

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru
Series 2

References on Tibet

Volume 26

Trade and Frontier with China¹

Page 481

I have read the fuller report of Dr K. Gopalachari² on the Sino-Indian Conference held in Peking.³ This report is a good one and gives a detailed account of the background as well as of the negotiations.

2- Since this Agreement was concluded, an important event has taken place affecting the relations of India and China. This is the visit of Mr Chou En-lai to Delhi, the talks he had with us and the joint statement issued at the end of those talks.⁴ This visit and the joint statement undoubtedly mark an important step forward in our relations with China.

3- I have previously written on several occasions about our general approach to China and Tibet. I need not say anything more about it here. I agree with the approach Indicated in Joint Secretary's note.

4- The Agreement between India and China over Tibet marks a new starting point for our relations with China and Tibet.⁵ The previous agreements have

¹ Note to the Secretary General and the Foreign Secretary. 1 July 1954, JN Collection.

² Adviser to N. Raghavan, the Ambassador who led the Indian Delegation at the Conference.

³ The reference is to the negotiations between the officials at Beijing between 31 December 1953 and 29 April 1954 when the Agreement on Tibet was signed by India and China.

⁴ For text of the joint statement Issued after talks between Nehru and Chou En-lai in New Delhi on 28 June 1954, see ante pp.410-412.

⁵ When the issue of selling rice to China came up, Nehru wrote a note to the Foreign

only a certain historical importance now. In any future consideration of this matter, the basis will be our Agreement of 1954.

5 - We must work this Agreement with the full Intention of giving effect to it. That is to say, we must work it in a friendly way, friendly to China and Tibet. This means that all our Officers, Trade Agents etc. who have to deal with matters concerning Tibet, must understand our basic policy and must realise that they have to function in accordance with not only this Agreement but in keeping with that basic policy of ours vis-à-vis China. Our Consul-General in Lhasa as well as our Trade Agent and officers at check-posts should be made to appreciate this fully. I agree that Trade Agents etc. should be carefully chosen. But I doubt if it is necessary to have a special cadre of officers for the border region. This may be examined. While there is a certain advantage in having special cadres for specialised posts, there is also the disadvantage of having too many such special cadres. Specialisation is good, but. there is always the danger of the specialists losing sight of the larger picture.

6- In future, we should give up references, except in some historical context, to the McMahon Line or to any other frontier line by date or otherwise. We should simply refer to our frontier. Indeed, the use of the name McMahon is unfortunate and takes us back to the British days of expansion.

7- All our old maps dealing with this frontier should be carefully examined and, where necessary, withdrawn. New maps should be printed showing our Northern and North Eastern frontier without any reference to any "line". These new maps should also not state there is any undemarcated territory. The new maps should be sent to our Embassies abroad and should be introduced to the public generally and be used in our schools, colleges etc.

8- Both as flowing from our policy and as a consequence of our Agreement

Secretary (not printed.) on 25 July 1954: 'I am clearly of opinion that we should agree to sell rice to China almost in any quantity. We have got large stocks... If the Chinese want to send rice to Tibet we should not object to it... Our selling rice to China... will indicate our healthy food position and that of China in this respect.'

with China, this frontier should be considered a firm and definite one which is not open to discussion with anybody. There may be very minor points of discussion. Even these should not be raised by us. It is necessary that the system of check-posts should be spread along this entire frontier. More especially, we should have check-posts in such places as might be considered disputed areas.

9- Our frontier has been finalised not only by implication in this Agreement but the specific passes mentioned are direct recognitions of our frontier there. Check-posts are necessary not only to control traffic, prevent unauthorised infiltration but as symbols of India's frontier. As Demchok is considered by the Chinese as a disputed territory, we should locate a check-post there. So also at Tsang Chokla.

10- In particular, we should have proper check-posts along the UP-Tibet border and on the passes etc. leading to Joshi Math, Badrinath etc.

11- The Joint Secretary in his note has mentioned the possibility of out increasing the strength of our garrisons at some of our border towns such Gangkok, Leh, Simla, Almora etc. I do not think this is necessary from the point of view of guarding this North Eastern frontier. In Leh, we have adequate forces. Round about Simla in the Punjab, we have also quite adequate forces But, apart from this, I do not consider it at all necessary to keep large contingent of our forces near this border area. Apart from check-posts, -we should have some kind of border militia. I like the idea that this Border Militia should be raised locally and used for the construction of roads etc. This will not only give a sensation of security to the people there but add to their self-respect. These people in the Border Militia would be the leaders in their villages and they could help greatly in organising construction work with voluntary labour etc. It is not necessary for this Border Militia to have a high standard of professional efficiency such as our border Scouts or the Assam Rifles have. It seems to me important that one

of their principal duties should be that of construction, cottage industries and the like. This would be an innovation for us but it is a right and natural development. The Defence Ministry should be requested to examine this matter.

12- I think that we should definitely encourage trade with Tibet. There has been some hesitation on our part to do so and some items have been practically banned. I do not see why we should ban any item except arms and ammunition, or anything in which we are in short supply. Tibet is a natural market for India. It is not a big market from the point of view of quantity. We should retain this market and supply them with various quantities of manufactured goods that they require. We must not think that by doing this we are strengthening China's control over Tibet. The small trade that will take place in this way will make little difference to the political or the military aspect. From the economic and psychological points of view, it will be advantageous to us.

13- We have stated previously that we cannot allow much trade on the ground of transport difficulties. That seems to me a wrong way to put it. We should allow as much trade as possible. If transport difficulties come in the way, they will limit the trade. It is not for us to plead transport difficulties and refuse permission for trade. Therefore, we should agree to free and unrestricted transit of goods to Tibet through India subject only to our own demand and supply position. Naturally the quantity sent to Tibet will be limited by transport difficulties.

14- As a matter of fact, the demand in Tibet for some articles is so great that these are smuggled across the Nepal-Tibet frontier, and they fetch fantastic prices in Tibet. Articles like bicycles, radios, textiles and any number of other things could easily be sent to Tibet through our normal channels.

15- There has been a certain reluctance in sending petrol across. The

apprehension was that this would be used by the Chinese Army. We have sent small quantities of petrol. I think we should be prepared to increase these quantities. In any event, the total quantity sent is not likely to be much. The petrol that is smuggled through Nepal to Tibet sells there, I am told, at Rs 50 a gallon! Oil lubricants can also be sent. In fact, we should develop a normal and healthy trade with Tibet. This will be advantageous also to our border people

16- As I have said above, we need not raise the question of our frontier. But if we find that the Chinese maps continue to indicate that part of our territory is on their side, then we shall have to point this out to the Chinese Government. We need not do this immediately, but we should not put up with this for long and the matter will have to be taken up.

17- As this note deals with defence as well as trade matters, I am sending copies of it to the Ministries of Defence and Commerce and Industry.

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Series 2,

Volume 52

September 1-30, 1959

Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China

New Delhi; the 26th September, 1959

10. So Ladakh, Tibet and China had all accepted that the frontier between Ladakh and Tibet was the customary boundary. You have stated that the boundary as shown in the Chinese maps follows more or less, that shown in the map of "Punjab, Western Himalaya and adjoining parts of Tibet" compiled by Walker and attached to Cunningham's book published in 1854. Walker's Map states in the Compilation Index that the document used for this sector is the "Map of Ladakh and Nari Khorsum by Capt. H. Strachey". Now Strachey toured only a part of Ladakh in 1847-48. He knew little nothing about Aksai Chin, having never visited the area, and drew the boundary where he thought the main water-parting; which was the natural and old established frontier in this area, lay. Thereafter a number of exploration and survey parties were sent by the Government of India to this region. These parties ascertained the customary frontier on the basis of natural features and such local evidence as was available. Johnson visited the area in 1865 and Frederick Drew, an Englishman in the employ of the Maharaja of Kashmir as Governor of Ladakh, in 1869. Other survey parties in the nineteenth century were those of Hayward, Shaw and Cayley in 1868, Carey in 1885-87, Hamilton Bower in 1891, Littledale in 1895, Welby and Malcolm in 1896, Deasy and Pike in 1896, and Aurel Stein in 1900. Accurate maps of the whole Ladakh area thus became possible only from 1865, after the afore-mentioned surveys had ascertained the exact lie of the watershed; and it is significant that most of the maps since that date show the customary boundary in accordance with the line shown by us in our map rather than that claimed by China. The later Map of Turkiestan of Walker himself published in 1867-68, Drew's map attached to this book *Jammoo & Kashmir Territories* (1875), Johnston's Atlas (1882), and maps attached to the *Gazetteers of Kashmir* published from 1890 onwards all showed boundary lines more or less similar to our present frontier. Even official Chinese maps of the late nineteenth century showed a

boundary approximating to our line. It is only in official Chinese maps of the twentieth century that the Chinese Government included large parts of our territory. On the other hand, *The New Atlas and Commercial Gazetteer of China*, published in Shanghai sometime after 1917 by the *North China Daily News* and *Herald* on the basis of authoritative surveys, shows a boundary in the north-west similar to our alignment and a boundary in the north-east which approximates to what later became known as the McMahon Line. I may add that the Chinese maps do not follow even Walker's Map of 1854 where it does not support the assertion made on behalf of China. Thus Walker shows the areas north of Demchok and north of Pangong in India but recent Chinese maps have not followed Walker's map in regard to these areas.

24. Nehru-Chou Talks V⁶

V

(April 23-4.30 p.m. to 7.45 p.m.)

Prime Minister: Yesterday afternoon some officials from both sides met but I am afraid the result did not go as far as I had hoped, because I understand the Chinese officials only listened. They said they had come to listen and not to see anything. I had thought that the purpose of such a meeting was that we may discuss and note down points of agreement and disagreement and those on which there was doubt so that the area of discussion might be limited.

No doubt your officers must have reported to you that, although our officials precisely stated our viewpoint on the western sector of the border along with latitudes and longitudes, this was not done by the Chinese side. Your officers said that they would only listen and would not say anything.

I had said that, having discussed the question in the broader aspects, we should try to come to grips with it now, and this involved a clear statement on our part of what we think the right border to be and an equally clear statement of what the Chinese Government thinks on the question. Then we would be in a position to know definitely where our differences lie. My idea was that we should take each sector of the border and convince the other side of what it believes to be right.

I do not know how I should proceed now. Should I take up the question in details or perhaps you would like to say something?

Premier Chou: I would like to listen to what you have to say.

Prime Minister: We can take up the question more precisely. According to

⁶ Source: see fn 18 in this section "Chou En-lai's Visit."

us, the boundary between Sinkiang and Ladakh is traditional and customary and has been well recognised for over a thousand years. It passes from the Karakoram Pass along the watershed between Shyok river system and Yarkand (Tarim system) and it goes on to a point north-east of Haji Langar where it crosses the Qara Qash river and then goes along the crest of the Kuenlun mountain, which forms the watershed between the Yurungkash and the streams flowing south into the lakes in the Aksai Chin area upto a point about 80° east. Then it runs down southwards to Lanakla along the watershed between the streams flowing into the lakes in Tibet and those flowing into the lakes in Ladakh. Then it goes along the watershed between Chanchenmo and Chumesang in Ladakh and the streams flowing into the Dyap Iso lake in Tibet. After this, the boundary lies along the south bank of Chumesang and eastern bank of Changlung lungpa. It then skirts the western extremity of the eastern half of Pan gong lake and goes along the watershed of streams flowing into the western Pangong lake and other streams flowing eastward. It then cuts across eastern Spanggur Tso and follows the northern and eastern watershed of the Indus upto Jarala. It crosses the Indus about five miles south-east of Demchok which lies along the watershed between Koyullungpa and Hanle rivers and streams flowing into Sutlej river. It then crosses Parechu about five miles south of Chumar and reaches Gya Peak. This is the physical description of the western boundary as we believe it and as is shown in our maps.

Meeting of Officials⁷

[22 April 1960 - 4 p.m. to 5.50 p.m.]

Top Secret

⁷ Conference Room, MEA, 22 April 1960, 4 p.m. P.N. Haksar Papers, NMML.

Proceedings of the meeting between the Indian and Chinese officials held on 22nd April, 1960, at 4,00 p.m., in the Conference Room of the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi.

Present:

India

1. Shri J.S. Mehta, Director, Northern Division, Ministry of External Affairs
2. Dr. S. Gopal, Director, Historical Division, Ministry of External Affairs
3. Colonel R.S. Kalha, Director, Survey of India
4. Shri K. Gopalachari, Officer on Special Duty, Ministry of External Affairs
5. Shri S.K. Bhutani, Officer on Special Duty, Ministry of External Affairs
6. Shri G.N. Rao, Historical Division, Ministry of External Affairs

China

1. Mr. Chang Wen-Chin, Director of the First Asian Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of China
2. Mr. Chien Chia Tung
3. Mr. Liao Teh- Yen

Shri Mehta: The Foreign Secretary has already welcomed you and discussed with you the lines on which we will proceed here. This evening it has been agreed that we will go over the facts relating to the dispute in Ladakh i.e. the western sector. In one sentence, our case is that the disputed area in Ladakh—the area shown in our maps—has always been part of India. It has been shown on our maps for some time and the local authorities of Jammu and Kashmir have exercised jurisdiction over it. I won't go into further details but I would request my colleague Dr. Gopal to restate briefly but still in much greater detail than what has been stated in the correspondence already exchanged with regard to our position in the western sector.

Dr. Gopal: The boundary of Ladakh with Sinkiang and Tibet, like the rest of the northern boundary of India, is a natural, traditional and customary boundary which has been well recognised for centuries by both sides. From the Karakoram Pass the boundary lies along the watershed between the Shyok and the Yarkand and along the crest of the Kuen Lun mountains upto a point east of 80° E. Thereafter it runs south along the watershed, along the southern bank of the Chumesang and the eastern bank of the Changlung Lungpa, skirts the western extremity of the eastern half of Pangong Lake, lies along the watershed between the streams flowing into the western Pangong Lake and other streams flowing eastwards, cuts across eastern Spanggur Tso and follows the watershed of the Indus upto Jara La. Crossing the Indus about five miles south-east of Demchok, the boundary lies along a spur of the Ladakh Range which in this region is the watershed between the Indus and the Sutlej.

Nehru-Chou Talks V⁸

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Ministry of External Affairs

[Note from Subimal Dutt]

I submit a short note in the hope that it will prove of some use in tomorrow a debate in the Lok Sabha.

2. Appendix I gives some factual data relating to the Sino-Indian boundary. It will be seen that if our proposals for interim agreement are accepted by the Chinese, we shall have to withdraw from about 100 square miles in the Demchok area in south-east Ladakh with a population of about 40 or 50 people. There are only 11 huts there. The Chinese, on the other hand, will have to withdraw from 3600 square miles in north-east Ladakh, including Aksai Chin.

They will also have to withdraw from Longju.

3. Shri Nathpai complained at the meeting of the Consultative Committee the other day that in some of our earlier notes instead of charging the Chinese with having committed aggression on our territory when the Chinese armed personnel crossed the international border, we merely said that they had violated the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954 and that they had come in our territory without any travel documents. A charge of aggression is a serious matter. We proceeded on the assumption that the Chinese crossed into our territory through inadvertence and not deliberately with aggressive intent.

4. It may be asked why we had not settled the boundary definitely with the Chinese at the time of negotiations in 1953-54. Prime Minister knows the answer. We assumed that our boundary was well-known and shown in our official maps and there was no reason why we should have raised a dispute ourselves. We were not ignorant of past disputes, but on balance we thought that the matter should rest with the Chinese to raise. Prime Minister knows

about the discussions in Peking about the frontier passes (paragraph 11 of Prime Minister's letter of September 26, p.37 of White Paper No.2).

5. Complaint is made that even as an interim measure we should not have agreed to an arrangement which would place us and the Chinese on an equal footing in relation to the area in Ladakh which the Chinese claim and which, according to us, is our territory. It is for Prime Minister to decide how much to say in reply to this on the present occasion.

The points to emphasise, I feel, are:

(i) We have no personnel in that area now and we are not withdrawing any personnel from an area which is in our territory.

(ii) We are not surrendering this territory and the proposed arrangement would mean that such Chinese personnel as are in wrongful occupation of our territory would have to withdraw from that area.

I would respectfully submit for PM's consideration that he should not deal in detail with conditions in that area which make it difficult for us to exercise occupation, for, after all, the Chinese have been occupying the area and have built roads there.

6. In regard to Aksai Chin, I am placing below a note from Dr. Gopalachari on our right to this area. Aksai Chin has been shown as part of India not only in our maps, but also in Chinese maps (Paragraphs 6-10 in Prime Minister's letter of September 26, pages 35-36 of White Paper No. 2) and paragraphs 7-8 of our note of November 4, pages 21-22 of the White Paper No. 2).

7. PM might emphasize the harsh and unreasonable treatment to which persons of Kashmiri and Ladakhi origin are being subjected to in Tibet. Our note on the subject is dated September 24 (pages 82-92 of white Paper No.2), the Chinese treatment of our nationals is in contrast to what they asked the Indonesians to agree to in respect of persons of Chinese origin in Indonesia and to which the Indonesian Government agreed. An extract from

the relevant agreement between the People's Republic of China and Indonesia is also placed below.

8. Our representatives in Tibet continue to be subjected to harsh treatment in violation of the 1954 Agreement. Reference might also be made to the propaganda by the official Chinese agencies and the organizations sympathetic to the Chinese cause in India. In regard to this, PM is aware of the steps that we have recently taken to control Chinese propaganda in the Kalimpong area. I also place below a letter which I have written to the Chief Minister of West Bengal on the position of the Chinese nationals in India. There is bound to be a demand in the Parliament about the tightening up of measures against the Chinese residents.

9. It is quite obvious that the authorities in China are keeping their people ignorant of the intensity of feelings in India on the Sino-Indian issue. In fact, in the rigorously controlled press in China the Chinese Government are permitting reproduction of newspaper articles and other comments from India which give an entirely misleading impression to the Chinese people. For example, they have quoted statements by Shri Sunder Lal and General Sokhey that it was a good idea to set up demilitarized zones on the border area. (I have been unable to check up the source of this report. This has been referred to in a telegram we have received from our Ambassador on November 18). The Chinese are angry that our newspapers are publishing anti-Chinese statements and they feel that if the Government of India so desired we could stop this propaganda. Either they do not understand or they deliberately refuse to understand the difference in the constitutional procedures in the two countries.

10. The Chinese propaganda attributes the criticisms in the Indian papers and reactions in India generally to American influence. This is yet another instance of self-delusion and its implication is not flattering to us in India. In fact, the US press has been very discreet in dealing with matters relating to

China and Tibet; so has been the press in the United Kingdom and other western countries. One can only attribute this moderation to their anxiety not to create further complications for the Government of India.

11. PM has seen the latest note of protest which we have given to the Chinese today on their treatment of the Indian prisoners taken in the Chang Chenmo Valley on October 21.

(S. Dutt)

24.11.59.

P.M.