, similar to how Nehru positioned China as the cornerstone of India's diplomacy, the CCP leadership saw the maintenance of Sino-Soviet solidarity as "daju" or the big picture for China.[662] Facing a "revisionist-leaning," but not yet fully revisionist Soviet leadership, Mao's opinion was that China should "wait" with "patience" for the time being, not pursue

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[657] "View on the Soviet Union's declaration on the Sino-Indian Border Incident," 10 September 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00946-04, pp. 36-37; for more about this episode between Beijing and Moscow, see, Shen Zhihua, "Nanyi mihe de liehen: Sulian dui zhongying chongtu de lichang ji zhongsu fengqi gongkaihua [The Cracks that Could Not Be Mended: The Soviet Stand on the Sino-Indian Conflict and the Sino-Soviet Divergence Coming into the Open]," *Journal of Tsinghua University*, no. 6 (2009), pp. 14-15; see also "Some Detailed Expressions of the Soviet Union's India Policy," 30 September 1959, *CFMA*, 105-00946-04, pp. 38-41.

[658] Shen, "Nanyi mihe," p. 19.

[659] Wu, *Shinian*, vol. 1, p. 228; See also Yang, "Xin zhongguo," pp. 62-74; For the CCP's essentialist view of the United States or the "American imperialism", for example, see the party internal discussion during the expanded Politburo meeting in January 1960, Wu, *Shinian*, vol. 1, p. 237, p. 241, p. 245.

[660] Shen, "Nanyi mihe," p. 16, p. 27.

[661] Wu, *Shinian*, vol. 1, p. 227.

[662] Wu, *Shinian*, vol. 1, p. 230.

an open debate with Khrushchev, and "let objective truth and historical progression teach him." The Politburo agreed on October 4th that the focus of China's approach to the Soviet Union should remain on "seeking solidarity."[663] This led to a train of revisions in China's foreign policy, which ultimately affected China's approach to India.

In January 1960, at the expanded Politburo meeting in Shanghai, the spirit of "seeking solidarity" was upgraded to a general principle for diplomacy toward all countries. Regarding India, "of course, [we] should also seek solidarity with Nehru, to be precise, to both seek solidarity and conduct struggle; the whole idea was to seek solidarity with them in order to oppose Imperialism." In line with this proactive diplomacy, the CCP subsequently abandoned the passive approach to China's border problems with neighbouring countries including Burma and India, which had been a general policy of delaying negotiation, and replaced it with a new one that stressed reaching speedy settlements. Regarding the Sino-Indian border dispute, the CCP planned to solve it peacefully with proper give and take through negotiation: "We should make some concessions and India should also make some concessions."[664]

The new impetus, which derived from the emerging Sino-Soviet rift, did not, however, lead to a breakthrough in the spring of 1960 on the Sino-Indian border problem. At first, the prospects appeared kind of encouraging, as shortly after Beijing reached an border agreement with Yangon on January 25th, 1960, Delhi noticeably changed its posture by accepting a meeting between the two Prime Ministers to be held in the future.[665] But Zhou's visit to Delhi in April did not generate a substantive border agreement as the party had hoped. The Chinese plan for this meeting, formulated by Zhou on April 5 and later approved by Mao, contained a minimum goal and a maximum goal. The minimum was that the tension on the Sino-Indian border would be lessened, if not ended; the maximum was that the two sides would further agree on "certain principles or detailed questions."[666] The meeting in Delhi from April 22nd to

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[663] Wu, *Shinian*, vol. 1, pp. 227-28.
[664] Wu, *Shinian*, vol. 1, pp. 246-48.
[665] "Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minster of China," 5 February 1960, *WP*, vol. 3, pp. 50-52. It is worth noting that in early 1960, in line with a general policy of accelerating the process of settling China's border problems with its neighbours, Beijing revised its position the Sino-Burma border dispute. It once insisted that, in order to define the so-called "traditional customary line," China and Burma conduct a geographical survey before installing the watershed principle. But in January 1960, the CCP accepted Burma's position, which was, except certain small areas, an unconditional application of the watershed principle. This change effectively reduced China's bargaining room in border demarcation. See Guan, "Zhongmian bianjie," p. 167.
[666] *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 302.

24th failed, in the sense that Nehru did not accept Zhou's five "common grounds" for the border question to be settled ultimately.[667]

The Chinese, who genuinely believed that they had come up with a reasonable and pragmatic solution, had no idea of what went wrong in their approach.[668] China's prerequisite for the border settlement, the first "common ground" that Zhou proposed to Nehru on April 22nd, 1960, was that India admit that the "Sino-Indian boundary had never been defined."[669] This was a repetition of China's fundamental stance on the border question, which was developed in response to the Dalai Lama's speech on September 7th, 1959 and based on the Chinese logic that Tibet had always been an part of China and its government in history and therefore had no right to conclude a border arrangement, such as the Simla Convention of 1914, with any foreign country. The problem was that Indian society had not recognized this logic from China since 1947, although in 1954 the Indian government recognized Tibet as the "Tibet Region of China." Again ignoring the elephant in the room, Zhou concluded that this episode was Nehru attempting to consolidate his domestic political standing and extract aids from both Washington and Moscow by refusing to end the dispute.[670]

However, it should be highlighted that the CCP did not see the Delhi meeting as a failure. "Our guideline is," Zhou wrote when planning for the Delhi negotiations, "that the situation and time favour us, while we seek detente, we would not be bothered by [any further] delay [in settling the border]."[671] Therefore, if the Sino-Indian border became pacified, with the minimum goal fulfilled, this itself would be a satisfactory result for the Chinese. Indeed, the Chairman saw a much larger silver lining. In a meeting with Kim Il-sung in Hangzhou on May 21st, 1960, Mao spoke with exhilaration about the international situation: "The present situation is very good. The masses of South Korea have risen; the situation in Japan and India are also good … the Soviet Union had also changed."[672] In his opinion, while the U2 incident exposed the warmongering nature of American imperialism, Nehru's refusal to accept

[667] *ZENP 1949-197*6, vol. 2, pp. 310-12.
[668] Zhou's report at full-member meeting of the State Council on 26 May 1960, *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 322; Zhou's talk to Polish Ambassador on 1 August 1960, *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 336-37.
[669] *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, 22 April 1960, pp.310-11.
[670] Zhou's talk with Vietnamese Communist leaders on 11 May 1960, *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2 p. 317; See also Zhou's report at full-member meeting of the State Council on 26 May 1960, *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 322; Zhou's talk with Polish Ambassador to China on 5 June 1960, *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 325; Zhou's talk to thePolish Ambassador on 1 August 1960, *ZENP 1949-1976,* vol. 2, p. 336-37.
[671] For "Draft Plan of the Sino-Indian Prime Ministerial Meeting on the Border Question," see *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, 5 April 1960, p. 302.
[672] In South Korea, Syngman Rhee's regime was facing the "April Revolution," i.e. mass protests that led to Rhee's ultimate resignation. Meanwhile, the Japanese government was dealing with a social and political controversy caused by the amendment of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. The Soviet Union's policy toward the West was being challenged at this time by the U2 Incident and the aborted Four Powers Summit in Paris. *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 4, pp. 397-98.

China's offer demonstrated a piece of "objective truth" to Moscow as well as the Indian people: Nehru was truly a "reactionary" politician and, as Mao had told Khrushchev the previous autumn, Nehru was the one responsible for the troubles between China and India.[673] Meeting his own men on May 22nd, Mao finally spat out in full his long-harboured bitterness toward the "dumb-acting" Khrushchev: "There was the TASS declaration [in September 1959, about the Sino-Indian border dispute], there was the clash between the two parties at Yinian Pavilion [in October 1959] — we have been holding our temper [because of being wronged by the Soviets]."[674]

For the following two years, until Zhou reported the grave situation on the Sino-India border to Mao on July 12th, 1962, the Chairman's attention was not on the Tibet matter.[675] But the party-state apparatus continued to reinforce the preconceptions and peculiar mode of thinking he left in place. India and the Sino-Indian border question continued to be ignored in China's external relations. Any Indian attempt to reach out to China that did not recognize China's stance on the McMahon Line and Aksai Chin received a cold shoulder from the Chinese government.[676] Nehru's difficult situation in domestic politics and the strains in the Sino-Indian relationship were continuously viewed as the result of his own "weakness" in leadership, instead of any reason remotely connected with China.

Without Mao's involvement, who was being preoccupied with the widening Sino-Soviet rift and the "Great Leap Forward" movement, the Chinese state apparatus in 1961 had developed an institutional inertia. Beijing proved not interested any more in pushing the border dispute toward a settlement. To be accurate, it was not interested in actively working on the border dispute as well as improving the Sino-Indian relationship – so long as Nehru led the Indian government. [677] "But the day will come when he dies," the Chinese Ambassador Pan Zili's said on one occasion in September 1961. "After him … I believe, the great Indian people will surely find solutions and ways out." [678] Given this collective

[673] Mao did not make this point directly himself, but could be easily conjectured by Zhou's report, five days later, at the State Council Meeting on 26 May 1960. See *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 322; *MZNP*, vol. 4, pp. 397-98; for the quarrel between Mao and Khrushchev on October 2, 1959, see Shen, "Nanyi mihe," p. 19; for Mao's treatment of the quarrel afterwards, see Wu*, Shinian*, vol. 1, pp. 227-28.
[674] Mao's talk at the CCP leadership meeting in Hangzhou on 22 May 1960, *MZNP*, vol. 4, pp. 399-400.
[675] An astonishing fact is that there was no reference to India in Mao Zedong Nianpu, from May 1960 to July 1962, reflecting the diversion of his attention to much more serious domestic and foreign matters, for example, the ideological struggle with Moscow over the correct line of communism.
[676]"Ambassador Pan Receiving Former Indian Army Commander-in-Chief K.M. Cariappa," 14 October 1960, and "Agreeing to Ignore Former Indian Army Commander-in-Chief Cariappa's Request to Visit China," 26 October 1960, *CFMA*, 105-00721-02, pp. 54 -70
[677] "Indo-American Relationship after Kennedy Assumed Office," 30 June 1961, *CFMA*, 105-01456-03, p. 30.
[678] "The Record of Conversation between Ambassador Pan [Zili] and the Head of India-China Friendship Association Sundarlal," 26 September 1961, *CFMA*, 105-01060-02, pp. 9-10.

mindset, it is not surprising to find how Zhou handled R.K. Nehru's inquiry on July 16th, 1961 about China's reaction to the completed report of the Sino-Indian officials' talks on the border dispute. Zhou told his Indian friend that he had not yet read the report.[679] Another example of this inertia or conservatism was Beijing's indifference to an extraordinary proposal from the Indian side during the Goa Crisis in December 1961.[680] To this windfall opportunity to mend China's image in the eyes of Indian society, which was pressuring Nehru to adopt a hard line on the border question, Beijing turned a blind eye.[681] The Indian Ambassador's suggestion in July 1961 — to create a "favourable atmosphere" for solving the border problem by "making some gesture" — had fallen on deaf Chinese ears.[682]

Coupled with this institutional ignorance was the fact that India was falling ever deeper into a radicalized and self-fulfilling ideology. Generally, China saw India as committing four sins. The first three were being anti-Chinese over the Tibet Question, being pro-American, and being anti-communist toward communist forces within India, which were reinforced in

[679] "The Memorandum of the Three Conversations between Director Zhang Wenjin and Indian Ambassador [on July 17 and 19, 1961]," 1 September 1961, *CFMA*, 105-01056-03, pp. 47-50.

[680] In the evening of 18 December 1961, literally on the eve of India's operation in Goa, retired Indian Lieutenant General D. R. Thapar called the Chinese Embassy to invite Councilor Ye Chengzhang for dinner, over which he said that wanted to discuss "some important matter." This matter turned out to be an extraordinary proposal from "some very important people" within the India government, who was "even higher" than the Chief-of-Staff of the Indian Army. According to this proposal, China was expected to issue a declaration before noon the next day, when "Portugal would have just surrendered" in Goa. China shall announce that "as a symbol of friendship and *bone fides* to India" but "not such that China forfeits its territorial right," it would voluntarily withdraw from a newly built check post at the western sector the Sino-Indian border. According to this proposal, India would not respond by taking this post, as it did to Longju after the Chinese withdrawal; and furthermore, "two or three days afterwards, Menon and Nehru would broadcast the slogan Hindi-Chini-Bhai-Bhai once more." Later in the evening, Thapor called the Chinese Embassy again, indicating that he was now "invested with more authority" and expecting a reply ASAP from China, because "three or four other people would wait all night long" for his message. Shortly after midnight, Thapar approached Chinese Ambassador Pan Zili directly and further explained the significance of this proposal: "… as far as the propaganda value was concerned, the appearance of withdrawing from a post would enable to the public to know. If China made a friendly gesture, it would give something to people in support of Nehru and Menon, to enable them to speak in Parliament." The moment before he left, Thapar added that to have China's reply, he could even delay India's operation upon Goa, by asking his brother, "but at most only for two or three hours." "Some Indian Figures Wanted Us to Support Their Liberation of Goa," 19 December 1961, *CFMA*, 105-01057-02, pp. 21-22; "Things Discussed during Thapar's Visit to Ambassador Pan and the Embassy's View," 19 December 1961, *CFMA*, 105-01057-02, pp. 23-24; See also "In the Lok Sabha: Chinese Incursions," 5 December 1961, *SWJN*2, vol. 73, p. 565.

[681] By the time China issued the declaration in support of India's "struggle against imperialism and colonialism", Goa had already surrendered for hours. Also, the Chinese did not withdraw from the proposed post on the Sino-Indian border. See "We Support India's Operation on Goa but Would Not Agree to Withdraw from Our Post," 19 December 1961, *CFMA*, 105-01057-02, pp. 25-26; "Our Government Issuing a Declaration in Support of India's Restoration of Goa," *People's Daily*, 20 December 1961, www.laoziliao.net/rmrb, accessed on 10 December 2019.

[682] "The Memorandum of the Three Conversations between Director Zhang Wenjin and Indian Ambassador [on 17 July and 19 July 1961]," 1 September 1961, *CFMA*, 105-01056-03, pp. 47-50.

the two years before the summer of 1962.[683] There was, however, a fourth sin developing, which was related to the ongoing process of Sino-Soviet split. As early as the spring of 1960, before the Nehru-Zhou meeting in April, there was another round of Sino-Soviet clashes over India, in which Beijing gave Moscow a tit-for-tat defense of its policy on the Sino-Indian border dispute. In January 1961, at the Ninth Full-Member Meeting of the Eighth CCP Central Committee, the party internally admitted that between China and the Soviet Union there was "a grave disagreement over a series of principles" of communism. Looking back in September 1961, the party believed that, while the difference began with the CPSU Twentieth Congress, the "open debate" commenced with the TASS declaration on the Sino-Indian border dispute on September 9, 1959."[684] It watched with envy and indignation as China's big brother gave more aid to India, a non-socialist country, than to China, a true communist country. And it concluded in the summer of 1962, as revealed by a top secret file from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, that Moscow meant to "slander our country" on the Sino-Indian border question, to "deal with our military force" by empowering India's armed force, and to "stage a rival show" against China's diplomacy toward India.[685] So far as the "anti-Chinese" agenda was concerned, this file established that India and the Soviet Union had found "common ground."[686] The struggle with Nehru's India, therefore, became a struggle with the Soviet revisionism as well.

With respect to the 1962 war, the existing evidence does not allow us to locate a precise and meaningful point of no return on China's path to the border war. If what happened in the Himalayas since the turn of 1962 was a game of chicken between India and China, Beijing kept one foot on the brake and the other on the accelerator. Seeking negotiations or conducting a "political-diplomatic struggle" was braking, while resorting to warfare or conducting "military struggle" was accelerating.[687] This double-track approach had become a pattern of how the CCP managed almost any crisis, as in the First Tibet Crisis of 1950 and the Second Tibet Crisis of1959. The dual-track approach was an inherent element in

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[683] "Some Problems in India's Foreign Relations in 1960," 24 January 1961, *CFMA*,105-01001-09, pp. 49-62; "India's Present Domestic and External Actions," 27 April 1961, *CFMA*, 105-01455-02, pp. 1-26; "Indo-American Relationship after Kennedy Assumed Officer," June 1961, *CFMA*,105-01456-03, pp. 24-30.
[684] Wu*, Shinian*, vol. 1, p. 452, p. 465.
[685] "The Soviet Union's Treatments of India in Recent Years," June 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01519-03, pp. 48-54.
[686] "The Soviet Union's Treatments of India in Recent Years," June 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01519-03, p. 61.
[687] Zhou chaired a military meeting on 14 May 1962, in which he ordered the generals to prepare for war with India. On 29 May 1962, the General Staff Headquarters issued a directive called "Detailed Arrangement for the Military Struggle on the Sino-Indian Border," Editorial board*, Zhongyin bianjing ziwei fanji zuozhanshi* [*History of the Operation of Self-defensive Counter-attack on the Sino-Indian Border*] (Beijing: Military Sciences Press, 1994), p. 103, p. 123.

promoting communist revolution. But when did the CCP decide to press the accelerator instead of the brake?

We have to look to Mao, who, with unparalleled authority, decided the ultimate direction to the party-state's policies. Perhaps we could break the roughly nine months before the war into two periods, with the summer of 1962 as a divider, for two reasons. First, before July, it appeared that Zhou was in full charge of navigating China's relationship with India. Throughout the spring of 1962, Zhou had sought to dissuade the Indians from taking firm actions on the Sino-Indian border with a carrot-and-stick approach. In March, when receiving a Laotian government delegation, Zhou mentioned that China had "never locked the door of negotiation with … India." In May, by declaring that China would open talks with Pakistan to delimit their shared border, Zhou signalled again the wish to engage with Nehru at the negotiation table. Indeed, he also complemented his proposal with some degree of muscle flexing.[688] In April, Beijing notified Delhi that China had renewed the border patrols in the western sector, and would extend this practice to the whole Sino-Indian border, if India "continues to invade and occupy China's territory."[689]

But the further expansion of India's border force into the Galwan River area, into the western sector in July, showed that the government's existing approach to the Sino-Indian border dispute had failed. Zhou knew it well. At the midnight of July 11th, he went to see Mao, reporting that the China's border with India was facing a grave situation.[690] Ten days later, on July 21st, the first bloodshed between the two sides since the end of 1959 occurred at the Galwan River area. It was followed immediately by another midnight visit from Zhou to Mao's place for the latter's opinion.[691] Mao, from this point onward, returned to the driver's seat of deciding China's approach to India.[692]

In fact, in the summer of 1962, the whole China was on the eve of "turning left."[693] The failure of the previous domestic policy, demonstrated by the economic and social disasters created by the Great Leap Forward movement, forced the Chairman to slow down his pursuit of Communism. Tens of thousands of cadres were summoned to Beijing and encouraged to voice their opinions over the state of the country, making the so-called "Seven-Thousand-

[688] *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 462, p. 481.
[689] "Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, to the Embassy of India in China," 30 April 1962, *WP*, vol. 6, pp. 50-55.
[690] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 5, p. 113.
[691] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 5, p. 123.
[692] *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 490.
[693] Niu Jun, "1962: Zhongguo duiwai zhengce 'zuo'zhuan de qianye [1962: Eve of China's Foreign Policy Turning 'Left']," *Historical Research*, no. 3 (2003), pp. 23-40.

Cadre Meeting" in January 1962. While this gathering was primarily intended to discuss the faults in China's domestic construction, it inevitably spilled over on to the realm of external affairs. The director of the CCP International Liaison Department Wang Jiaxiang submitted several notes in spring, recommending a technical adjustment in China's foreign policy. China should "reconcile with the imperialism, the revisionism, and the reactionaries in India and other countries, and reduce the support to nationalist liberation movements."[694] But what was in Wang's view a pragmatic approach constituted in Mao's eyes an intolerable challenge to some fundamental issues in his line to China's external affairs.[695] The mounting criticisms on the party leadership's, or to be accurate, Mao's previous domestic policy, convinced him that this round of political opening within the state apparatus had gone too far. Toward the end of the summer, Mao moved to drag the country back to the right road to Communism, according to him. "Never ever forget class struggle," Mao reminded or warned his colleagues at the Tenth Full-Member Meeting of the Eighth Central Committee on September 21st, 1962. [696] Therefore, after the summer of 1962, not only did China's game of chicken with India continue in the Himalayas, the CCP also became ready to put even more weight on the accelerator than on the brake.

Conclusion

Who was to blame for the border war in 1962? The conventional wisdom that Nehru was intransigent while the Chinese were pragmatic and earnest in resolving the border dispute proves to be a superficial understanding. The truth was that by the Nehru-Zhou meeting in April 1960, Beijing had already pushed Nehru to a point from which he could no longer compromise on China's terms. Even if he had wanted to compromise, Indian public opinion would not have permitted it. For eight years since 1951, the Indian people had been told that Tibet retained its autonomy despite being integrated into the Chinese state and that China was merely practicing suzerainty in Tibet. However, in the spring of 1959, they heard about a riot breaking out in Lhasa and subsequently saw in their own eyes thousands of Tibetan refugees flooding into India, including the Dalai Lama, the symbol of Tibet. These developments constituted a psychological blow to the Indian society. It was clear to the Indians that Tibetan autonomy was gone now, if it had ever existed after 1951. No society, indeed, would stand

[694] CCP Central Archive Research Office, *Wang Jiaxiang nianpu 1906-1974* [*Chronological Record of Wang Jiaxiang 1906-1976*] [hereafter: *WJNP*] (Beijing: Central Literature Press, 2001), pp. 486-89; Niu, "1962: Zhongguo," p. 37.
[695] *JYMZW*, vol. 10, p. 188.
[696] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 5, pp. 157-58.

idly by to a geopolitical change at such a scale on its periphery, and no government would have an easy time continuing an old policy that seemed to be an appeasement policy.

It would have been still possible for a society to tolerate such a government policy, provided that the country's own national interests were not at stake. However, in the autumn of 1959, the two border skirmishes in Longju and Kongka Pass, in which there were considerable Indian casualties, had closed this possibility. To Indian society, these clashes suggested that by following the Prime Minister's calls for "restraint and wisdom" toward China after Tibet was wiped from India's map of neighbours, India had only encouraged China to continue being aggressive. In the immediate aftermath of the Tibetan Uprising, Beijing's relentless criticisms of India and its condescending gestures, particularly its imposition on India of the story that the Dalai Lama had been taken "hostage," were highly resented in India and viewed as bullying based on might. There was no domestic support for Nehru to accept Zhou's "package deal" in 1960, which was produced according to China's understanding of Tibet as never having been independent. The deal demanded that India admit, above all, that the Sino-Indian boundary had never been delimited, a condition that would not only turn the stated Indian government position on this issue into a joke by contradicting it entirely, but also invoke fear within the country regarding what would be China's next move. The government's existing approach to Beijing, in the eyes of Parliament, the press, and the public, looked too much like an appeasement policy after the autumn of 1959.

Were the Chinese pragmatic and earnest in resolving the border dispute peacefully? They certainly thought they were. But from an outside perspective, questions remain. First, the Chinese were not the only ones who were flexible and politically pragmatic. In the exchange of notes in the autumn of 1959, Nehru also proposed the reasonable solution that the two sides withdraw in the western sector beyond the international border as defined by the opposite side's maps, while both maintained their territorial claims. Nehru did not insist that China accept India's stance on the western sector. It was an offer as reasonable, or unreasonable, as China's proposed *ad hoc* solution of both sides retreating twenty kilometers from both the western sector and the eastern sector. What made Nehru's offer appear unfair was that his solution would not apply to the eastern sector. In other words, the difference between the two *ad hoc* solutions was the treatment of the McMahon Line. The McMahon Line, however, was an issue of deciding the validity of the Simla Convention of 1914, rather than of Nehru possessing no spirit of reconciliation or compromise.

Second, contrary to external Chinese propaganda on the results of Nehru-Zhou meeting in 1960, Mao was satisfied with the outcome of the meeting. He was happy that Nehru's refusal had, in his opinion, helped prove that Khrushchev's "revisionist-leaning" line was wrong on both general issues, like peaceful coexistence between communism and capitalism, and on specific questions, particularly the policy toward India. Compared to the "gang fights" with India in the Himalayas and on a few miles of no-man's land, combatting emerging Soviet revisionism was of strategic importance to the communist world revolution. This reveals a sad truth in the Sino-Indian relationship, which was that while Nehru valued India's relationship with China as the cornerstone of the country's diplomacy, Mao saw China's relationship with India as merely a stepping stone.

Last but not least, before the page was turned to 1962, Beijing had lost interest in resolving the border dispute with India. More accurately, as long as India was led by Nehru, whom Beijing viewed as a "reactionary" politician from the Indian capitalist class and also as being interested in sabotaging the Sino-Indian friendship for his political agenda, Beijing would not take initiative in settling the border dispute. It was happy to watch the Sino-Indian border problem continue as it was in April 1960: existing, but not causing trouble for China. The CCP felt that time was on its side, an attitude it held from at least as early as Zhou's planning for his visit to Delhi in 1960. Meanwhile, from the summer of 1960 to that of 1962, Mao's China was generally preoccupied with a much more important domestic agenda of managing the disastrous outcomes of the "Great Leap Forward," and a similarly important external agenda of dealing with the Sino-Soviet rift. This deprived China of the attention needed to follow the lingering Sino-Indian border dispute.

In the end, what was the most destructive problem in the bilateral relationship, from the Second Tibet Crisis in 1959 to the Sino-Indian War of 1962? Perhaps no problem caused more damage than the one that is always there, but constantly ignored. Between China and India, that problem was that the two countries — not just their governments — held different views of China's right to Tibet: suzerainty versus sovereignty. Indian society believed that Tibet was a country separate from China before 1950; in 1951, it forfeited its right to devise an independent foreign policy but retained its domestic autonomy. The nature of suzerainty was indirect rule. In contrast, the Chinese, be they Nationalist or Communist, had a firmly held belief that Tibet was and would always be part of China. The nature of sovereignty was direct rule. For Beijing to exercise Chinese sovereignty over Tibet or direct rule there required the regime not only to annihilate the "counter-revolutionary" elements and implement "democratic reform" in Tibet, but also to re-write and re-define the past. The latter

was of paramount importance in terms of establishing legitimacy for Chinese presence and activities in Tibet. In other words, the Chinese communists did not see Tibet as having been a separate country in the past, and more importantly, they would not allow others to entertain this conceptualization. Nehru knew this obsession of China's and always tried to reassure Beijing on that matter. As demonstrated in the aftermath of the Second Tibet Crisis, he was unwilling to go to war with China over Tibet. There were, however, two problems on the Indian side. The Indian people, by whom the Nehru government was elected and thereby accountable, had held onto the view that China possessed no sovereignty over Tibet. Moreover, when defending India's stance on the Tibetan-Sino-Indian border, Delhi had to stress repeatedly that its position was supported by those historical border arrangements that Tibet had signed. In so doing, Delhi was effectively rallying under the banner that Tibet was an independent country before 1950/51, which struck at the heart of Beijing's project to establish direct rule in Tibet. In other words, the Sino-Indian border dispute was not about the border, but about Tibet. The fact that the Tibet Question was gradually phased out in the two countries' dealings with each other on the border issue demonstrates that the elephant in the room was appallingly ignored.

Chapter 6: The Border War and Aftermath, 1962-64

Introduction

The Sino-Indian border war in 1962 was remembered differently in China and India. The Chinese government and historians adopted the name "Zhongyin bianjie ziwei fanji zhan [Sino-Indian Border War of Self-defensive Counter-attack]," in which the character "zhan" means "war." However, "war" has another Chinese translation, which is "zhanzheng," a privileged term reserved for those conflicts of national significance.[697] The 1962 border war has never occupied a significant place in either historiography or public memory in China, which is sharply in contrast to the war's treatment in India. The "1962 War," a popular name in Indian society for the conflict, is often paired with non-military terms like "betrayal" and "humiliation," suggesting that India's experience of this episode differed substantially from China's. Regarding this naming practice, it is worth adding that the practice also exists in China's "Hundred Years' Humiliation" discourse about the period from 1842 to 1949.[698]

To understand the origin of China's and India's current divergent societal feelings toward the same historical event, this chapter will explore the hidden stories behind the Sino-Indian border war. This brief war escalated from a military standoff that commenced in early September along the eastern sector of the border. The place of contestation was a 25-square-mile triangular area south of Thagla Ridge, which was the result of two competing versions of the "McMahon Line."[699] The week after September 21st registered the first round of skirmishes, as Chinese and Indian soldiers began to expel the opposing side from the area. On October 10th came the second round, although the fighting only lasted for one day.[700] On October 20th, the Chinese launched a massive coordinated attack on both sectors of the Sino-Indian border. On November 16th came the second massive strike by China. While India was prepared to fight to the end, on November 21st Beijing conducted a unilateral withdrawal, thereby ending the Sino-Indian border war.

This chapter will focus on the tensest period of this episode of Sino-India relations — October and November of 1962 — and developments in the following years. Why and when did Beijing decide to militarily resolve the border crisis with India? The chapter will discuss

[697] For example, "Yapian zhanzheng [Opium War]" (First Anglo-Chinese War, 1839-1942), "Kangri zhanzheng [War of Resistance against Japan]" (Second Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945), "Chaoxian zhanzheng [Korean War]."

[698] For example, "Jiawu zhanzheng [1894 War]" (First Sino-Japanese War), "Wuxu bianfa [1898 Reform]" (Hundred Days' Reform), "Gengzi peikuan [1900 Indemnity]."

[699] Maxwell, *India's China War*, p. 293.

[700] "100 Chinese Casualties at Thagla: Fighting Follows Sudden Attack," 13 October 1962, *Times of India*, p. 1.

the mindset behind Beijing's two ceasefire offers, the second of which led to the end of this border conflict. As for India, this chapter will analyze Nehru's approach to Beijing before, during, and after this unprecedented border conflict with China. It will also be interesting to explore why this conflict did not cause an even larger military confrontation between the two Asian powers.

China's Approach to India

What triggered China's attack on India on October 20th, 1962? First of all, China's paranoia about India having "an ulterior motive" reached new levels toward the end of September. At a full-member meeting of the CCP Central Committee, Zhou announced that China's approach to the Sino-Indian border dispute was going to be "military coexistence and long-term struggle," which was "to conduct struggle as well as seek unity, to fight as well as talk." In retrospect, the significance of this announcement lay not so much in its acknowledgment of negotiation as a preference than in its affirmation that China's troops would not back down in the standoff in the Himalayas. They were expected to "repulse" Indian military "attack" "when necessary."[701] The alarm was soon sounded. On October 5th, the General Staff submitted a report anticipating that the "first real fight since the Sino-Indian border dispute broke out three years ago" would arrive "within a few days." The basis of this report was the coverage by Delhi-based Western journalists on recent Indian military activities, especially the announcement of the establishment of a new army corps [4th Corps] in east India to deal with the Chinese threat. Upon receiving this report, Zhou immediately ordered the army to accelerate war preparations. The Indian assault did not materialize, of course, but the red alarm remained on. On October 8th, Mao convened a leadership meeting at his place discussing the imminent military clash with India. Convinced that India "had prepared for a large-scale military attack," Mao made the ultimate call to have China embrace this challenge. Reflecting this decision, the General Staff issued a "preparatory order" afterward to annihilate the Indian troops in the Kejilang area (known as Dhola for the Indians), south of Thagla Ridge, a region that was, by China's definition, north of the McMahon Line, while according to India, south of it.[702] The gun was loaded.

[701] For Zhou Enlai's speech at the Tenth Full-Member Meeting of the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP, 26 September 1962, see *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 498.
[702] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 5, p. 164; *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 500; for Zhou's talk with the Soviet Ambassador regarding this "large-scale war" with India on 8 October 1962, see *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 502.

The next question was when to pull the trigger. At this juncture came Nehru's speech at the Delhi airport on October 12th, 1962: "Our army is told to throw out Chinese from [the] NEFA area." This was trumpeted immediately by the Indian press, such as the *Times of India*.[703] One popular view in India, reflecting on this moment, is that this statement left Beijing with a convenient "excuse."[704] But in the eyes of the CCP leaders, who were expecting a major military confrontation, it was perhaps more than just an "excuse," but also a signal that India was finalizing its war mobilization. Two days later, leading Indian government members started to echo their Prime Minister, urging the nation to unite and back the government in facing China. As Defense Minister Menon stated on October 15th, "we will fight the Chinese to the last gun."[705] Nehru himself, who visited Ceylon afterwards, openly stated there that "India found it difficult to pursue the cherished principles of peaceful action."[706] Also, this visit to Ceylon resembled what the CCP itself did after deciding to engage with India: soliciting understanding from friendly countries.[707] It is worth adding that on October 13th, the American Ambassador J.K. Galbraith, who was interviewed in Bombay, said that he "would hope" that his report would enable Washington to increase aid to India in the future.[708] In other words, the United States appeared to be backing India. Monitoring these developments with utmost vigilance and deep-seated suspicion, the CCP leaders spent two successive nights on October 14th and 15th discussing the looming prospect of a showdown with India on the border. Against this backdrop, in the evening of October 16th, a new fire exchange incident occurred in the Kejielang area.[709] The big moment had come, from Beijing's perspective. In the afternoon of October 17th, Mao convened an extended meeting of the CCP Central Committee, in which the leadership agreed unanimously that India had pushed China into a situation in which the latter must immediately "strike back in self-defence." In line with this decision, one hour before midnight, the Central Military

[703] "Our Army is told to throw out Chinese from NEFA area: No talks if aggression continues, Says Nehru," *Times of India*, 13 October 1962, p. 1.
[704] Kaul, *A Diplomat*, p. 74.
[705] "Nehru Asks Nation to Back Action in NEFA," *Times of India*, 14 October 1962, p. 1; "Solid Support for Govt. Urged - President's Appeal to Nation," "We Will Fight Chinese to The Last Gun - Internal Squabbles Must End - Menon," *Times of India*, 15 October 1962, p. 1.
[706] "Use of Force Unavoidable, Ceylon Told," *Times of India*, 14 October 1962, p. 1; "Chinese Must Quit - Talks After That - No Complacency Now, Affirms Nehru," *Times of India*, 16 October 1962, p. 1.
[707] On October 8, Zhou told the Soviet Ambassador that this time, China would defend itself with determination once India "attacks" again. Three days later, he flew to North Korea and informed Kim Il-sung of China's answer to the deteriorating standoff on the Sino-Indian border. *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 502.
[708] "India is Using US Aid Effectively- Galbraith," *Times of India*, 13 October 1962, p. 7.
[709] "Exchange of Fire at Dhola Post: Menon Flies to Tezpur," *Times of India*, 18 October 1962, p. 1; see also how government-sanctioned records in China described the skirmish starting on October 16, *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 5, p. 165.

Committee issued the combat order.[710] On October 20th, at 7:30 A.M., Beijing started a massive attack on India.[711]

Mao and his colleagues expected that this attack as "both warning and punishment" would teach Nehru "a lesson" that "to settle the border problem by force will not work" for India.[712] The battle-hardened Chinese troops certainly did not let him down. Superior in number, training and preparation, they quickly overran the Indian troops. The latter did not expect a drastic escalation of military confrontation in the form of a division-level coordinated assault on multiple fronts. In the eastern sector particularly, which was the focus of this attack, the Chinese not only swept India's defense in the Kejilang area within one day, but also expanded their victory by crossing south of the McMahon Line (the Chinese version) and capturing the adjacent Tawang area with little trouble. On October 23rd, the Chinese Liberation Army's stunning progress on the battlefield convinced the CCP leadership that it was time to conduct diplomatic struggle.[713]

On October 24th, Beijing paused the military operation and offered Delhi a peace deal. This was announced to the world in the form of a government statement, and to India specifically by a letter from Zhou to Nehru. The deal contained the following three key points: first, China and India should affirm that border dispute should be settled only through peaceful negotiations; second, the armed forces of each side should disengage and withdraw 20 kilometres from the "line of actual control," a term first coined by Beijing in 1959; and finally, the two Prime Ministers should open talks again. Beijing felt that this was an honorary and workable deal.[714]

In fact, it was neither honorary nor workable. It was not honorary because China's offer contained a grave distortion of reality. "On October 20th, Indian forces started a massive general offensive in both the eastern and western sectors of the Sino-Indian border."[715] Beijing propagated this disinformation in the open statement but evaded in the letter to Nehru. Indeed, the latter well knew that the Indian side launched no "massive general

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[710] *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 503; *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 5, p. 165; *Zhongyin bianjie*, p. 147; Lei Yingfu, Zai zuigao tongshuaibu dang canmou: Lei Yingfu jiangjun huiyilu [As General Officer at the High Command: General Lei Yingfu's Memoir] (Shanghai: Baihuazhou Wenyi Press, 1997), pp. 209-10.

[711] The operation involved vanquishing India's "attacks" in both western and eastern sectors and "expanding victory" when suitable. Its commencement was first scheduled at the dawn of October 19, but in consideration of the Tibet Military Region's recommendation, moved to that of October 20. *MZNP*, vol. 5, p. 165.

[712] Lei, *Zai zuigao tongshuaibu*, p. 210; Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, vol. 3, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), p. 230.

[713] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 5, p. 166.

[714] Jin Chongji, *Zhou Enlai zhuan* [*Biography of Zhou Enlai*], vol. 2, (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 1998), p. 1659; *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 505.

[715] "Statement of the Chinese Government," 24 October 1962, "Letter from the Premier Zhou Enlai to Prime Minister of India," 24 October 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 1-6.

offence" at all. No evidence shows that Beijing had any qualms about this egregious lie. The Chinese leaders, so convinced of the inevitability of this showdown, might well have believed that they were just stretching what they imagined India had done or had intended to do.

This offer was not workable due to the Chinese definition of the "line of actual control." As Beijing later clarified this ambiguous term, stating that it was referred to not the border status when the recent war happened, but the situation on November 7th, 1959, when Zhou in his letter to Nehru first proposed holding direct talks between him and Nehru.[716] The idea behind this definition was clear: all Indian activities on ground in the past three years were illegal and accordingly, Indian troops should retreat from the outposts built during this period. The problem was that the border dispute had become, especially after the massive attack by China in October, more than just a border dispute. In Nehru's words, his country was facing a "battle of Indian freedom."[717] For India, to recognize this "line of actual control," which was still ambiguous even in the context of 1959, meant to accept "a deceptive device which can fool nobody" that would continue to slice off Indian territory to China.[718] Delhi immediately rejected the deal on October 24th. Two days later, the Indian government declared the country to be in a state of emergency. On November 14th, Zhou finally received Nehru's reply to his letter on November 4th, realizing that despite this round of diplomatic struggle, Delhi was still not yielding.[719]

Beijing's reaction was to strike India again. On November 16th, the Chinese side launched a new offensive in the Himalayas. The military plans had already been developed two weeks prior and had awaited only the result of further diplomatic struggle. This time, the military purpose of the operation shifted from evicting Indian troops from disputed areas to annihilating them to a significant degree. The political or strategic aim remained, forcing the Indian government to accept the peace deal on China's terms. In fact, the same order that commanded the Chinese troops to pause on October 24th "to create a favourable condition for peaceful negotiation," demanded that they be prepared at the same time for another strike "if India refuses to negotiate." As it transpired, the Chinese Liberation Army succeeded in

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[716] "Letter from the Prime Minister of India to Premier Zhou En-lai," 27 October 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 6-9; "Letter from Premier Zhou Enlai to the Prime Minister of India," 4 November 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 11-16; "Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India," 7 November 1959, *WP*, vol. 3, pp. 44-45.
[717] Letter on 21 October 1962, *LCM*, vol. 5, p. 538.
[718] "Annexure to Letter from the Prime Minister of India to Premier Zhou Enlai," 27 October 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 10-11.
[719] "Letter from Premier Zhou Enlai to the Premie Minister of India," 4 November 1962, "Letter from the Prime Minister of India to Premier Zhou Enlai," 14 November 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 11-23.

delivering another blow to India, as Beijing hoped. After the resumption of attacks, like a hot knife into butter, the Chinese vanquished the Indian army's resistance on multiple fronts. Particularly in the eastern sector, they had pushed the frontline further south and reached as far as the northern edge of Assam plain by November 20th.[720]

Ultimately, Delhi appeared to soften its position in the supreme leader's eyes. On November 19th, Mao encountered a pleasant surprise when reading press reports of recent political developments in India: both Prime Minister Nehru and President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, in their respective speeches on November 18th, expressed their wishes to open talks in order to solve the present difference with China. "[They] suddenly talk a lot about peaceful settlement," Mao immediately notified Zhou: "Check if the Indian leaders had given similar tones in the past few days." Believing that he had sniffed out an opportunity, about half an hour later, Mao gathered Zhou and other CCP leaders to discuss "issues about facilitating the Sino-Indian peaceful negotiation."[721] This meeting unveiled the last stage of the border war on the part of China.

Mao decided to bet that India could now be levered into negotiation. On November 19th, right after the leadership meeting, Zhou summoned the Indian Chargé d'Affaires P.K. Banerjee, telling the latter that China "fully agreed" with President Radhakrishnan's statements and that bilateral talks could start "immediately." The tone of his speech was rather earnest: "We have confidence and we will not lose the last hope. I promised going to Delhi. I have been there four times and next time would be the fifth." Later on, Mao also summoned the Indonesian Ambassador, expressing the wish that President Sukarno could help facilitate Sino-Indian negotiations. In the afternoon of November 20th, after exchanging opinions with Zhou and Liu Shaoqi, Mao increased his bet. He had the General Staff issue an order to stop the "operation of counter-attack" on the Himalayan front. Just after midnight on November 21st, Beijing issued a government statement declaring that, after twenty-four hours, China would conduct a full ceasefire along the Sino-Indian border and, from December 1st, its troops would retreat twenty kilometres from the "line of actual control."[722] The statement gave no acknowledgement of India's recent friendly, or at least softened, gesture in Beijing's eyes: "until now, the Indian government… continued to expand the border conflict and worsen the Sino-Indian border." Twenty minutes later, Zhou summoned Banerjee, repeating the contents of this statement and indicating that China expected the

[720] Editorial Board*, Zhongyin,* pp. 208-10.
[721] *MZNP* 1949-1976, vol. 5, p. 169.
[722] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 5, pp. 169-70

Indian government to respond positively. Several hours later, Chen Yi sought meetings with the Burmese and Indonesian Ambassadors, assuring them that China would conduct this "voluntary ceasefire and retreat" "even if India does not respond or if it was yet to respond with a positive or negative answer."[723] At midnight on November 22nd, the ceasefire took effect in the Himalayas. This was the end of the Sino-Indian border war of 1962.

But again, whether it was war or a ceasefire, China's external behaviour was directed by at least one goal: to keep the Sino-Indian border dispute both defined and managed according to China's terms. These terms included that India's McMahon Line was not only illegal but also cartographically incorrect; that China did not recognize this line and only treated this illegal line — in its correct alignment under China's definition — as the "line of actual control" in the eastern sector; that in the western sector, China had not intruded into India's territory and it was India who had raised territorial claims to China in 1958; and that the "line of actual control" in this sector referred to the defense parameter connected by China outposts in Aksai Chin before the Kongka Pass Incident of 1959. Whenever proposals from the external world appeared to contradict these terms, China turned its back on them.

This had already happened in the inter-offensive period. In response to China's "peace offer," India raised its condition for resuming talks, which was restoring the border status on September 8th, 1962. On this day, the Chinese troops crossed Thagla Ridge in the eastern sector, beginning the standoff that ultimately evolve into the massive Chinese attack on October 20th.[724] This was the date that the military standoff between China and India began in the eastern sector, after Indian troops had entered and occupied the Kejielang River area. According to China's definition, the McMahon Line lay south of this small river basin, whereas according to India's, it lay north, resting on Thagla Ridge.[725] In contrast, China was committed to restoring the border status on November 7th, 1959.[726] This was the date when, after the Kongka Pass Incident, Beijing raised with Delhi for the first time the idea of the twenty-kilometre mutual withdrawal and top-level talks on the border dispute.[727] More importantly, at this time India had not yet deployed troops in the Kejielang River area to establish India's McMahon Line on ground. The most significant difference on the ground between September 8th, 1962 (India's stand) and November 8th, 1959 (China's stand) was

[723] *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 514.
[724] "Annexure to Letter from the Prime Minister of India to Premier Zhou En-lai," 27 October 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 10-11.
[725] Editorial Board, *Zhongyin bianjie*, p. 124.
[726] "Letter from Premier Zhou Enlai to the Prime Minister of India," 4 November 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 11-16.
[727] "Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India," 7 November 1959, *WP*, vol. 3, pp. 44-45.

therefore not about the McMahon Line's legitimacy, but rather its alignment. In other words, India's refusal to accept China's definition of the demarcation of the McMahon Line was a critical reason for China's resumption of warfare.

China's struggle with the Colombo Powers after the border war demonstrates a similar pattern of the country's principled or uncompromising commitment to its border policy, which was formed in 1959. On December 10th, 1962, representatives of six non-aligned Afro-Asian countries — the United Arab Republic, Burma, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Ghana, and Indonesia — gathered in Colombo at Sri Lankan Prime Minister Bandaranaike's initiative. The meeting led to a third party-initiated ceasefire settlement, known as the Colombo Proposal, which contained the following three principles: one, it did not condemn China for starting the war; two, in the western sector, China should withdraw twenty kilometres, which India did not need to reciprocate, with the resulting demilitarized zone administered afterward by civilian posts of both sides; and three, in the eastern sector, China should retreat north of Thagla Ridge, where the McMahon Line lay according to China's definition while India could move up toward this "line of actual control" except in the Kejialang River basin area.[728] The Chinese leaders found this settlement unfair. As Zhou told Madam Bandaranaike in their meeting in Beijing on January 3rd, 1963, this settlement "in effect means that China should concede at both sectors while India need not concede anything there. [The Chinese] people would not accept this and I would have to resign from my premiership," Zhou added. The CCP therefore requested a revision or "two explanations" to be made to the Colombo Proposal: in the eastern sector, after China's withdrawal, only *non-military* Indian personnel could move up to the south of McMahon Line (by the Chinese definition), while in the western sector, the area from which Chinese troops withdrew should be left vacant and *neither military nor civilian* Indian personnel should enter.[729] If anything could sum up what Beijing was effectively pursuing through the "two explanations," it would be as follows: no Indians, military or non-military, could cross the "line of actual control" — the border status of November 7th, 1959 — to enter China's side. To be fair to Beijing, the fact that the "two explanations" did not demand a reciprocal Indian retreat from the "line of actual control" could be counted as a Chinese move to meet India halfway.

China's "two explanations" were followed by the Colombo Powers' "clarification" on January 13th, 1963, which reflected India's reception of the Colombo Proposal. The "clarification" of India's new position accepted China's definition of the "line of actual

[728] Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru,* vol. 3, p. 234.
[729] Jin, *Zhou Enlai*, vol. 2, pp. 1672-73.

control" in terms of the border status on November 7th, 1959. However, it still failed to meet China's expectation of how India should, or should not, act in the areas left by China's military retreat. According to the "clarification," Indian troops could still move up to the McMahon Line in the eastern sector except in two designated areas, and in the western sector, could deploy non-military personnel with China in the twenty-kilometre-wide demilitarized zone.[730] The "clarification," which was later accepted by Delhi, proved to be a new compromising point between China's border policy and the expectations of the external world.

But this time, Beijing decided to concede no further. On January 19th, Zhou wrote to Prime Minister Bandaranaike in a reply to her letter on January 14th, expressing that China would accept the Colombo Proposal as the "preliminary basis" for Sino-Indian officials' talks, but reserve its insistence on the "two explanations." According to Jin Chonji, at this time Zhou had not received any information about the "clarification," and it was not until January 31st, 1963, when the Sri Lankan Ambassador delivered the full text of the "clarification," that Zhou grasped the full picture. On February 4th, when attending the National Day Reception hosted by the Sri Lankan Embassy, Zhou made it clear to the Sri Lankan Ambassador that China would not surrender on the "two explanations."[731]

Beijing's activities in the spring of 1963 therefore turned into a non-military struggle to defend China's "two explanations." Zhou was effective at shifting the blame for not opening talks onto the Indian side once he decided to fortify China's position on the "two explanations." He masterfully split China's immediate goal after the border war in two: to stop fighting and to open talks. By switching between them when needed, he skilfully undermined the impression that China was not interested in peaceful settlement. For example, on February 4th, he also told the Sri Lankan Ambassador that "it is alright if India insists on imposing a precondition for talks, which makes negotiation impossible," because China would "retreat as scheduled… thereby effectively creating detachment." Zhou stated that "as long as India did not provoke" China by "entering Longjiu and Chedong in the eastern sector, Wuje in the Middle Sector, and 43 outposts seized in the western sector," there would be no fight. To translate this into common language, India's rejection of China's "two explanations" equated India imposing "preconditions" for talks, and if India ignored these two points and chose to deploy troops or non-military personnel in the aforementioned areas

[730] For more of this "clarification", see Raghav Sharan Sharma, *The Unfought War of 1962: An Appraisal* (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 279.
[731] Jin, *Zhou Enlai*, vol. 2, pp. 1675-76.

it would be an Indian "provocation." Of course, China was always happy to talk "with no condition," as Zhou told Norodom Sihanouk on February 10th, 1963. To bolster China's image and create further pressure on India, China slowly released the cards it had gained from the border war. On February 28th, Beijing announced that China, "according to the statement on November 21st, 1962, had completed the plan of withdrawing twenty kilometers from the line of actual control on November 7th, 1959." From April 10th to May 25th, it released over three thousand Indian military personnel who were captured during the border war in the previous year, in order to "show to more people who was really obstructing peace." On April 21st, Beijing managed to make Ali Sabry, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the United Arab Republic — one of the Colombo Powers — admit that the "Colombo Proposal" was "just advice," and not "an arbitration."[732] By May 1963, it had become clear that the Colombo Powers' mediation proved only to cushion China's act of violence act — the border war — by minimizing the diplomatic repercussions of this move. The perceived tension along the border was removed.

India's Approach to China

It was propagated widely and incessantly by the Chinese government and historians that the border war of 1962 resulted from India launching "a massive general offensive" that had "forced" China to "strike back in self-defence."[733] This depiction does not withstand a close examination of what the highest echelon of the Indian government actually did, in September, for example. Nehru was abroad between September 8th — the start of the standoff when Chinese troops descended from Thagla Ridge — and October 1st.[734] He was attending the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London and was accompanied by the Finance Minister Morarji Desai, who was otherwise first in line to chair cabinet meetings in Nehru's absence. On the way back, Nehru even stopped and visited Ghana and Egypt.[735] It is worth adding that Defense Minister Menon also left India on September 20th, the day before the September clash, to attend the UN General Assembly in Washington. Therefore, the Chinese accusation that India staged a "premeditated bloodshed" in September did not square with the facts, so far as the leadership of the Indian government was concerned.[736]

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[732] Jin, *Zhou Enlai*, vol. 2, pp. 1676-78, p.1688-90.
[733] "Statement of the Chinese Government," 24 October 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 5-8; Jin, *Zhou Enlai*, vol. 2, p. 1656.
[734] Mullik, *My Years*, p. 472
[735] Maxwell, *India's China War*, p. 324.
[736] Editorial Board, *Zhongyin bianjie*, p. 125.

Nehru in particular did not see a war with China forming in the Himalayas.[737] This attitude continued to direct his actions — or non-actions — on the border matter before the outbreak of the war. In the evening of October 11th, 1962, Nehru chaired a top-level meeting on the border dispute with China, from which he learned of the "grave situation" in the eastern sector from General B.M. Kaul. The day before, China had staged an unprecedented battalion-level attack on India, although it was thwarted for the time being. Nehru was not swayed by this development. He rejected Kaul's proposal to request immediate and massive military aid from the United States. Nehru only asked his generals to first form a unanimous opinion before any substantial moves to be made by him or his government.[738] On October 12th, at the Delhi airport, while dealing with journalists, Nehru signalled the direction of the government's future efforts on the border dispute: "we shall throw the Chinese out."[739] However, regarding this event, which was and still is paraded by China as evidence of Indian warmongering, two facts should be highlighting. First, this was not a declaration of war; rather, there were only piecemeal or spur-of-the-moment statements from Nehru on this day, which was interpreted by the Indian and Western press as a kind of declaration of war. Second, immediately after speaking to the press at the airport, the Indian Prime Minister left Delhi. He proceeded to make a three-day state visit to Sri Lanka, which was scheduled long prior. Therefore, if what Nehru said on October 12th could be counted as "national mobilization" or a "major step" toward war, India perhaps has conducted one of the most careless or relaxing mobilizations in human history.[740]

The story that India launched a "massive general offensive" in mid-October is almost certainly a Chinese distortion of reality. The standard historiographic treatment of this topic in China is dominated by the practice of copying Beijing's official statement on October 24th, 1962.[741] Namely, "on October 20th, Indian forces started a massive general offensive in both the eastern and western sectors of the Sino-Indian border."[742] A different version is that this "general, fierce, and large-scale" Indian assault "in both sectors" actually began on October 17th, appearing to suggest that October 20th was just another day of the Indian attack.[743] It is

[737] Editorial Board, *Zhongyin bianjie*, p. 125.
[738] Maxwell, *India's China War*, p. 339-40.
[739] "Our Army is Told to Throw Out Chinese from NEFA Area," *Times of India,* 13 October 1962.
[740] Jin, *Zhou Enlai*, vol. 2, p. 1656.
[741] Jin, *Zhou Enlai*, vol. 2, p. 1656; "Statement of the Chinese Government," 24 October 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 3-6.
[742] "Statement of the Chinese Government," 24 October 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 3-6.
[743] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 5, p. 165; *ZENP 1949-1976,* vol. 2, p. 503; Wang Gui, "Zhou zongli zai zhidao zhongyin bianjing ziwei fanji zuozhan qusheng zhong de zhuoyue gongxian [Premier Zhou's Outstanding Contribution to Guiding to Victory the Self-defensive Counter-attack on the Sino-Indian Border]," in

worth noting that Chinese scholarship usually avoids discussing the border situation in last few days before October 20th.[744] Beyond what the communist regime unilaterally claimed, there is in fact no solid Chinese evidence to support the accusation that India attacked China on October 20th, 1962, in any fashion that could be called a "massive general offensive." In fact, by comparing an orthodox Chinese account of October 20th with a detailed description of the commencement of China's "self-defence" on the same day, it becomes clear as to what this "massive general offensive" was all about.

> At the dawn of October 20th, the Indian army finally launched a massive attack…the Chinese troops suffered grave losses under the heavy gun and artillery fire [from India]. Having reached the limit of patience, the CCP Central Committee issued the order to conduct a self-defensive counter-attack.[745]

> At 0730 hours, October 20th, [our] artillery group delivered a 15-minute barrage upon the Indian army in the Kejielang area, destroying its artillery position and some defensive works. At 0745 hours, infantries started their assault and quickly penetrated India's defense.[746]

The second quote above confirms Nehru's later account, in his letter to his Chief Ministers on October 21st, 1962, of the beginning of the war on the morning of the previous day.

> The Chinese Government issued a statement at about 7 A.M. (Beijing time) on the 20th October…some time after this…the major attack… started…Chinese have attacked us with overwhelming strength and firepower, and this had led to a grave setback to our forces in N.E.F.A.[747]

Given no Indian evidence whatsoever that India made any military moves before the Chinese attack, it is clear that the Indian "massive general offensive," as the Chinese side claims, did

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Zhou Enlai yu Xizang [*Zhou Enlai and Tibet*], ed. Party History Office of Tibet Autonomous Region (Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 1998), p. 378.
[744] Lv and Sun, *Zhongyin bianjian,* pp. 194-95.
[745] Jin, *Zhou Enlai*, vol. 2, p. 1658.
[746] Editorial Board, *Zhongyin bianjie*, p. 156.
[747] Letter on 21 October 1962, *LCM*, vol. 5, p. 535.

not exist. "It has become a habit for the Chinese to blame others for what they propose to do."[748]

Nehru was shocked by this aggressive action from Beijing. The "Forward Policy," however provocative or foolish it might look in retrospect, had never been a war plan. When Nehru first articulated the policy to the army in November 1961, it was meant to "check" rather than "evict" China's advance along the Sino-Indian border, especially in the western sector.[749] It did not aim to exploit China's difficulties due to the Great Leap Forward; instead, this move was compelled by mounting criticism from within India, which had reached a point beyond Nehru's ability to control by the end of 1961. He was forced to demonstrate that the Indian government would "at least try" to contest China on the lingering border dispute on the ground.[750] The fundamental premise of this new border policy was that China would not start a war with India. The fact that China's strategic threat from the outside world came from its east coast instead of its western hinterland, that Tibet's difficult geography and terrain would hamstring any Chinese major attack with this area as the base, and that India had strived to cooperate with China with respect to Tibet since 1954, along with India's efforts in record since 1949 to promote China internationally, should undo any idea of Beijing to wage a large-scale war with India.[751] The clash at Galwan Valley in the western sector in July 1962 validated, at least from Delhi's perspective, this premise and accordingly the "Forward Policy" as well.[752] The unprecedented attack by China on a scale that Nehru had never imagined therefore delivered a psychological blow to Nehru. As he stated in the Lok Sabha on October 25th, "we were getting out of touch with reality in the modern world and we were living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation."[753] Indeed, Nehru even began to question his own judgement.

Nehru's handling of the crisis shows that he did not wish to abandon his China policy altogether. Delhi did not declare that the country was in a *state of war* with China. The October attack pushed Nehru only to the point of having his government declare, on October 26th, that India was in a *state of emergency*, despite Nehru having seen "in effect a Chinese

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[748] Jin, *Zhou Enlai*, vol. 2, p. 1658; Letter on 21 October 1962, *LCM*, vol. 5, p. 535.
[749] A.G. Noorani, "India's Forward Policy," review of *Himalayan Blunder*, by J.P. Dalvi, *The Untold Story*, by B.M. Kaul, *The Guilty Men of 1962*, by D.R. Mankekar, *The China Quarterly*, no. 43 (1970), p. 137; Neville Maxwell and A.G. Noorani, "India's Forward Policy," *The China Quarterly*, no. 45 (1971), p. 158.
[750] Kaul, *The Untold*, p. 368; A.G. Noorani, "India's Forward Policy," review of *Himalayan Blunder*, by J.P. Dalvi, *The Untold Story*, by B.M. Kaul, *The Guilty Men of 1962*, by D.R. Mankekar, *The China Quarterly*, no. 43 (1970), pp. 136-41.
[751] "The Indian Mission at Lhasa," 9 July 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, p. 410; "Prime Minister's Secretariat," 18 June 1954, *NMML*, Subimal Dutt Papers, Subject Files, File 6, p. 7.
[752] Noorani, "India's Forward Policy," p. 139.
[753] Mullik, *My Years*, p. 393.

invasion of India."[754] As Nehru reminded his Chief Ministers on October 21st, declaring war would have "far-reaching consequences."[755] Indeed, always thinking of the "consequences" had been a general approach of Nehru's, especially since early 1959, when he deliberated any moves that might result in irrevocable damage to India's relationship with China.[756] Therefore, containing the confrontation with China by not declaring war and not breaking off the diplomatic relationship characterized Nehru's crisis management in 1962. China certainly did not expect this, especially after November 16th, when it started a new round of offensives in the Himalayas.[757] The new Indian defeat on the battlefield in November, however, did cause Nehru to lose his poise. As he wrote to President Kennedy on November 19th, the situation for India had become "really desperate" and Nehru requested that the United States immediately send fighter planes to protect India, which should be operated by American servicemen until Indian pilots were trained. Such a drastic, although temporary, deviation from the core values of India's foreign policy since independence — self-reliance and non-alignment — was unthinkable before this darkest hour of Nehru's China policy.[758]

Despite being the apparent underdog in this short border war, India refused to yield to China. "This is going to be a long, drawn-out affair," Nehru wrote to the Chief Minister of Assam on October 20th. "I see no near end of it."[759] On the next day, he reiterated to all Chief Ministers his determination to fight China — "a great and powerful country with enormous resources" — until "that aggression is vacated."[760] "I will fight them with a stick!" Nehru once shouted privately, sometime between the two Chinese general assaults. Ample evidence shows that India's new military defeats in November created a sense of despair and helplessness within the government. For example, the Home Minister even planned to blow up oil wells in Assam, as he was predicting the incoming fall of NEFA, Assam, and northern Bengal.[761] The days after November 16th were truly Nehru's darkest hour. Without consulting his Cabinet members first, Nehru wrote to John F. Kennedy on November 19th, requesting immediate U.S. military assistance. This might be interpreted as Nehru's nerves cracking.

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[754] "Letter from the Prime Minister of India to Premier Chou En-lai," 27 October 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 6-9.
[755] Letter on 21 October 1962, *LCM,* p. 536.
[756] "To Rajendra Prasad: Foreign Policy Restraint," 2 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 434; "In the Lok Sabha: Statement on Situation in Tibet," 27 April 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 48, p. 505; "In the Lok Sahab: Referring Tibet to the UN," 4 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, p. 235, p. 241.
[757] "PRC Foreign Ministry: On the Possibility that India Might Announce Severing the Diplomatic Relationship with Us and Our Countermeasures," 9 November 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01120-01, pp. 1-2; Untitled, 16 November 1962*, CFMA*,105-01120-01, pp. 7-9; "On the Further Withdrawal of Our Embassy Staff," 17 November 1962, *CFMA*, 105-01120-01, pp. 44-45.
[758] Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3, pp. 229-30, p. 252.
[759] Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3, p. 221; See also Letter on 21 May 1963, *LCM*, vol. 5, p. 594.
[760] Letter on 21 October 1962, *LCM,* vol. 5*,* p. 538.
[761] Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3, pp. 226-28.

But it is equally worth noting he did not send any secret emissaries to Beijing to probe the CCP's intentions at this juncture. In other words, Nehru was desperate, but he chose to solider on despite India's new military losses. "We shall see this matter to the end and the end will have to be victory for India," Nehru reiterated his unyieldingness in a broadcast to the nation on November 19th.[762]

Peace in the Himalayas returned as unexpectedly as it evaporated a month ago. At midnight on November 20th, Beijing suddenly announced ceasefire with a unilateral withdrawal plan. This transpired to be the end of the so-called 1962 War. It never occurred to Nehru that his speech on the Territorial Army Day (November 18th), with a general tone of intending to continue the fight, was somehow interpreted by Beijing as an indication of Indian readiness to negotiate.[763] "There is no bridge between us. We should be prepared for four or five years of war." Nehru made his distrust of Beijing clear in his letter to Robert Sherrod in late November.[764] It took a whole month for him to accept that the worst period for India had passed. On December 22nd, Nehru resumed the practice of writing fortnightly letters to his Chief Ministers. His reflection of the border dispute in the wake of this border war is worth quoting in detail:

> The border dispute with India, however important, was relatively easy to solve, but this dispute was kept alive and the attack on India was part of a larger design to humiliate India and bring pressure on the Soviets and create discord among the unaligned countries, and thus weaken the more progressive forces in the Soviet Union itself. The Chinese have… looked up India as a country helpful in the larger sense, for furthering the cause of peace and co-existence.[765]

In other words, the lessons were as follows: first, the border dispute was not about the border. Second, the border attacks were the means for China to pressure the Soviet Union to be in line with it in foreign affairs. Third, China's ultimate interest was to destroy a particular group of ideals, which would lead to relaxation and peace but come in the way of its communist ideological pursuit. These ideals included non-alignment, which India had stood for, and peaceful co-existence, which both India and the Soviet Union subscribed to.

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[762] Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3, p. 230.
[763] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 5, p. 169; "Reverses are Stepping Stones to Final Success: Nation Determined to Take Back Every Inch - Nehru," *Times of India*, 19 November 1962, p. 1; See also "President Opens Shivaji Varsity," *Times of India*, 19 November 1962, p. 1.
[764] Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3, p. 237.
[765] Letter on 22 December 1962, *LCM,* vol. 5, p. 553.

The most significant result of this reflection was that the Sino-Indian border dispute was now completely detached from its roots in the Tibet Question — of Chinese suzerainty versus Chinese sovereignty — and transplanted to the fundamentally different issue of Chinese communist imperialism and Mao's Communism. The practice of separating the border question from the Tibet Question had been going on for years. As early as 1959, the Indian government deliberately ignored an eloquent speech by the Dalai Lama in exile that articulated from a legal argument for why defending the McMahon Line meant supporting Tibet's cause for independence. In the officials' talks about the border in 1960, Nehru again asked India's representatives to skirt the Tibet Question. The significance of the Tibet Question in this short-lived border war was reduced to the Chinese being "angry… toward… our giving asylum to the Dalai Lama."[766] And, as demonstrated by Nehru's letters to his Chief Ministers from the end of 1962 onwards, the Tibet Question virtually disappeared from discussions about India's relationship with China.

Another profound change after the war was that China, joining Pakistan, became a long-term "menace" on India's doorstep.[767] "By a curious quirk of circumstance this [Pakistan] had got tied up with the Chinese menace." This was mainly because of the progress in the Sino-Pakistan border dispute. This progress culminated in the signing of the Sino-Pakistan border agreement on March 2nd, 1963, which was during a difficult period when India was struggling with China over the extent to which the Colombo Proposal should be used as the basis of a peace settlement. While the Chinese threat was listed as a persistent one, Nehru still attached higher importance to India's "internal problems" than the "Chinese menace" or "Pakistani trouble."[768] The logic behind this was in line with Nehru's understanding of the border war. Because China's larger designs were believed to be the sabotage of causes of peace, which for India meant non-alignment, it became imperative to stick to these ideals. To uphold non-alignment as the core value of its foreign policy, India required not only an "adequate defense apparatus," but also the "basic background" that meant developing India in terms of its industrial and agricultural capacity.[769] This approach did not mean that India would compromise easily on specific matters, such as having civil posts in the demilitarized zone in Ladakh, for example, which was one of the key differences between Delhi's and Beijing's acceptance of the Colombo Proposal.[770] The Indian approach to Communist China,

[766] Letter on 22 December 1962, *LCM,* vol. 5, p. 554.
[767] Letters on 22 December 1962, 14 April 1963, 21 May 1963, *LCM,* vol. 5, p. 556, p. 587, p. 592.
[768] Letter on 21 May 1963, *LCM,* vol. 5, pp. 592-94
[769] Letters on 22 December 1963, 2 February 1963, 14 April 1963, *LCM,* vol. 5, p. 556, p. 568, p. 586.
[770] Letter on 21 May 1963, *LCM,* vol. 5, p. 593.

however, did create a defensive posture toward China on a strategic level, which continued after Nehru's death in May 1964. This was because the way to combat China was understood to be ultimately developing India itself.

Conclusion

The most fascinating, or surprising, aspects of the Sino-Indian border war in 1962 were its beginning and end points. A general collision course had been in place before mid-October. India's gradual implementation of its "Forward Policy" with the aim of checking, rather than expelling, the Chinese presence in the disputed areas hardened Beijing's willingness to use force when necessary to check what was, in its eyes, India's active encroachment. What triggered the Chinese onslaught on October 20th was likely Nehru's speech at the Delhi airport on October 12th. Beijing misinterpreted Nehru's speech as one of national mobilization, and through this coloured prism, the CCP viewed subsequent developments within India as Nehru's government finalizing its war preparation. In other words, by mid-October, Beijing believed that the outbreak of a large-scale military confrontation with was India only a matter of time. That Beijing labelled the October operation "self-defence" reflected a genuine belief that India would be at China's throat if the latter sat idly.[771] The problem with Beijing's decision to launch the pre-emptive and punitive strike was that Nehru's speech on October 12th — a collection of answers to press questions, to be precise — was not a declaration of war. In no way did Nehru intend to have a war or military confrontation with China, particularly on the scale of what the border war turned out to be.

In comparison, the way Beijing ended its "self-defence" was even more startling in terms of the chasm between its perception of India and the reality there. What triggered Beijing's decision to upgrade its peace offer on November 20th — the unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal — was Nehru's speech for Territorial Army Day on November 18th. Mao came across this speech when reading *Cankao Ziliao*, a newsletter only for cadres, the next day. Reading between the lines, Mao believed that he had captured a sense of weakness from India. In the Chairman's eyes, Nehru had softened the Indian government's position due to the new military defeats and was signalling the interest in negotiating with China. This interpretation quickly became the view of the CCP leadership, which decided on November 20th to "adopt proactive measures" to encourage Nehru to return to the negotiation table.[772] The problem with this decision was that on November 18th at the Red Fort, Nehru was

[771] "Statement of the Chinese Government," 24 October 1962, *WP*, vol. 8, pp. 3-6.
[772] *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 514.

apparently working to cheer the country up and reiterated the unequivocal stance that "India would not be cowed down by threat."[773] In fact, from the moment the border war started, Nehru had already decided to fight China for however long the CCP desired. Nehru's lament that "we were living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation" was apparently more fitting to describe China than India.[774]

Why did the November ceasefire become permanent? This situation, which even survived Nehru's death in 1964, was arguably a function of China and India's border policies. First, Nehru was wrong about Beijing's intentions behind the border war. There was no "larger design" for "humiliating" India to pressure the Soviet Union and destroy ideals of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence, although Beijing was disappointed by Moscow's attitude toward the Sino-Indian border dispute and the dispute did become part of the Sino-Soviet polemic. The evidence shows that the purpose of China's military operations in 1962 was to direct the Sino-Indian border dispute back to diplomatic channels while maintaining the status quo on the ground on China's terms. The fact that, by the end of 1961, China had actually surrendered the hope of achieving anything substantial on the border matter with India as long as Nehru was alive was another matter. Once its military operations had succeeded in checking the erosion of China's stance in the Himalayas by India's "Forward Policy," Beijing was willing to resume new talks with Delhi, like those in 1960. Whether these talks would lead to any meaningful result was another matter.

Second, the long peace between the two countries was made possible by two factors in play on the Indian side. First, a bad result is still a result. It should be noted that the Sino-Indian border dispute had been lingering for years without solution. Indian society, represented by those MPs who hurled questions at their Prime Minister ever more frequently toward the end of 1961, had exhausted its patience on the border dispute with China. Accountability was never something that worried authoritarian or totalitarian regimes, which controlled media and legislation, but it was an issue for democracies and people who believed in rule of law. The "Forward Policy" was, in this sense, a reluctant move by Nehru to answer the societal anxiety toward the limbo status of the border dispute. The military fiascos in 1962, however humiliating they looked, did shift the target of the mounting pressure from the Indian government, which was seen as not having done enough, to Beijing, which proved ready to use war-scale force. The internal force, which had driven India into a collision

[773] "Reverses Are Stepping Stones to Final Successes: Nation Determined to Take Back Every Inch - Nehru," *Times of India*, 19 November 1962, p. 1.
[774] Mullik, *My Years*, p. 393.

course with China, was contained. Second, as Nehru concluded that Beijing had dealt with the border dispute according to a "larger design," he naturally thought holistically about devising India's answer to the "continuing menace" of China.[775] In his opinion, India needed not just an "adequate defense apparatus," but also the "basic background to it"—progress in India's industry and agriculture.[776] While this comprehensive preparation should afford India the means to resist any attempt of "physical domination," holding on to the doctrine of non-alignment mattered equally, if not more, in terms of giving no "mental surrender" to Chinese communism. As Nehru believed, one end of China's "larger design" for the border dispute was to "humiliate" India in order to discredit non-alignment.[777] Non-alignment, which was championed by India, curbed the spread of the Cold War, whereas China, believing in war's inevitability, favoured polarization. To ally India with either camp of the Cold War would therefore play right into China's hand by tarnishing non-alignment. In short, the lack of domestic pressure and the creation of a pacifist answer to the Chinese challenge worked collaboratively to remove the seeds of major confrontation from the Indian side.

[775] Letters on 22 December 1962, 14 April 1963, *LCM,* vol. 5, p. 553, p. 586.
[776] Letters on 22 December 1962, 2 February 1963, 14 April 1962, *LCM,* vol. 5, p. 556, p. 568-69, p. 586.
[777] Letter on 22 December 1962, *LCM,* vol. 5, pp. 549-51.

Conclusion

The first half of the 1950s registered an upward trend in the Sino-Indian relationship. This largely resulted from the convergence of China and India's strategic interests: China's need for Indian assistance to integrate Tibet, and Nehru's grand designs on world politics with China as a pivotal element. India, from the moment the CCP started to envisage a "New China" in 1949, was evaluated primarily in terms of its potential adverse influence on China's re-integration of Tibet. However, Delhi proved its usefulness to Beijing. In the end of 1950, the Indian government managed to persuade the Fourteenth Dalai Lama to stay within Tibet. He was at the moment about to follow the example of his predecessor the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, who had fled to India after a similar Chinese invasion decades ago. In 1952, the timely Indian grain supplies to Beijing's grand army in Tibet, which was on the verge of collapse because of a dire food shortage, proved again India's value in consolidating the so-called "Tibet Region of China" in the eyes of the CCP.

To India, accepting the reality of Communist China was primarily because Nehru believed that India had to. The Chinese unification under the CCP leadership was "a fact of world significance," and India must accept this fact.[778] While the ashes of World War II were still warm, Nehru publicly disclosed his vision for the new world order: China would ultimately emerge as one of the four great powers, along with India, in order to maintain world peace, and "there will be no fifth."[779] At the time of power transfer in 1947, some visionary British officials also highlighted the importance of wining China's friendship. To ensure "India's well-being" and for it to be "a potent but benevolent force in world affairs," Deputy Secretary Fry advised that India should not "prejudice her relations with so important a power as China." The idea of acting as "a benevolent spectator" therefore guided Nehru's handling of various troubles between Tibet and China after India's independence. Indeed, how China and Tibet received this "benevolence" is another matter.

Their shared strategic interests enabled China and India to overcome their differences in the early 1950s and reach a historic consensus in 1954: the Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet, signed on April 29th, 1954.[780] This reconciliation was the outcome of India's initiative. It was Nehru who proposed the negotiations on Tibet toward the end of 1953 and if there had been

[778] "India and Indonesia," 28 June 1949, *SWJN*2, vol. 12, p. 371.
[779] "The Limits of Self-determination," 2 August 1945, *SWJN*1, vol. 14, pp. 440-42.
[780] "India and People's Republic of China Agreement (with Exchange of Notes) on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India on 29 April 1954," *WP*, vol. 1, p. 98.

no Korean War, he would have done so much earlier. Beijing, ironically, interpreted this proposal as India's attempt to leverage China's dependence on India in settling the Korean War. But this misreading did not reverse the ongoing trend of Sino-Indian rapprochement, for both parties achieved what they each considered more important. China was satisfied with the successful consolidation of its rule in Tibet. This success was expressed not only in India's surrender of the many rights and assets that it had possessed in Tibet until 1954, but also in the wording of the agreement. It was called the "Agreement between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China on Trade and Intercourse between the *Tibet Region of China* and India." Note that none of the international treaties involving Tibet since the late 19th Century had ever recognized this land as part of the Chinese state in such an explicit way.

Many Indians, upon hearing the result of the Beijing negotiations, felt that their government had conceded more than it had received, but their view did not matter yet so far as Nehru was concerned. As both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, he believed that India had merely surrendered what it "could not hold" any more.[781] He cared more about laying a solid basis for a future Sino-Indian partnership. The fact that the 1954 agreement in the following years in India was called, or perhaps was allowed by the government to be called, the "Panchsheel Agreement" or the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" illustrates this desire. Meanwhile, Nehru also harboured a specific intention for this negotiation. He hoped for an "implicit acceptance" of the current border status, especially the McMahon Line, from the Chinese government. Ever since Nehru prepared to adjust to Communist China's rise in 1950, maintaining the existing long border with Tibet, or Tibet Region of China after 1951, constituted the bottom line for his China policy. The Beijing negotiation, in which the border matter was not raised, led Nehru to conclude that China had acquiesced on this matter. It took years for him to realize that this was a Chinese evasion.

As the old Chinese saying goes, "huoxi fu suoyi, fuxi, huo suofu [fortunate and danger are interchangeable]." Beijing and Delhi's reconciliation on Tibet in 1954 ushered in a honeymoon for their bilateral relationship. This period lasted for three to four years, featuring an unprecedented level of cultural, economic, and political exchange between the two countries. The Bandung Conference in 1955 witnessed the sort of Sino-Indian cooperation in world politics that Nehru had dreamed of for years. In retrospect, however, this reconciliation was the prologue to the Sino-Indian border dispute. Shortly after the agreement on Tibet,

[781] "To G.L. Mehta," 29 June 1954, *SWJN*2, vol. 26, pp. 355-57; Letter dated 1 July 1954, *LCM*, vol. 3, p. 587.

Delhi started to move government personnel toward "international" Himalayan mountain passes in the middle sector, which, in the CCP's eyes, remained Chinese passes. Therefore, during the summers of 1954, 1955, and 1956, small-scale standoffs between the border forces of the two countries repeatedly occurred at or near these bottlenecks in the middle sector. The first diplomatic protest in the history of the Sino-Indian border dispute was lodged by China on July 17th, 1954. Under the surface of "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai (India and China are brothers)," an undercurrent of distrust was forming.

But this force was not yet strong enough to overturn the Sino-Indian friendship. The Nehru-Zhou meeting of 1956-57 infused a new force of stability into this relationship. With Nehru's assistance, Zhou managed to persuade the Dalai Lama to return to the "Tibet Region of China." The latter, after attending the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha in India in 1956, was dithering over the idea of staying there indefinitely. Meanwhile, Nehru received Zhou's informal reassurance on the McMahon Line. Zhou privately told Nehru that the line was "unfair," but China saw "no better way than to recognize" it in the future.[782] For the Indian Prime Minister, who was confused by China's ambiguous stance on the border after the Beijing negotiations but still retained faith in China, this reassurance was good enough. It is worth adding that by mid-1957, Beijing's approach to the border dispute in general had matured. In essence, it had become a Chinese version of the "Forward Policy." With a spirit of "giving away no single inch of land," this policy guided Chinese troops to capture disputed territories *first*, with the issue of ownership to be solved "in peaceful negotiations in the future."[783] In other words, China needed to be in the driver's seat in settling border disputes. This proactive policy, however, was yet to adversely affect the Sino-Indian relationship because Chinese troops had not yet been deployed along the Sino-Indian border.

In 1958, both China and India lost the faith in each other that had sustained the general friendship until then, despite their frictions and differences. China was always short of trust in India. Even in the golden days of the "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai," deep in the minds of the CCP leaders was the idea that "Nehru is no brother to us."[784] The CCP's trust in and forbearance toward India had been diminishing for various reasons. Beijing's handling of Nehru's scheduled visit to Tibet in mid-1958, which the CCP approved reluctantly and eventually cancelled at short notice, showed the new degree of Beijing's distrust. By the end

[782] "Talks with Chou En-lai - I," 31 December 1956, *SWJN*2, vol. 36, pp. 599-601.
[783] "Premier Zhou Enlai's Report at the Fourth Meeting of the First National People's Congress (Zhou Enlai zongli zai diyijie quanguo renmin daibiao dahui disici huiyishang guanyu zhongmian bianjie wenti de baogao zhaiyao)," 9 July 1957, *JPA*, 3023-3-161.
[784] Li, *Dai waijiaojia*, vol. 3, p. 142.

of 1958, India had become a considerable "covert" subversive force against China's rule in Tibet, just as it was around the Lhasa Incident in 1949.[785] Meanwhile, Nehru also lost his belief in China's "bona fides" in the summer of 1958, although it took four more years for him to display this distress openly.[786] This change was a direct result of the inconclusive Sino-Indian border talks in Delhi in April 1958, which were intended to settle the lingering dispute in the middle sector since 1954, along with Beijing's ideological attack on the Yugoslavian party in 1957 and the CCP's hailing of the cold-blooded execution of Nagy by the Soviets the same year: "Panchsheel had been broken in various parts of the world by those who said they adhered to it." Nehru was only one step away from naming China in this speech in the Lok Sabha in August 1958.[787] As a reflection of this general mutual distrust, a war of notes about the border matter exploded after the first half of 1958. Like a couple on the verge of a divorce, China and India were anxious to establish their cases legally.

The Tibetan Uprising and its aftermath destroyed the foundations of Nehru's China policy. Until the spring of 1959, Indian society, including Nehru himself, had assumed that Tibet retained some sort of autonomy, despite having been annexed as the "Tibet Region of China" in 1951. The killings in Lhasa, the Dalai Lama's flight into exile, and the hundreds of Tibetan refugees that crossed the Indo-Tibetan border disillusioned the Indians; there was no Tibetan autonomy now, if it had ever existed in the past eight years. From this moment onward, any attempt to portray China as a benevolent force north of India became much harder. Meanwhile, it appeared that the country was facing "Chinese imperialism" at its doorstep.[788] While pursuing the Tibetan rebels, the CCP's troops moved to the Indo-Tibetan-Chinese border in large numbers. The principle of China's border policy — of "giving away no single inch of land" before negotiations — was thereby effectuated. This caused bloodshed between China and India's border forces, at Longju in the eastern sector in August and at Kongka Pass in the western sector in October. These incidents were naturally interpreted by India in light of the impression formed by what had happened to Tibet. The significance of the two letters from Zhou to Nehru in 1959 — one on January 23rd and the other on September 8th — is worth highlighting. Both letters, in which Beijing stated that the "Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited," signalled the bankruptcy of Nehru's China policy. Until then, this policy had rested on the premise that India's own boundary was secure. The difference

[785] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 3, p. 575.
[786] Letter dated 14 April 1963, *LCM*, p. 586.
[787] "International Situation- II," 20 August 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 43, p. 439.
[788] "Rajya Sabha, 'Motion Re Present Relations between China and India'," 10 September 1959, *SWJN*2, vol. 52, pp. 192-93.

between the letters was that Beijing publicized the second. The failure of Nehru's leadership thereby became known to all. Neither the political elites, nor the mass of Indian society, would invest the same degree of trust in Nehru's grand design toward China.[789]

In retrospect, the unsuccessful Nehru-Zhou meeting in April 1960 should not come as a surprise. Zhou did bring a "package deal" to Delhi that seemed to give peace a chance. Indeed, Beijing did not wish for the "gang fights" in the Himalayas to rock the boat of China's relationship with India.[790] This matter was far less important than that of China's Soviet brothers leaning toward "Revisionism." But the CCP leaders were also too self-righteous to think from the perspective of a "reactionary politician" such as Nehru.[791] The Indian people had learned what happened to Tibet from the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan refugees; the Seventeen-Point Agreement between the Tibetans and the Chinese had unquestionably been broken. Nehru himself had felt the pain of Zhou breaking the tacit agreement of 1956-57 over the McMahon Line. That was not only a gentleman's agreement, infused with his personal affection for Zhou, but also a shield that had insulated the delicate border matter from complications caused by Parliament and the public. With the pending Tibet Question and an Indian society that was deeply suspicious of China, Nehru was not left much leeway in negotiations. Note that Zhou's offer contained a precondition that he insisted India fulfill: to acknowledge that the Sino-Indian boundary had never been delimited. This diametrically contradicted the Indian government's widely known stance that the border had generally been fixed. Anyone in India who signed this deal would be signing his letter of resignation as well: "It is not a matter of one individual getting over them, because these are national issues affecting vast numbers of people."[792]

What is interesting about the following year and a half is not that China and India managed to maintain a superficial friendship, but the divergence of their attitudes toward the border dispute. The officials' talks on this matter, which were off and on during the second half of 1960, provided a useful mechanism for avoiding conflict on the ground. The two sides were able to establish their cases at the negotiation table. But because China and India differed in their evaluations of root issues such as Tibet's status before 1950, the evidence derived from negotiations, however reasonable it might look to one side, seemed ridiculous to the other side. However, the officials' talks in 1960 to some extent resembled the Beijing negotiations in 1954, in the sense that they also produced an unanticipated result. While in

[789] "Preventing the Drift to Disaster," 7 December 1950, *SWJN*2, vol. 15, part 2, p. 442.
[790] *MZNP 1949-1976*, vol. 4, pp. 211-12.
[791] *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 322.
[792] "Nehru-Chou Talks VI," 24 April 1960, *SWJN*2, vol. 60, p. 148.

the spring of 1954, Nehru felt that the two sides had settled the border issue and started to move troops to the Sino-Indian border, in early 1961 he was convinced that the report of the officials' talks had established an irrefutable Indian case. Nehru and his officials expected Beijing to surrender to reason, which resulted in R.K. Nehru's mission to China in July 1961. They did not realize, however, that the report made little impact on Beijing's mindset. In fact, by the end of 1961, the Chinese side had already lost interest in settling the border issue as long as Nehru was still in office. This Chinese patience or indifference was certainly consistent with the guideline that Zhou set for his meeting with Nehru in 1960: "we would not be bothered by [any further] delay."[793] Finally, Nehru was compelled to upgrade India's efforts on the border dispute by adopting the "Forward Policy" in December 1961.

The 1962 war was the culmination of the Sino-Indian border dispute, in which the two countries seemed to interact from parallel universes. When imitating Beijing by establishing military outposts along the line formed by connecting the existing Chinese outposts, Nehru always assumed that China would not risk war in response. He expected that "[beyond] shouting at each other, not much would happen" in the Himalayas.[794] Indeed, the "Forward Policy" itself was meant to check, rather than expel, the Chinese presence. Meanwhile, in 1962, China's foreign policy was on "the eve of the left turn."[795] As always, Mao's China misconstrued Nehru's intent and, in October, arrived at the conclusion that India was plotting a major assault on China in order to alter the border status. Beijing decided to meet it with a pre-emptive strike, which, from the CCP's perspective, was punitive in nature. Ironically, this war was ended by yet another Chinese misperception that India threw in the towel around mid-November. Regarding the meaning behind this Chinese attack, Nehru was convinced of the existence of a "larger design" of China in "humiliating" India, pressuring the Soviet Union, and intimidating non-aligned countries to shape the world according to China's ideology.[796] Beijing only intended to maintain the status quo, however, although this was measured by China's standards.

In the vicissitudes of the Sino-Indian relationship from 1945 to 1964, the Tibetans posed a live and unpredictable challenge. Neither Delhi nor Beijing was in full control of Lhasa, which demonstrated considerable agency at almost every critical moment. In July 1949, to Nehru's surprise, the Kashag government of Tibet suddenly expelled all Chinese diplomats in

[793] For "Draft Plan of the Sino-Indian Prime Ministerial Meeting on the Border Question," see *ZENP 1949-1976*, vol. 2, p. 302.
[794] Lorenz Luthi, "India's Relations with China, 1945-74," in *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives*, ed. Amit Das Gupta and Lorenz M. Luthi (New Delh: Routledge India, 2017), p. 34.
[795] Niu, "1962: Zhongguo."
[796] Letter dated 22 December 1962, *LCM*, p. 553.

Tibet in the name of removing potential communist elements. This came only two months after Stalin warned Mao that the imperialists would not idly watch the CCP advance into Tibet. In November 1951, when the CCP's troops entered Lhasa and the regime started to form its first impressions about the McMahon Line, the Director of the Tibet Foreign Bureau told the Chinese that India had only recently captured Tawang and moved its administration up to the line. This conversation not only reinforced the CCP's understanding that the Simla Convention was illegal, but also forged the belief that the Indian government was opportunistic in nature. It is particularly interesting to compare the Tibetans' position on the McMahon Line when they could still bear Beijing's rule to their position when they could not. "If India recognizes Tibet as an integral part of China, it should abrogate the [Simla Convention of 1914]."[797] This was the kind of pressure Tibetan elites placed on the CCP toward the end of 1953. Things changed completely when those elites fell out with Beijing after the spring of 1959. In September, the Dalai Lama, who, to the embarrassment of Nehru's government, had made numerous speeches after taking refuge in India, called upon Indian society to support Tibet's cause. "If you deny sovereignty status to Tibet, you deny the validity of the Simla Convention and, therefore, you deny the validity of the McMahon Line."[798] Thanks to the Tibetans, the Tibet Question, which at first had principally concerned Tibet and China, evolved in 1959 into a deadlock between India and China: the Sino-Indian border dispute.

The Tibet Question — not the Tibetans but the question itself — stood as a stubborn structural problem between China and India. An examination of the interactions between China and India from 1950 to 1964 shows that the source of conflict was China's evaluation of India's activities in and toward Tibet. From India's perspective, the interactions between the Indians and Tibetans were a legitimate expression of Tibet's *autonomy* from China. This view was supported by the concept of "Tibet Region of China," which Beijing officially approved first in 1951 and then in 1954. From Communist China's standpoint, however, these dealings were undermining China's efforts to establish *sovereignty* in Tibet. The "Tibet Region of China" meant that the communist regime should have the ultimate say on everything that happened between India and Tibet. Nehru's acceptance in 1957 of the Dalai Lama's invitation to visit Tibet — which the Dalai Lama extended without first consulting Beijing — was naturally viewed by the CCP as revealing India's lingering "ulterior motive."

[797] "Regarding Various Questions of the Sino-Indian Relationship about Tibet," 21 October 1953, *CFMA*, 105-00032-23, pp. 76-82.
[798] "Speech Delivered by Dalai Lama on the 7 September 1959 under the Auspice of the Indian Council of World Affairs," *CFMA*, 105-00406-01, pp. 52-59.

However, the fact that the Tibet Question was an unsurpassable issue was not just because India and China had different interpretations of the concept of the "Tibet Region of China" in the 1950s and 1960s. It was also because each country had a fundamentally different framework of looking at the world. The CCP's schematic worldview still had no capacity to understand or accommodate multiple polities existing simultaneously within its boundaries. Therefore, concepts like "suzerainty" or "autonomy" were nothing but disguised foreign attempts to dismantle China. Note that Mao, the leader of the CCP, had never left China until 1949. In other words, he had little firsthand experience in the outside world. In contrast, the Republic of India itself was a union of various states. Its political system — parliamentary democracy — afforded its people and government the reference point to appreciate the complexity of international, as well as domestic, politics. Therefore, the Indians had far less trouble understanding indirect rule than the Chinese communists, who ultimately aimed to build direct rule across China, including Tibet. The Indians felt that they could respect Tibetan autonomy and Chinese sovereignty simultaneously by supporting the "independence of Tibet subject to the suzerainty of China." This was something inconceivable for the Chinese.

The ultimate challenge posed by the Tibet Question was to identify the historical relationship between Tibet and China, especially before 1911. The fact that no Chinese government since 1911 had recognized Tibet's independence did not factor into the CCP's decision to march troops into Tibet. In 1950, Mao even entertained the idea of incorporating Outer Mongolia, which had already received the Republic of China's official recognition in 1946 into the so-called "New China." He finally dropped the idea only because Comrade Stalin disapproved of this design. Communist China's commitment to re-establishing rule in Tibet grew from Mao and his colleagues' understanding of the ambiguous relationship between the Lamaist state and the Great Qing, or Qing Empire (1644-1911). They imagined this relationship as one close to what a province has to a country. This, however, was not how the Indians or even the British really perceived the relationship as being. In the late 19th Century, the Tibetans even dared to defy the relevant clauses in the Chefoo Convention, which was concluded between Britain and the Qing in 1876 and granted the British the right to travel between India and China through Tibet. This resulted in the Sikkim Expedition in 1888. It took yet another expedition, which was led by Younghusband in 1903, and a treaty signed directly with the Lamaist state, also known as the Treaty of Lhasa, for the British finally to be present in Tibet without harassment from the Tibetans. In light of these facts, historically Tibet was certainly not a province or quasi-province of China, as the CCP liked

to believe. History teems with evidence, however, with which people can build arguments toward different ends. Whether Tibet was historically independent from China or part of it also formed the basis of the judgement of ordinary people, and a country's national sentiment, which is an accumulation of these judgements. In short, the core of the Tibet Question was a question that had no single satisfactory answer.

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SMA – Shanghai Municipal Archives, Shanghai, China

NAI – National Archives of India, New Delhi, India

NMML – Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, India

AH – Academia Historica, Taipei, Taiwan

NADM – National Archives Department of Myanmar, Yangon, Myanmar

LAC – Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada

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