Essays in Frontier History
India, China, and the Disputed Border

Parshotam Mehra

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To
the memory of
Professor Owen Lattimore
July 1900–May 1989

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On the face of it, this thin volume, a compendium of some longish research articles spanning almost half a century, should incur a bare minimum of obligations. In actual fact, as the following lines indicate, the number of people who lent a hand in making it possible is large, if not truly impressive. To start with, a host of scholars from far and near have, over the years, sought offprints of one piece or another strongly indicative of the relevance of most of the topics discussed. It should follow that the volume owes its birth to these friends far too numerous, one is afraid, to list.

A major exercise was the compilation of the Bibliographical Survey. Here my principal quarry was the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library where an old friend and colleague, S.K. Sharma, was no small help. As were a number of his friends whose knowledge of the Library and its resources is truly amazing. Nearer home in Chandigarh, the staff of the Panjab University Library, one and all, under the stewardship of the indefatigable A.K. Anand gave unstinted support. Old and new friends and colleagues known over the years, G.S. Thakur, Vinod Grover, Neeru Bhatia, Rupak Chakravarty went out of the way to dig up some useful references. And track books which have an amazing tendency to disappear from their place on the stacks.

My good friend Alex McKay lately of the SOAS in London was helpful in more ways than one, especially in tracking individuals and publishers for permission to use their material. So also Carole MacGranahan of Boulder (Colorado) in helping with photocopies of not-so-easy-to-find books and journals. It is pleasant to place

on record my deep debt to gratitude to both of them, as well as to the staff at Gulshan Graphics who did the bulk of the work on the computer.

What I owe my publishers is not easy to register. And since naming names may be invidious, one may barely note that both the editorial outfit as well as the production team was singularly cooperative.

My debt to my wife is hard to quantify; harder still to re-pay. At considerable sacrifice, she enabled me to sit at the desk and indulge some academic pursuits.

A word on Professor Owen Lattimore to whose memory this volume is dedicated may be in order. Author, educator, and a renowned Mongolist, Professor Lattimore was by far the most outstanding American scholar of Central Asia in his time; his theory, that humanity affects the environment and is changed by it, still has a great deal of relevance in today's world. I had the privilege to be one of his students.

Two of my good academic friends have drawn my attention to some recent research of considerable relevance to the overall theme of these essays. This came a little too late for incorporation in the text and is being only very briefly touched upon in the following few lines.

Professor Tom Grunfeld of New York University in the US has referred me to an article in the *China Quarterly*[1] where its author, Professor Lin Hsiao-ting of Stanford University, suggests that neither Chiang Kai-shek nor yet his wartime regime in Chongqing were 'capable of launching a punitive war' against Tibet nor yet determined to do so. That in the final count they viewed the 'politically capricious' Tibet as a buffer zone against political threats coming from the 'militarily vulnerable' Indian subcontinent and South-East Asia, and regarded the Xikang-Tibetan and Qinghai-Tibetan borderlands as the last line of defence for south-west China.

Dr Julie Marshall of Melbourne University in Australia has focused me on an exciting piece by Professor Hsiao-ting Lin of California University who in the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*[2] maintains that Nanking officials communicated with the British or the Indian embassy insisting upon China's 'imagined sovereignty' in the Zayul (later Nefa) region. 'Interestingly yet

somewhat ironically', he concludes, the outlook and the strategically oriented intent of the Kuomintang to realize its control on the Indo-Tibetan frontier were not unlike its British Indian counterpart. For the 'ironic yet undeniable fact' was that for most of the time prior to 1947 'neither Republican China nor British India exercised effective authority' over the frontier lands that were fought over in the 1962 war.

NOTES

1. Lin Hsiao-ting, 'War or Stratagem? Reassessing China's Military Advance Towards Tibet, 1942–43', *China Quarterly*, Cambridge University Press, 186, June 2006, pp. 446–62.
2. Hsiao-ting Lin, 'Boundary, Sovereignty and Imagination: Reconsidering the Frontier Disputes between British India and Republican China, 1914–47', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 32, 3, September 2004, pp. 25–47.

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Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar for 'India's Imperial Legacy and China's Frontier Gains: The Western Sector—A Case Study', in Surendra Chopra (ed.), *Sino-Indian Relations*, 1985, pp. 1–30.

Abbreviations

FD	Foreign Department
FO	Foreign Office
FD SC	Foreign Department Secret Consultations
FD SP	Foreign Department Secret Proceedings
HMG	His (Her) Majesty's Government
IO	India Office
IOLR	India Office Library (and) Records (now British Library)
JRCAS	Journal (of) Royal Central Asian Society (now *Asian Affairs*), Journal of Royal Asian Society
NEFA	North East Frontier Agency (now Arunachal Pradesh)
P & S	Political & Secret
Secret F	Secret Frontier
UP	United Provinces (of Agra and Oudh, under the Raj; now Uttar Pradesh)

INTRODUCTION

My formal initiation into 'frontier studies' started with my enrolment as a graduate student at the Johns Hopkins University way back in 1952. Here, under the stewardship of Professor Owen Lattimore, its first Director, the Walther Heines Page School of International Relations made a powerful impact on the study of China's Inner Asian frontiers with special reference to Mongolia and Sinkiang. The School had been able to attract considerable talent, both in linguistics as well as academic field research and between 1946–50, published some very interesting studies. For its work on Mongolia, the School brought together, under the same roof, a group of Mongolian students from several regions both of Inner as well as Outer Mongolia, representing a number of linguistic and social variations, and of different degrees of Chinese and other cultural influences. As these frontier regions between China and the Soviet Union were only partially and intermittently open to Western scholarship, work in history and other subjects, having a bearing on frontier studies, was only of a peripheral nature. The programme, which lasted barely five years resulted in the preparation of about a dozen books and a number of articles in learned journals by Professor Lattimore's associates and students.[1]

Sadly for my enrolment at Hopkins, and a great ambition to work with Professor Lattimore, both he and the University were in serious trouble with Senator Joe McCarthy. In the early fifties, it may be recalled, the junior senator from Wisconsin had mounted no end of witch hunts of a number of outstanding people—especially academics who, he believed, had pronounced leftist leanings and were, inter alia, responsible for the 'loss' of China to Mao and his men.

Like all witch hunts, this one too blighted any number of careers,[2] and for long was to administer a rude shock and irreparable damage to all independent work in the universities. Was it any wonder then that the School too was wound up before long, and Professor Lattimore himself, in no small trouble. Happily, even though he was to proceed on leave, he continued to be available for informal contacts and guidance of research. Later he was to supervise my doctoral work on the Younghusband expedition to Lhasa (1903–4).[3]

The subject I had chosen was to remain a long-time fixation. This was the expedition the British mounted on Tibet to frustrate, as it were, the Tsarist government's allegedly evil designs on the land of the lama. My own interest in the field had been aroused much earlier. For long before the first paper in this collection appeared, I had written a short piece at the popular level drawing attention to the Chinese 'liberation' of Tibet and the threat it posed—and not only to the Dalai Lama's domain.[4]

Later in the 1960s, especially in the wake of the Chinese onslaught on India's land frontiers, there was a great deal of interest in all that related to the dispute, especially in the east—delineated by the Red or the McMahon Line on the 1914 Simla Convention maps. Apart from an exhaustive scrutiny of archival sources at the National Archives of India in New Delhi, as well as the Public Record Office, and the then India Office Library and Records collection in London, I availed of an opportunity that came my way to have a good hard look at the lie of the land all along the frontier. And all the way from Tawang in the Kameng division in the west, to Walong in the Lohit division in the east, in what was known in those days as NEFA (North East Frontier Agency), now christened Arunachal Pradesh. Travel is an excellent corrective to book-bred ideas if the traveller never tires of studying the landscape with reference to the way the people who live there make their living—and if he likes rambling—even endless talk with the people among whom he is travelling. The chapters on the 'Forgotten Frontier' as well as the one on 'Lu Hsing-chi and the Simla Conference' were born out of this phase. So also the short piece on Tawang which, sadly, continues to remain in the limbo—no more than a bare synopsis and an outline.

In the 1980s, my interest and fascination for the western frontier grew—especially in the wake of a visit to Ladakh and its unique and

in many ways, out-of-the-ordinary landscape, singularly barren and bleak, and treeless. Among others, the 1960 newspaper articles[5] had whetted my interest further, and were to find concrete shape in the research paper on India's 'imperial legacy' as well as a slender volume on Ladakh that was to appear later.[6]

In one of Huxley's essays, his protagonist underscores some elements in his growing up which, this writer believes fit in well with his own upbringing in the early 1930s as to merit citation:

> At that time, I was a voracious and omnivorous reader; a dreamer and spectator of the first water, well-endowed with that splendid courage in attacking any and every subject, which is the blessed compensation of youth and inexperience... my reading stamped upon me the conviction that on even the most solemn and important questions men are apt to take cunning phrases for answers... Philosophy and history having laid hold of me, have never loosened their grip... I have found it possible to cover a good deal of ground... and all the more easily that I have never cared much about A's or B's opinions, but have rather sought to know what answers he had to give to the questions that I had put to him... the ordinary examiner with his 'state the views of so and so' would have floored me at any time. If he had said, what do *you* think of any problem, I might have gone on fairly well.[7]

Toynbee's *A Study of History* gave me a vision of history as the story of great cultural groups and civilizations, rather than of nationalities. His principal thesis that the well-being of a civilization depends upon its ability to respond successfully to challenges, both human and environmental, made a lot of sense. Of twenty-six civilizations in *History*, he saw only Western Latin Christendom as still thriving. Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* and its youth-maturity-senescence 'morphology' of culture, made a deep impact. His influence though is strong while it lasts, yet over a period of time is evanescent. As a young student in college, I was fascinated by George Macaulay Trevelyan's *A History of England* and, much later, his *Social History*. Many a year elapsed before D.D. Kusambi was to prove another great inspiration. Soon, one is past the age of youthful, if apocalyptic conversion to any doctrine. This does not mean by any chance that the writer or the author has arrived on a senescent or terminal period of revolution and rumination. It would be a great pity if he did. For in actual fact he is not unlike Tennyson's Ulysses with the clear objective 'to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield'.

II

Some facets of Chinese civilization and its cultural moorings may help put their interaction with India, and Tibet, into sharper focus. At the outset, it is necessary to underline the fact that as the Chinese view it, theirs is not just another nation state in the larger family of nations, rather they are a civilization pretending to be a state. The fact that the Chinese state was founded as one of the world's great civilizations has given an inordinate strength and durability to its political culture. Again, the overpowering obligation felt by Chinese rulers to preserve the unity of their civilization meant that there could be no compromise in Chinese cultural attitudes about power and authority. As for the recent triumph of Marxism–Leninism and the emergence of the People's Republic of China (1949), it is necessary to recall that Mao's revolution met the demands both of the cultural iconoclasts as well as the political nationalists. Inasmuch as it was Western to the core, the former were more than satisfied and insofar as it had a strong anti-imperialist orientation, the political nationalists had little to complain. Again, the rise of Mao as the trinity of political leader, ideological teacher, and moral example was in the mode of the traditional Chinese polity with the Son of Heaven ruling/presiding over his vast domain.

With no less than fourteen countries along its 22,000 km-long land border, China's basic need, it should be obvious, is a secure and stable environment, so as to safeguard its political and economic development. No country, least of all China, can afford to have tension on its borders if it wants to develop economically. Was it any wonder then, that in the 1990s, China went around in a determined bid to sort out border disputes with its neighbours and—barring a few including India and Vietnam—has largely succeeded in doing so. In the event, Beijing is now concentrating almost exclusively on its economic expansion. And fast building its infrastructure if also lobbying hard for oil and gas pipelines from Russia and Kazakhstan and rail links with Russia, Mongolia, and Burma. Also, it is mounting a serious effort to make the Mekong navigable from Yunnan through Laos to Thailand, and establishing road links between its Yunnan and Guangxi provinces on the one hand, and Vietnam on the other.

Some aspects of the India–China boundary do need emphasis. To start with, it is by no means easy to translate an un-demarcated traditional boundary into map lines. Again, while the Chinese have persisted with their rhetoric of mutually acceptable borders, they have charged New Delhi with being a little too rigid, legalistic, and even unwilling to negotiate. The Raj, it may be recalled had tried hard not only to identify traditional or customary boundaries, but also helped evolve strategic boundaries. In the event, not a few problems remained. To start with, McMahon's thick line drawn on a small-scale map is hard to transpose on the ground. The Chinese, though a little allergic to its all-too-evident imperialist tag, do not mind the principles. And point out that it is hard to stick to natural features or such dicta as the highest crest in very high mountains.

Sadly, different styles are in evidence. Whatever the regime, China has always projected itself as a Great Power while India, after 1962, was consigned to the position of a regional power. Beijing, it is said, viewed its disputes on the border as problems and tackled them successfully; it was always choosy about when and where to settle. India, on the other hand, its detractors stress, turned its problems into disputes. Keen students underline sharp divergences in the two countries' respective styles. The Chinese are said to be taciturn, Indians garrulous; Chinese matter-of-fact, Indians legalistic; Chinese methodical, Indians casual. It was this approach which led Indians to believe that in 1954, China had agreed to go along with their version of the border. Later that year, Zhou Enlai successfully fobbed Nehru off on the issue of maps. Chinese maps, he indicated in effect, were old Guomindang maps that needed to be updated. What he had in mind was that time was 'not (yet) ripe' for the issue to be sorted out. Five years later, time was indeed ripe. Even today, with the hindsight of over forty long years, Beijing refuses to concede that the 1962 war was an error of judgment on its part. The fact is that it miscalculated, took India to be a 'soft state' which it would easily overrun, a position of which it would take the fullest advantage.

Discerning observers point out that while Chinese nationalism was affirmative, assertive and aggressive, its Indian counterpart was relatively pliant, accommodative, and willing to make compromises. The Sino–Indian boundary question, they underline, was not

submitted for negotiation 'because' New Delhi decided in the early 1950s that to do so would not be in the country's best interests. And it held to that policy in spite of diplomatic deadlock and defeat.

III

All through the ages, in sharp contrast to the Chinese, the Indian ballgame was different for there was little or no impulse to create a territorial heartland and then protect it against all attacks from the periphery. Also, the people have, as a whole, lacked a territorial consciousness and its logical corollary, the determination to protect their land; both conspicuous by their absence until the arrival of the British. As Sunil Khilnani, a perceptive Indian scholar, has put it:

> the possibility that India could be united into a single political country was the wager of the modern educated urban elite...on an idea; the idea of India.[8]

The above notwithstanding, there has, over the centuries, persisted a firm belief in India's great power destiny, with the clear conviction that our unbroken civilizational unity rests on a superior ancient culture that underlines the supremacy of moral—not material—values. Also, India's greatness lay in exporting religious ideas, cultural forms, and knowledge, and the deep faith that such influences powerfully affected China as well as South East Asia. All the same, India never consolidated a strong national political identity that could repel the Turko–Afghan Muslim sultanates which ruled Delhi and the Gangetic plains for a little over three hundred years (1206–1526). And when the sultanate itself declined towards the end of the fourteenth century, the Tatar Taimur swept down the Khyber (1398) to rummage through and plunder the Punjab and Delhi. Even the long span of Mughal rule (1526–1707) did little to shake the notion of the superiority of Indian culture; the belief persisted that Mughal culture itself had been integrated into the larger whole of the land over which they held sway.

Later, the Mughal power itself was to meet its nemesis at the hands of the Marathas who slowly but steadily undermined its authority. And yet the chief beneficiary of the breakdown of Mughal authority were *not* the Marathas but the English East India

Company, which over a period of less than half a century (1757–1807) emerged as the paramount power. The British created conditions, not so much by design, for the birth of a centralized state that was independent of traditional Brahamanical legitimacy. While British scholars and orientalists admired India's rich, glorious past, they were contemptuous of contemporary Indian society, its caste superstitions, and raw poverty. In the event, the Raj signalled the unequivocal superiority of Western civilization. Indian languages, Persian, and Sanskrit were downgraded as vernaculars, and yielded ground to the official medium of English. A major outcome of this policy was the evocation of strong nationalist feelings among the educated classes, who dug deep into their rich cultural past to attack British rule as Satanic.

Another corollary of the Raj was a definition of India's territorial boundaries with its (Indian) Empire, by no means hemmed in by the geographic limits of the Himalayas to the north or the Indian Ocean to the south. For it extended far beyond. The protection of this empire was the cornerstone of British policy. The 'inner ring' of the Himalayan kingdoms of Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim—separating Tibet from India—as well as the tribal areas in the north and north-eastern Assam on China's southern border, were part of the Empire. There were also tribal areas in the west bordering Afghanistan and Kashmir which were either to become British protectorates or be integrated with India.

The British defeated the Gurkha kingdom of Nepal (1814–15) and in the aftermath, stationed an envoy, and secured an agreement to recruit the Gurkhas for their army. More than a hundred years later, a treaty (1925) replaced the agreement and recognized Kathmandu's independence. Sikkim was annexed as a protectorate in 1885, and Bhutan in 1910. Both fell securely within the larger whole of the Indian orbit.

Articulate as ever, Nehru had, as early as 1941, asserted that India was 'potentially' a great power, destined to play 'a very great part' in the security problems of Asia and the Indian Ocean. He visualized India as the 'pivot' around which the defence problems of the Middle East, the Indian Ocean, and of South East Asia would revolve, the geo-strategic lynchpin of the British Empire astride the Indian Ocean. In its essence, this was a hark-back to India's historic sphere

of cultural influence in S.E. Asia and sought to project its future role in the modern world.

Not unlike Nehru's India, the Chinese Communist government was also based on nationalist sentiments and strongly against imperial domination. Nehru's worldview visualized that the new states just emerging from colonialism would follow India's example and not join any block. China fitted into this worldview and even though it had entered into an alliance with the USSR (1949), was rated far too big and far too conscious of its separate identity to subordinate its foreign policy to a third country for long. The rift in the Sino-Soviet lute may be dated with the outbreak of the Chinese assault on India's frontiers (October–November 1962) while the near-simultaneous Cuban missile crisis exposed it to full public glare. As the 1970s saw New Delhi inch closer to Moscow, there was a further widening of the existing breach with Beijing. The Deng era (1978–92) brought about a modicum of normalcy and as the Soviet factor disappeared, relations between New Delhi and Beijing were soon on the mend.

In retrospect, the March 1959 Rebellion in Tibet was to mark in effect the end of the road to Sino–Indian friendship. And Nehru's critics were unsparing that he condoned China's occupation of Tibet when he had bound India by treaty not to acknowledge Chinese sovereignty there. Meanwhile, India has not repudiated the April 1954 border agreement with China in the hope that Tibet remains 'an irritant'; should events take a different turn, the 'local problem' of Tibet could be transformed into a 'larger geo-political challenge'. On the other hand, in lending its support to Islamabad, Beijing is indulging in another 'low cost, high payoff' ball-game against New Delhi.

IV

A word on boundaries and frontiers may not be out of place here. To start with, boundaries are the focus of practical concern for politicians, surveyors, administrators, as well as military leaders. It would be difficult for such people to take a detached view; the subjective opinions and desires of interested parties too play an important role. Taking their views into account, the scholar/

academic can afford to make an objective, unbiased assessment which will be of interest and value to people concerned with boundaries in a practical way. The position and character of any boundary/frontier is a result of interaction of many factors, some of which are geographical; once a boundary/frontier is established, it is capable of influencing the landscape, of which it is a part, and the development and policies of the separated states.

The geographical study of boundaries and frontiers is very much concerned with human behaviour in two distinct areas: (a) there is the behaviour of national governments towards each other; such behaviour will determine the evolution of the boundary and frontier, the character of disputes associated with the boundary, and the formulation of regulations to cover intercourse between the two states; and (b) the behaviour of individuals who live in the borderland or near the frontier, their perception of the boundary, and the framework of government regulations.

Frontiers and boundaries form a political continuum through time, since boundaries usually evolve from frontiers; geographers have made many more studies of boundaries than frontiers. Political frontiers separate individual states while settlement frontiers separate the developed and undeveloped areas of a single state. Both the Great Wall of China and the Roman Wall were built to mark the edge of the political frontier. Charlemagne established marches to defend his empire, some of which later emerged as separate states. The term buffer state refers to a state established or allowed to exist by two or more powerful neighbours so that their territorial contact can be avoided. Spheres of interest or influence are territorial arrangements reached by states to reserve freedom of action generally, without responsibility and without competition from other states. Such arrangements were common in Africa or Asia in the nineteenth century; in modern times, they usually refer to the so-called satellite state/states of the major powers.

Stages of international boundary formation may be briefly enumerated here. To start with, allocation of the simple political division of territory gives the first general shape to the states involved. Straight lines concerning known geographical features such as mountains or the sources of rivers or waterfalls or co-ordinates of longitude or latitude are common concerns of such

boundaries. These would usually be refined during the stage of delimitation which involves the selection of a specific boundary site that would require detailed knowledge, not available when the allocation was made.

The final stage of boundary development is called demarcation—which requires that the boundary be marked by any appropriate means including pillars, cleared vistas, and fences. In East Africa, straight boundaries were preferred between Kenya and Tanganyika because both were under British administration.

Internal boundaries evolve in a haphazard manner, and few of them are demarcated. As the international boundary passes through the stages of allocation, delimitation and demarcation, its definition becomes increasingly precise. States invariably seek to create boundaries out of frontiers to satisfy a wide range of aims; the increasing precision of boundary definitions during the last century, reflected the growing geographical knowledge about borderlands. The distribution of people, of different ethnic groups, of mountains and rivers, of mineral deposits, of routes, and places that are of emotional importance for the state may be the main factors which most influence the desire of a particular government for a particular boundary.[9]

The linear frontier—as it is conveniently indicated on a map—always proves, when studied on the ground, to be a zone rather than a line. A frontier separates two jurisdictions but whether the two countries that are set apart from each other in this way are similar in a general way like France and Italy, or notably dissimilar as India and Tibet, is a matter of scrutiny. Again, the maximum of difference is to be sought near the centre of gravity of each country and *not* at the frontier where they meet. A frontier population is, by definition, marginal. Here it is important to underline that Tibetan culture as a whole is un-Indian (even as it is so distinct from the Chinese), and that in religion, the Tibetans have thoroughly transformed Indian Buddhism.

V

On the north and the south, the Chinese created two contrasting frontiers. From the point of view of sociology and the evolution

of institutions, they can be described in terms of the alternative processes through which a society functions—the southern frontier dynamic, the northern, static. The northern could not, in fact, be made permanently static; it was crossed by alternating barbarian incursions, with the Chinese outward thrusts attempting to subdue and discipline the barbarians. And yet nothing could be more static in conception than the Great Wall. In the final count, then, China's northern frontier was the frontier of exclusion; the southern, of inclusion.

In our case, by contrast, the Himalayas were both a frontier of ingress as well as egress. With Tibet in the north, the intercourse was largely one of religious doctrines and their practice, the Himalayan barrier being far too formidable to provide the means of mounting any large-scale invasion. But on the western side, the Khyber did provide the royal route for any hostile power to challenge the northern Indian polity, unless the latter was in a position to defend itself. As to the southern frontier, the peninsular barrier did not constitute any major obstacle; both Asoka (273–237 BC) as well as Akbar (1556–1605) did hold sway over lands south of the Vindhyas.

In the study of both old and new frontiers, a general rule can be stated—namely that any and every kind of society creates its own kind of frontier. The essence of the rule is that any society seeks out more land of the kind that it already knows how to exploit by the techniques it already has. Changes that follow in the organization of society in a larger territory, and in the application of the old economic practices on an extended scale, are not the planned purpose but its inevitable consequence.

The McMahon Line, which, it has been suggested, was 'to some extent provisional and experimental', gives India a much easier border to defend than a boundary along the foothills, north of the Brahmaputra plains. Chinese claims to the Tawang belt or the tribal areas in Arunachal Pradesh are not vital to the existence of the Chinese state (even as areas of eastern Russia); the country can thrive and prosper within its present borders, and the dispute carries more ideological than geographical significance for China.[10] Prescription refers to the uninterrupted occupation of an area by a single authority perhaps without any formal treaty being concluded

to legalize or legitimize such occupation. This principle forms part of the Indian case against China in Aksai Chin.

The essence of all negotiations is to maximize advantage and minimize ambiguities. It should follow that any serious India–China negotiation would have to define 'limits of flexibility', disclaim extreme positions, and avoid any rigid or inflexible stand. The ultimate objective is to evolve pragmatic or realistic solutions to long-standing problems.

Despite all the hype and hoopla built around the border deal during Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's April (2005) visit to New Delhi, all it amounted to was a 'package settlement' that still remains to be negotiated, and one that was not far from the status quo. Broadly, China would drop its claims to Arunachal Pradesh and India to parts of Ladakh, with some adjustments to the border, there and elsewhere. The New Delhi–Beijing representatives are to consult 'in an earnest manner' with a view to establishing strategic trust. For both here and elsewhere, there has been growing emphasis on a 'strategic partnership' between the two hitherto estranged neighbours.[11] The fact is that the boundary problem, is only partly a territorial question for political factors weigh heavily in finding a mutually acceptable solution.

Mao's 'unique' termination of hostilities in the 1962 conflict by declaring a unilateral ceasefire, foreclosed any action on behalf of Nehru by either 'imperialism' (read US) or 'revisionism' (read USSR). Today China does not have any urgency in resolving its border dispute with New Delhi for the balance of power between itself and India is 'sufficiently stable' and will not tilt in its direction in the foreseeable future. In the event, Beijing will have more options when the dispute will need to be finally settled.

China's stated objective in forming the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which, apart from Russia, includes the four 'stans', barring Turkmenistan, is to settle long-standing territorial disputes, demilitarize borders, cooperate in counter-terrorism, and foster regional trade. With Beijing drawing ever closer to Moscow, the SCO bids fair to evolve from a loose grouping into a security alliance, envisaging joint military and anti-terrorist operations. For, while China of the Mao-Deng era viewed itself to be a victim of imperialism, and a developing nation, today it is an emerging great

power with varying interests and responsibilities, an engine of growth wielding mounting influence and leverage, all the greater for Beijing having settled its border conflicts with Kazakhstan, Kyrgzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in the nineties, and the last remaining segment of its contentious 2300 km-long common land frontier with Russia in October 2004. Even then some disputes remain outstanding: the land and sea frontiers with Vietnam for one while differences persist with the Philippines and Japan, even as does the running battle with Taiwan. With ASEAN, Beijing has however signed a declaration accepting a code of conduct for its maritime territorial disputes, conceding most of the points sought by the regional grouping while easing its earlier—eighties' and early nineties'—narrow and reactive approach.

VI

A brief word on the historian and his craft and what this slender volume purports to offer. The French philosopher-historian Michel Foucault (1926–84) has expressed the view that truth and knowledge are the product of power. In every age, he ruled, there has always been a 'dominant discourse' and both history and ideology have been the products of this dominant discourse. What history does is to impose a fiction of narrative order on the irreducible chaos of events in the interests of the exercise of power—thereby establishing a linkage of knowledge with power. History however will always remain a contested terrain even though it cannot be rendered into a simplistic morality tale of the good and the bad. Mature nations come to terms with the complexity of nation-building, for when viewed in retrospect, events acquire internal coherence, fall into a pattern, and seemingly appear to convey the consequences of a direction and purpose of which the actors actually involved are unaware. History enhances choices more than it restricts them; in the event, hindsight does help history writing. Leadership is the constant manipulation of, and movement, between the past and the future for while bullying and buying off the opposition may work, the most effective leaders remake the past in pursuit of the future. For breadth trumps depth, and broad surveys being more helpful than in-depth analysis.

The supreme value of academic work postulates that the facts are open to instant challenge for verification, and the inferences drawn from the facts, to constant debate. Two brief caveats may be of relevance. To start with, a word on state-sponsored/funded research. There is no reason why the department of a government, should it be so interested in a particular field of political or economic research, make bold to provide financial aid and even official data to an academic research programme, but only if the information from government sources is made equally available to all other research workers. A vice that always threatens the work of the historian no less than that of the social scientist is the insidious, gradual attribution of importance to one element in a complex, leading to exaggerations and omissions which, in the end, distort the analysis of the complex as a whole.[12]

In history the past really happened, and if we are very scrupulous and careful and self-critical we may find out how it happened and reach some tenable—if less than final—conclusions about what it all meant. Post-modernism notwithstanding, objective historical knowledge is both desirable, and attainable. Marx's dictum that people make their own history but they do not do it under circumstances of their own choosing, has a great deal of validity.[13]

VII

The original dates of publication of the pieces assembled here cover a spread of almost half a century. And it is hardly surprising, that in so long a span, when so much material is brought together in one place, two tendencies come to light. On the one hand, there is a repetition of data and hardening of ideas; on the other, a tendency towards growth, development, and a willingness to present material somewhat differently. And to modify earlier ideas. To make it easier for the reader to form his own opinion on these and other issues, the editorial method adopted has been to divide the studies under geographical and topical headings. To start with, the border dispute with China as in the present volume is followed by two others—hopefully soon in the pipeline: one on Tibet and its polity, and another on its neighbours to the north (Mongolia) and the south (Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim). As may be evident, the 'studies' have

a thematic togetherness, not a chronological order of their dates of publication.

The principal focus of this compendium of nearly a dozen essays is the long-simmering boundary dispute between Asia's two major land powers. And the span of nearly half a century, over which they spread helps to underline its varied facets as viewed in the time-frame in which a particular essay or presentation was composed. The earliest goes back to the mid-1950s reflecting the eventful, if then cheery and hopeful prospect of the '*Hindi-Chini bhai bhai*' phase; in sharp contrast, those belonging to the 1970s or early 1980s smack of the bitterness that followed the 1962 war and lasted for the best part of a couple of decades. With time, things mellowed; it should be obvious that the 1990s and the early opening years of the twenty-first century have a different tale to tell. The uninitiated reader may find the summary of the articles useful in that it gives a brief conspectus of what the individual article/essay has to offer and help him make up his mind to savour the whole. The bibliographic note is an attempt to update the subject in the words of those who had something to do with the negotiations as active participants or as scholars and researchers who claim knowledge and understanding of how the situation evolved.

An important trick the historian must master is that of achieving a balance between rigour and readability. It does not come that easy. All the same, an effort has been made to strike that fine balance in the pages that follow; how successfully, is for the reader to decide.

NOTES

1. Two studies stand out in my mind: Owen Lattimore et al., *Pivot of Asia: Sinkiang and the Inner Asian Frontiers of China and Russia*, Boston, 1950 and Owen Lattimore, *Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia*, Leiden-New York, 1955.
2. For some graphic details see Owen Lattimore, *Ordeal By Slander*, Boston, 1950 and London, 1952.
3. Parshotam Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition: An Interpretation*, New Delhi, 2nd edition, 2004; the first appeared in 1968.
4. P.L. Mehra, 'The Chinese Invasion of Tibet—A New Portent?', *Caravan*, New Delhi, February 1951, pp. 25–31.
5. Parshotam Mehra, 'Chinese Aggression: Ladakh, A Case Study', I and II, *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 13–14 May 1963.
6. Parshotam Mehra, *An 'Agreed' Frontier: Ladakh and India's Northernmost Borders, 1846–1947*, New Delhi, 1992.

7. Thomas Henry Huxley, 'Agnosticism', in *Science and Christian Tradition*, cited in Owen Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History: Collected Papers 1929–58*, London, 1962, p. 26. This is an impressive, large-size tome running into almost 600 pages (565 to be exact).
8. Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, New York, 1999, p. 5.
9. For more details on boundaries and boundary-making see J.R.V. Prescott, *Political Geography*, London, 1972.
10. Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, 2 vols, London, 1966; as also Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, New Delhi, 1974 offer detailed analysis of the genesis of the 'Line'. Lamb's later work, *Tibet, China and India 1914–1950*, Hertingfordbury, 1989 has two very interesting, and useful chapters—XII and XIII, pp. 401–76, about all that happened to it during the three decades and more, before the British left.
11. 'The neighbours moved from an agreement to disagree about the border to an agreement to try to agree', the *Economist* (London), no. 8422, 16 April 2005.
12. There is much legitimate debate on means and ends about the still-to-be-completed multi-volume series *Towards Freedom* sponsored by the Government of India and its demi-official organ, the Indian Council of Historical Research.
13. Both the layman and the professional will find Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History*, London, 1997, stimulating reading.

I

THE BACKGROUND

1

India–China Border
A Review and Critique*

Over the past year or two there has been a spate of populist, and highly tendentious writings on the India–China frontier dispute. If partly, it has served to enliven the talks now underway between the two countries to help normalize their relations. The second round, after the earlier exchange of visits between the foreign ministers, is scheduled to open in New Delhi sometime in May 1982.

Broadly, Karunakar Gupta[1] deplores the 'distortion of records and the resultant ignorance of vital facts'. More specifically: in 1956–7, Prime Minister Chou En-lai 'was ignorant about this matter' [the McMahon Line]; Charles Bell's distortion of the record in his book, *Tibet, Past and Present*, (Oxford, 1924) which, it is presumed, escaped the Chinese, 'did not influence' either the India Office in London or New Delhi's Foreign and Political Department. A 'distorted version of the history of the Simla Conference [was] printed in the concocted volume of Aitchision's treaties'. The principal culprit was the late Olaf Caroe, whose acts of omission and commission were further compounded by a compatriot—and a Political to boot—Hugh Richardson in his 'Tibetan Precis'. Together, their doings 'proved to be two veritable time-bombs causing a violent rupture in Sino-Indian relations'.

Subramaniam Swamy[2] has levelled some grave charges. In negotiating with Tibet at Simla, Henry McMahon 'was flouting instructions from London and going beyond his brief'; in his memorandum of 13 June 1914, Sun Pao-chi, the Chinese Foreign

* First published in the *Economic and Political Weekly*, 15 May 1982, pp. 834–8.

Minister, 'was protesting inter alia, the McMahon Line'. 'It is interesting' that all the three plenipotentiaries 'were sent into disgrace by their respective governments soon after the Simla Conference'. Again, after the thirteenth Dalai Lama 'attained the heavens' in 1933, the British botanist Kingdon-Ward 'entered Lhasa via Tawang'; in 1938 'by a sleight of hand', Olaf Caroe 'unobtrusively' replaced the original by a 'reprinted fraudulent copy' of Aitchison. The lesson of Swamy's exercise in research: 'The Sino–Indian border does not exist. The McMahon Line has no legal basis. The arguments of the boundary alignment in Aksai Chin and the so called Middle Sector are even weaker.'

Neville Maxwell,[3] well-known as the author of *India's China War* (London, 1970), has not added anything by way of a new thesis albeit there is a certain freshness in his reiteration of the old. He underlines the fact that the alleged complexity of the border dispute is 'factious and specious and the deadlock, like the war of 1962, is the indeductable consequences' of New Delhi's policy. Moreover, 'the nub of the dispute' relates to 'that salient of territory in the western sector... which comprises the Aksai Chin plateau'. Of McMahon and his Line: his 'secret negotiations with the Tibetans had been illicit', Olaf Caroe 'arranged the falsification of the published record of the Simla Conference' in Aitchision's treaties so as to 'make it appear that there had been agreement among all parties on the new McMahon alignment'. In disentangling itself from 'the book on which Nehru's approach' to the boundary problem impaled his country, New Delhi may do well to heed 'the truth [which has been] set out clearly... in the writings of the distinguished historian of the North-Eastern Indian boundary, Karunakar Gupta'.

In a brief article, space inhibits, the present writer has elsewhere carefully examined every available scrap of evidence on the McMahon Line and set out his conclusions;[4] additionally, he has supplemented this study by two compendia of relevant documentary source-material.[5] Nor is he alone. A painstaking scholar in Calcutta has recently brought out a full-length work on the subject.[6] In the result, the following few paragraphs tend to be more suggestive than exhaustive; there is no viewpoint projected here, the objective is to set the record straight.

II

The McMahon Line (ML), shown by a red line on the 1914 map, was an integral part of a longer, more comprehensive line drawn on the convention map to illustrate Article IX thereof; the latter designed to show the borders of Tibet, and the boundary between Outer and Inner Tibet. A blue line on the same one-sheet map marked the boundary between Inner Tibet (nominal Tibetan control, *de facto* Chinese authority) and Outer Tibet (*de facto* Tibetan control, nominal Chinese authority). The map is initialled by the three plenipotentiaries 'in token of acceptance' on the 27th day of April 1914. Part of the red line showing the India–Tibet boundary in greater detail is etched on a two-sheet map, copies of which were exchanged between the British and Tibetan Plenipotentiaries along with formal letters on 24–5 March. The latter map does not contradict the former; it only shows a part of the whole and in greater detail. The part came to be known as the ML.

The memorandum of 13 June 1914 by Sun Pao-chi[7] was designed principally to obtain a modification of the boundaries of Inner/ Outer Tibet. Inter alia he asked that the former include areas west of Litang and Batang and the region between the Yangtse and the Mekong. It is necessary to underline that the minister's protest did not concern itself with the ML boundary: a graphic representation[8] bears out clearly that its preoccupation was with the contours which the Chinese wanted etched between Inner and Outer Tibet.

It is a little less than fair to suggest that in the aftermath of the Simla conference, McMahon 'was immediately transferred to Egypt' as a measure of Whitehall's 'displeasure'. The fact is that McMahon was due for promotion and that his appointment as High Commissioner in Egypt was a measure of the British government's confidence in his ability to man a post of such crucial import. Later (1919), it may be recalled, he was to be British Commissioner on the Middle East International Commission—again, a very senior and responsible appointment.

A word on McMahon 'flouting instructions' and 'going beyond his brief'. A close and careful scrutiny of all papers relating to the conference gives no inkling whatever, that at any stage during the negotiations, he was out of step with his political masters either in

England or nearer home, in Delhi/Simla. As to the telegram of 3 July intimating that there were to be no 'separate signatures' with Tibet, McMahon noted that it was received a few hours prior to the convening of the conference—it was cabled from London a little after 6:30 pm (Indian time) while the conference itself assembled at Simla around 11:15 later that evening. The delay occurred owing to a fortuitous circumstance and is faithfully recorded on a minute paper in the India Office Library:

> That the Sec of State's instructions of 3rd July reached Sir H. McMahon 'too late to affect the proceedings of the conclusive meeting' was not due to any delay on the part of this office, but primarily to the fact that no one of sufficient authority to deal with the question arrived at the FO on Friday last until 1 p.m.
>
> In the circumstances, Sir H. McMahon appears to have acted most judiciously, and it is submitted that his action be approved by HM's Govt.[9]

It was. The lapse, it should be obvious, did not lie at McMahon's doorstep. Nor is there any evidence to suggest, even remotely, that the British government ever held it against him: the minute underlines the considered view that in the circumstances, he had acted most judiciously.

Lonchen Shatra's role as his country's plenipotentiary at Simla won him fulsome praise from the British. McMahon noted that it was 'difficult' to do him adequate justice:

> He combines a simplicity of charm of manner with an unexpected knowledge of men and affairs.... A man of very great shrewdness and capability [who] despite his want of diplomatic training... proved quite his [Ivan Chen's] match in political acumen.

It may be conceded that after his return to Lhasa, the Lonchen was under some sort of a cloud, but this is to be attributed to the Dalai Lama's own somewhat imperfect understanding of the Convention and its terms. It is well known that for long the Lama was at a loss to understand Tibet's notional division into two, and doubtless laid the blame squarely on the Lonchen's head. Bell noted (1946) that the Tibetan ruler was not 'very sympathetic' towards Shatra, that the latter, in the evening of his life, was 'a lonely figure', and that his political adversaries 'wanted to pull him down'.[10]

Shatra's post-1914 discomfiture notwithstanding, two facts stand out. One, the settlement with India on the border was not in question for the Tibetan plenipotentiary had sent the ML map 'to Lhasa for

orders' and obtained its clearance before committing himself to his British counterpart. Two, Lhasa had no second thoughts on his performance. This is evident from the handsome tributes paid to him by a Tibetan scholar, an official close to the thirteenth Dalai Lama who had considerable knowledge of old Tibet and its affairs: 'He served Tibet so well at Simla...and his achievements as a Minister for the Tibetan government will long be remembered.'[11]

As for Ivan Chen, it may be pertinent to recall that prior to his arrival at Simla, he had, for eight long years (1903–11) served as Secretary Counsellor at the Chinese Legation in London, and acquired, apart from great diplomatic finesse, a reputation for sobriety and reasonableness. In 1911–12, he had participated in the negotiations leading to the Opium Agreement. In 1912, he had been appointed a Taotai on the Burma–Yunnan frontier, and a little later, Commissioner for Trade and Foreign Affairs, Shanghai. Jordan had evidently known him and hence his complimentary references. All this notwithstanding, any suggestion that Chen was a British protégé or betrayed his country's interests is not borne out by any documentary evidence.

At Simla, Chen had presented his country's case vis-a-vis Tibet with considerable skill and great personal conviction. He yielded little ground. Typical of his resistance to the British compromise draft was his 15 April 1914 meeting with Archibald Rose, McMahon's assistant in the Chinese negotiations. The meeting lasted ten hours and Chen obtained some significant concessions.[12] Again, his initialling of the Convention on 17 April, would appear to have been born of his clear perception that (in McMahon's words) he had obtained 'more favourable terms than could reasonably have been expected': the situation in Tibet was none too easy with a 'complete collapse of Chinese power and prestige in that country'.[13] It is significant that on the eve of his departure from Simla, Ivan Chen still sincerely believed that China would change its stance. More, it is now known that he made a brave effort, off his own bat, to influence Yuan Shih-kai accept the Simla Convention.[14] Chen's lapse into relative anonymity in the aftermath of the 1914 conference does not smack of disgrace, nor was it a singular act. He melted away, as did many others, in the political chaos of a ramshackle Republican regime that ill-knew its own mind.

Swamy's reference to Hardinge's letter, as Karunakar Gupta's to Bell are misplaced, and torn out of context. McMahon, it may be recalled, had in his 'Final Memorandum' on the conference, datelined 8 July 1914, referred to the Tawang area and suggested some preliminary measures for its administration:

The future welfare of this section of the frontier will depend on the steps which are taken at the outset to put the new district on a satisfactory basis.... I would prefer for the present to withhold any detailed suggestions in regard to the treatment of this tract and would only recommend that a British officer with experience of administration in tribal country be directed to proceed to Tawang for a period, with a good native assistant of Tibetan experience and a native medical attendant and that the settlement of Tawang be decided after he has had an opportunity of thoroughly investigating the local conditions.[15]

With World War I on its hands, post-1914 India fought shy of giving shape and form to McMahon's recommendations (one may add in parenthesis, that it was not until after the Raj had been wound up that New Delhi implemented them). Understandably, in forwarding his memorandum, Hardinge had to own that the 'views and proposals put forward' by the former British plenipotentiary were to be treated as 'personal' to McMahon and lacked the endorsement of the government over which he presided.

The same holds true of the observations made by the Foreign Secretary, A.H. Grant to Bell for both, Chinese ratification as well as negotiations with Russia were still pending. Nor was it a secret that a powerful lobby (not excluding Grant) held, that at Simla, McMahon had ridden roughshod over Chinese susceptibilities.[16]

III

The question as to why the British refrained from publishing the maps for twenty-two years or for that matter McMahon's 'agreement with Lonchen Shatra', is easily answered. For almost two decades, until the emergence of the Kuomintang as a powerful unifying force, Republican China was in a moribund state. It posed no threat in the Assam Himalayas, it dispatched no uncomfortable probing missions into tribal territory. Understandably, both Whitehall as well as New Delhi—the latter, under the Raj, was a political adjunct of the former—avoided the risk of attracting

unwelcome Chinese notice that would have only served to fuel the fires of anti-British propaganda, then at white heat. To say that Britain's vital trade, and commercial interests were involved, would be, putting it mildly.

The re-discovery of the ML in the aftermath of the thirteenth Dalai Lama 'retiring to the heavenly fields' (*not* attaining the heavens) calls for some comment. Two sets of circumstances converged. One, the travels (1934) of the well known British botanist, Francis Kingdon-Ward in the Balipara tract in Monyul; two, the political uncertainty in Tibet in the wake of the Lama's death with the Chinese making a determined bid to stage a comeback and fish in Lhasa's troubled waters.

Kingdon-Ward, the botanist, did not enter Lhasa; he strayed into Monyul, the country where the Tawang monastery is located. Insofar as both India as well as Assam had failed to exercise any control in the area, the Tibetans took him to be an intruder and treated him as such. It was this 'escapade' which flustered the official dovecots in New Delhi and awakened them to the harsh realities of a fairly grave situation. It may be of interest to note that as far back as 1928, the then Political Officer in Balipara had sounded a note of warning: 'Should China gain control of Tibet, the Tawang country is particularly adapted for a secret and early entrance into India.' Kingdon-Ward's words were no different: 'Sooner or later India must stand face to face with an enemy looking over that wall into her garden—or fight to keep her out of the Tsanpo valley. With Monyul a Tibetan Province, the enemy would already be within her gates.'

The re-discovery of the ML has an element of drama about it and the hero is Olaf Caroe, then Deputy Secretary in the Foreign Department. Only part of the credit however is deserved. Caroe's role in digging up the fact that Assam did not know—Burma did—about the ML and had done nothing about making it effective is uncontested. But to suggest that both New Delhi as well as Whitehall had forgotten all about the Simla Convention or the 'McMahon-Shatra' notes or the ML, a necessary corollary, would be far-fetched. The harsh truth is that these came up again and again in one form or another: in May 1917, through Eric Teichman's memorandum which offered a powerful critique of McMahon and his handwork;[17]

two years later, in May 1919, through China's revival of the modified tripartite settlement; in 1920–1, through Bell's mission to Lhasa and more importantly, his definitive work published three years later (*Tibet, Past and Present*, Oxford, 1924). Bell's manuscript, it may be noted, was duly scrutinized in Whitehall and contains a first hand account—he was McMahon's assistant on the Tibetan negotiations, even as Archibald Rose was on Chinese—of what transpired at Simla. Not only was the book published by a reputed publisher, its end-maps show a clear and unambiguous ML as the India–Tibet frontier.

A word about the Simla convention and the joint Indo–Tibetan declaration of 3 July. As early as July 1920, the Secretary of State for India had ruled that 'so long as there remains any prospect of a final settlement of the Tibetan question by negotiations with the Chinese government', it may not be wise to give the convention or its maps 'unnecessary publicity'. The question was re-agitated in 1925, 1928, and again in 1933–4 in the context of the India–Tibet Trade Regulations (1914) which were an integral part of the Simla confabulations.

Much has been made of *Aitchison's Treaties*, Volume 14, and the responsibility of Olaf Caroe in publishing its modified version. It may be noted that three arguments had been adduced by him in support: one, that failure to publish might give the Chinese a handle to argue that 'no ratified agreement [on the boundary] between India and Tibet was in existence'; two, in view of the impending introduction of the Government of India Act 1935, it was necessary to define the tribal areas in the north-east which were to be placed under the political control of the government of Assam; three, the imminent separation of Burma, which was responsible for part of the ML frontier.

Caroe underlined the importance of early publication by pointing out that failure to do so hitherto had meant that publications such as the *Times* continued to show the frontier wrongly, along the foothills of Assam.

India Office was not over-enthusiastic. The 'only' reason it found in support of New Delhi's proposed course of action was the 'not improbable' assumption that the Chinese, aware of the Indo–Tibetan declaration of 3 July, would view its non-publication to imply that

'we doubt' the agreement's validity. Walton concluded, '*If* the Foreign Officer were willing, we might perhaps decide to publish.'

The Foreign Office concurred. In the result, New Delhi was authorized to correct the maps straightaway but as to publishing the documents 'unless [they] are contemplating a re-issue of the Aitchision volume, they should... wait for it'.

After weighing the pros and cons, New Delhi decided to re-issue Volume 14. It is common practice in such cases to withdraw old copies and replace these by new ones; the old are discarded, not necessarily burnt or destroyed. It should follow that if the 1929–31, as well as its substitute (the 1938 version) has survived in some places, it is for reference and record. It may be of interest to note that both these versions are extant at the National (earlier, the Imperial) Archives.[18] The worst one can hold against New Delhi is that it was not thorough in its alleged operation to obliterate all traces of the earlier volume; the best, that it was keen that its own archives, and posterity are custodians of all that transpired, in terms of the earlier as well as later versions.

The gravamen of the charge against Caroe:

> He replaced the short factual paragraph about the 1914 convention with a long embellished three paragraph set. He included in this set as many favourable references for India as was feasible. This act was not only unethical but bordering on forgery.

Any objective reading of the factual paragraph, side by side with the 'long embellished three paragraph set', leaves one distinctly cold: one is as colourless as the other. It is the typical, insipid matter of fact prose that government presses churn out day in day out. There is precious little by way of embellishment; that is not the hallmark of bureaucratic style.

The three-paragraph affair, in place of one, is easily explained. The new Aitchision volume contained the text of the 1914 Convention, the McMahon-Shatra exchange of notes on the boundary, as well as the revised (1914) Indo–Tibetan Trade Regulations. Whitehall had ruled that the joint Indo–Tibetan declaration of 3 July was not to be published, its place being taken by an explanatory note. Surely, the additional contents had to be spelt out in terms of a narrative outline that comprehended much more than the earlier version; hence, three paragraphs in place of one.

The 'Tibetan Précis', an official handout prepared for government use in 1945, calls for a brief comment. The relevant paragraph on the Simla Convention here reads much the same as Volume XIV alluded to above. And one may well ask, why not? Government could not unsay to its officials what it had owned in its official publication. (Interestingly, Gupta has cited the Précis with evident approval when it describes, in the context of the Kashmir–Tibet boundary dispute, that 'Tibet's claim was by far the better'.)

Caroe's alleged distortion, forgery, and concoction are not easy to pin-point. One charge however, is valid. It stands to reason that the 1938 version of Volume XIV should have carried the new dateline, taking care of the additions both in terms of the documents as well as the narrative. In government or administration however, no one individual takes the praise or blame; it is a machine that functions as one, in a faceless totality. It would thus appear that to pitchfork an individual or two into fame (as the discoverer) or notoriety (as the distortioner) is, at best, unfair. It smacks of petty vendetta, unworthy of sound academic scholarship.

IV

A word on the western frontier. Even a cursory acquaintance with the evolution of the British India–Kashmir relations in the latter part of the nineteenth century would furnish convincing evidence that the Government of India did, from time to time, toy with the idea of modifying Kashmir's frontiers depending upon developments in Kashgar and Hunza's claims to the Raskam and Taghdumbash Pamirs. The Kashmir Atlas; the meteoric rise and fall of Kashgaria as an independent entity; Tsarist Russia's steady, if unrelenting march towards Afghanistan's northern borders; China's seeming ineptitude to push itself into empty spaces on the roof of the world which the British did not covet, but which they wanted denied to the Tsarist regime—all these were important factors that dictated imperial policy.

Certain facts however, need to be clearly stated. Thus the Ardagh boundary line should not be damned because of its author's short-lived intelligence connections. (Briefly [1896–7] Director of British Military Intelligence, Major General Sir John Charles Ardagh [1840–1907] belonged to the Royal Engineers, and had served as

Private Secretary to two Governors-General, Lansdowne and Elgin.) To be fair to him, it was for the most part a hard-nosed, well-grounded alignment designed to answer to the needs of the frontier and the compulsions of the situation that prevailed.

In sharp contrast, the abortive Macartney–Macdonald proposal was an effort at compromise by a known Sinophile. (George [later Sir George] Macartney, 1867–1945, was British Consul-General in Kashgar. Half-Chinese through his mother, his father, Sir Halliday Macartney served for many years as Advisor to the Chinese Legation in London.) It did not rest on firm ground. Manchu China did not even deign to acknowledge, much less react to it; Mao's government rejected it out of hand.

As for Aksai Chin, there is no dearth of evidence—from official records, revenue data, travellers' accounts—that India's claims to those parts where the Chinese have built their highway network, rests on firm ground. Nor is it a secret anymore that new roads have been constructed, parallel to the original highway with branches to the Chinese military outposts. Uncomfortably for New Delhi, and close observers of the scene, China's 'line of actual control' (which has been offered as the basis for a definitive boundary settlement of the dispute) has, over the years, steadily inched forward!

One would feign deliberately keep away from the more contemporary scene. The oft-quoted letter of Vallabhbhai Patel offers conclusive evidence that, at the highest levels of government, there was grave concern about Chinese intent; it does not necessarily follow that the then Prime Minister was unduly complacent or unrealistic in his assessment. Reference has often been made to the advice tendered by distinguished civil servants such as Girja Shankar Bajpai or public men of the stature of K.M. Panikkar, or the role played by the intelligence chief B.N. Mullik or by the so-called generals who misled New Delhi into adventurous courses which have come in for comment.

It is difficult to be categorical in such cases for the end picture is far from complete. The bits and pieces at hand do not add up to the whole; there is the grievous, indeed crippling gap of archival sources.

This is not to deny the usefulness of a rash of books that have appeared over the past two decades by individuals at the highest levels of government or public life. In all such cases there is bound

to be the ego that sometimes looms larger than life; in the bargain, there is underplay or suppression, conscious or otherwise of such evidence as may run counter. One may also concede that official versions too suffer from much the same malady: inconvenient facts tend to be ignored, their importance, minimized. This is not uncommon in regimes exposed to the glare of public scrutiny. In those that are not, one can only speculate as to the shape of things.

From the above it should follow that the best one can do about the events leading to the massive Chinese onslaught of 1962, and the two decades that have elapsed since, is to draw some tentative conclusions which, by definition, have to be cautious, not categorical. Thus it is reasonable to accept Swamy's view that in 1954, a pragmatic approach would have been 'to incorporate a negotiated boundary settlement into the trade agreement as a price for giving up the rights we had acquired in Tibet through the 1914 convention'. Equally, Karunakar Gupta has made a valid demand for the appointment of a high-powered commission, having access to all official records from 1914 to 1947, to determine inter alia 'the true legacy of the Raj'. The present writer for one, is disposed to go the logical step further and strongly urge that all these records be thrown open to public gaze. For far too long has the hush-hush policy, ill-conceived and fatally detrimental to the country's best interests, ruled the roost. It is time to call it a day.

Meanwhile, one is constrained to enter a strong caveat to Neville Maxwell's unabashed view that India's guilt was total: '[it] had established the dispute by its claim to Aksai Chin, deadlocked it through the refusal to submit the boundary question to negotiation and then transferred the diplomatic deadlock to the field of arms by its forward policy'. This view smacks too much of a propagandist, partisan—not a scholarly or scholastic—approach. The harsh truth is that there is strong evidence to suggest that the Chinese attack in 1962 was an attempt to cut India to size; nearly twenty years later, the objective was 'to teach' tiny, albeit troublesome Vietnam, 'a lesson'.

V

In sum, one may accept without qualification that there are gaps in New Delhi's case on the border, but it should also be conceded that

the Chinese case is much more tenuous. The fact is that the evidence at hand, meticulously marshalled and in rich detail, makes out the Indian presentation to be far superior to its Chinese counterpart. That evidence can be scrutinized and sifted but not discarded or thrown out of the window in an unseemly haste to establish a non-existing (bhai bhai!) parity of two fumbling Prime Ministers misguided by their advisors.

A word by way of illustration may help. It is true that the ML was not made effective for more than a quarter century after Simla, but what conclusive evidence do we have that Peking's writ ran in the area or for that matter in that vast expanse of Aksai Chin it now claims?

Indian maps under the Raj had their lacunae and seeming inconsistencies, but at Simla, Ivan Chen was so ill-equipped as to have none to hand; in sheer desperation he used a sketch by a British official to substantiate his claim to Chinese rule in East Tibet. Nor did China permit any maps to be published in its vast domain without an imperial (later Republican) imprimatur. The real dilemma China has on the McMahon Line stems from the uncomfortable truth that at Simla, the credentials of the Tibetan plenipotentiary were accepted without qualification, that he took full part in the conference deliberations as an equal. It was with Shatra that Ivan Chen discussed the Tibet–China boundary back and forth over many a weary week. In history, as in life, one cannot plough back in time. Tibet's *de facto* status in 1913–14 cannot be altered by pushing back China's present occupation of the country. The harsh truth is that in any realistic assessment, the Chinese claim has no historical validity insofar as barring the probing missions of 1910–11 in tribal territory, they were never physically present on this frontier.

An effort has been made in the preceding paragraphs to view the border and the controversies it provokes, in their proper historical perspective. However important in its own right, the more urgent problem is to break the deadlock and help reach a mutually satisfactory settlement with Deng's China. This calls for statesmanship of the highest order, a material modification of public postures at both ends, and a meaningful give and take across the negotiating table. Deadlocks in themselves offer no solutions; nor for that matter need they be taken as immutable.

NOTES

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2. 'Does the Sino-Indian Border Exist?, *Sunday*, Calcutta, 28 March–3 April 1982, pp. 20–5.
3. 'The Deadlocked Deadlock: Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute', *EPW*, 19 September 1981, pp. 1545–8.
4. *The McMahon Line and After: A Study of the Triangular Contest on India's North-Eastern Frontier between Britain, China and Tibet, 1910–47*, Macmillan, 1974.
5. *The North-Eastern Frontier: A Documentary Study of the Internecine Rivalry between India, Tibet and China* (2 vols, I, 1906–14, II, 1914–54), Oxford, 1979, 1980.
6. D.P. Choudhury, *The North-East Frontier of India*, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1978.
7. For the text, Parshotam Mehra, 'The North-Eastern Frontier', op. cit., I, p. 131.
8. D.P. Chaudhury, op. cit., last map following page 186.
9. For a photocopied reproduction of the original see Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, op. cit., dust jacket.
10. Charles Alfred Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, London, 1946, pp. 206–7.
11. Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, New Haven, 1967, pp. 208, 262.
12. For minutes of the Rose–Chen meeting, see Parshotam Mehra, *The North-Eastern Frontier*, I, op. cit., pp. 94–103.
13. Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, op. cit., p 244.
14. Lo Hui-min (ed.), *The Correspondence of GE Morison, II, 1912–20*, Cambridge, 1978.
15. Parshotam Mehra, *The North-Eastern Frontier*, op. cit., I, Final Memorandum, excerpts, pp. 175–80.
16. Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, op. cit., notes 21, 22, p. 421.
17. For text of memorandum, Parshotam Mehra, *The North-Eastern Frontier*, op. cit., II, pp. 15–20.
18. The Dwarka Das Library at Chandigarh has, among its holdings, a copy of volume XIV of the original 1929–31, 5th edition, of *Aitchison's Treaties*. This writer consulted both these volumes at the National Archives sometime in July 1981.

2

INDIA'S IMPERIAL LEGACY AND CHINA'S FRONTIER GAINS

The Western Sector—A Case Study*

Peking's oft-repeated charge—was dutifully rehearsed, not for the first time, at the third round of India–China talks held in Peking as late as January 1983. It reiterated that New Delhi had inherited the legacy of the British Empire whose policy of continuous and unabashed aggression on China's frontiers was no secret. In the result, India's inheritance of ill-gotten gains far outstripped its legitimate rights or claims on the frontier. Differently put, New Delhi must not only live down its dubious inheritance but disgorge large chunks of territory on the borders it now claims so as to come to terms with its powerful neighbour.

Sadly for Peking, the boot is on the other leg. The aggrandizement and resultant expansion of China's empire to its farthest known territorial limits under its last reigning dynasty, the Qing (1648–1912), is universally acknowledged. In our immediate neighbourhood, Tibet and Sinkiang apart, the Chinese writ was said to run over Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, as well as Burma and the states of Indo-China. For sure, imperialism does not always come aboard ships across the high seas!

Within the limited perspective of our land frontiers, the story is at once fascinating as well as revealing. Both in the north-east, in the case of the much-maligned McMahon Line[1] and the western

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sector where Ladakh's, and Kashmir's boundaries were intimately involved, the British bent over backwards to be unusually generous. And for the most part, at India's expense. In Europe, the accepted norm is that the perfidious Albion fights to the last of its Allies' soldiers and their equipment. In our case, no sacrifice, territorial or otherwise, was considered too great to subserve passing imperial exigencies. The Chinese pocketed most of the gains—at our cost!

II

The evolution of the eastern frontier and the McMahon Line are relatively better known. It would suffice therefore, to refer to it somewhat briefly. One interesting facet of this frontier has been that as late as 1910–11, there was no Chinese presence here. Later, in 1913–14, when the tripartite talks were held in Simla–Delhi, the British made signal, and indeed significant territorial concessions to meet Tibetan religious susceptibilities. Thus McMahon, explaining the delineation of the India–Tibet boundary underlined that it followed

> except where it crosses the valleys of the Taron, Lohit, Tsangpo, Subansiri and Njamjang rivers for a short distance near Tsari, the northern watershed of the Irrawaddy and the Brahmaputra rivers.
>
> Near Tsari, it left the watershed so as to include in Tibet the course of the sacred pilgrimage route known as Tsari Nyingpa ('old Tsari') which is used every year in large numbers by Tibetans...(also) the village of Migyitun to which the Tibetans attach considerable importance.

As for Tso Karpo and Tsari Sarpa (mentioned in his note to the Tibetan Prime Minister Lonchen Shatra)

> it is probable that both places are either on the main watershed which forms the boundary or to the north of it, but should they be found to be within a day's march on our side of the boundary as now shown, it has been agreed that the boundary line will be altered so as to include them in Tibet. No difficulty should be found in doing this because our evidence tends to prove that there is a wide continuous tract of uninhabited country along the south side of the main watershed.[2]

In the quarter century that elapsed after the Simla conference and for a variety of reasons into which it is not necessary to go here, the McMahon Line remained confined to archival records in New

Delhi. Worse, when 'rediscovered' in 1936, India developed cold feet on the question of making it effective on the ground. Assam's then Governor, Sir Henry Twynam, was less than enthusiastic. Occupying the Tawang tract in the extreme west of what is now Arunachal Pradesh, he argued, would be tantamount to the pursuit of a 'forward' policy which (he felt) would 'inevitably alienate' Lhasa 'without any particular advantage' to New Delhi. Besides, Tawang had 'always been oriented towards Tibet ethnographically, politically and in religion'.[3]

The interesting point about Twynam's reasoning was not that he made a strong case of it but that New Delhi itself was not unimpressed. Indeed the then Governor-General, Lord Linlithgow, confided in the Secretary of State that

> there is much to be said for his (Twynam's) proposal both on general and financial grounds particularly as he thinks that a boundary on the Se La would not only cost about one-fourth of the expenditure estimated to be necessary if we were to decide eventually to go right up to the McMahon Line and include Tawang....[4]

An additional argument pressed into service was that the people of Tawang, the Monbas, made poor 'Wardens of the Marches' and that the best about the 1914 boundary was that it looked well on a map! Not long after, in August 1940, a high level meeting of officials in Shillong ruled that:

> Common sense demands that we should not press our claims on Tawang, but tacitly assume that a more suitable line than the McMahon Line would be one farther south, either at the Se La or farther south in the neighbourhood of Dirang Dzong.[5]

Partly, if not wholly, the above line of reasoning was characteristic of a bureaucratic frame of mind that must justify to itself its lack of action, or decision, on an issue of such vital importance. There could be no doubt that New Delhi was afraid of upsetting the Chinese, afraid lest any attempt at resisting Tibetan incursions towards Tawang, create a hullabaloo in Lhasa. Faced with a harsh choice, the Indian Government dithered, soft-pedalled, swept controversial issues under the carpet as it were and—did nothing!

Interestingly, as late as October 1944, the Tibetan Foreign Office had informed Gould, 'by direction of the Kashag', that 'it did not wish' to dispute the validity of the McMahon Line as determining

the limits of territory in which India and Tibet respectively (subject to such minor adjustments as then contemplated) are entitled to exercise authority. Nonetheless in view of the 'territorial and political settlement' with China then pending, and which was 'a matter of overwhelming importance' for Lhasa, it was requested that 'extension of their (British) regular administration up to the (McMahon) Line should be postponed'.[6]

To be fair to the British, they were not averse to the Tawang 'concession' but made it conditional on Lhasa's implicit, and unqualified acceptance of the rest of the boundary to which it had agreed in 1914. As an India Office minute (1943) recorded:

> there was general agreement in India (in 1940) that if it came to discussions with the Tibetans on the question of the boundary, it might be useful to agree, *as a bargaining counter*, to draw the boundary south of the Tawang area.[7]

It is revealing that on the eve of the transfer of power, India's British rulers played with the idea of carving out a separate dominion comprising almost the entire tribal belt in the north-east outside of New Delhi's purview—which would be their special preserve. Unfortunately, many a day-dream was swept away by the irresistible avalanche of events which gathered a momentum that proved well-nigh irreversible. The long and short of it was that at the time of their withdrawal in August 1947, the British left Tawang and much else besides, hanging about as it, were in mid-air. It may be added—if only in parenthesis—that India's effective control was achieved through the efforts of a distinguished frontier statesman, Nari Rustomji and his second in command, a Tanghkul Naga, Bob Khating.

III

The western sector is a study in contrast. The British presence here, unlike on the north-east, was indirect. For it was not British India but Gulab Singh's state of Jammu and Kashmir, which came into being as a separate political entity in the wake of the First Anglo-Sikh War (1845–6), that was involved. Its frontiers touched Tibet and China's far-flung dominion in Kashgar and Yarkand. The British—as suzerains of the Dogra ruler—were concerned, a major

attraction being the prospect of opening the heart of Asia to commerce. In the context of our limited purview, a long and fairly complicated story of Ladakh's, and to an extent Kashmir's northern frontier, needs emphasis only on two points. One, an initial anxiety to define the limits of the Maharaja's territory (and open it to trade). Two, insofar as the task turned out to be much more complex than they had imagined, a willingness to barter away such territorial claims as appeared to be inconvenient. Hardly had the ink dried on their treaty with Maharaja Gulab Singh that the British decided to lay down the exact limits of his territory. They appointed Alexander Cunningham and P.A. Vans Agnew as Boundary Commissioners, charged with the task of demarcating a boundary between the British territory of Lahul and Spiti on the south, and Gulab Singh's Ladakh on the north; besides, a boundary between Ladakh in the west and Tibet on the east.[8] In a letter to the 'Vizir of Lhasa-Gartope' as early as 4 August 1846, the Indian Governor-General spelt it out that:

> As it is now deemed expedient to settle definitely the boundaries to the eastward of the countries thus ceded to His Highness Maharajah Goolab Singh, I have now determined to depute two of my confidential officers... in order that they in conjunction with the confidential agents of His Highness Maharajah Goolab Singh should lay down the boundary between the territories of the British Government and those of its dependents and the territories of Maharajah Goolab Singh.
>
> As it is understood that the territories belonging to the great Empire of China and which are under Your Excellency's Government adjoin those of the British Government and of the Maharajah Goolab Singh and with a due regard to the friendly alliance now subsisting between the British Government and the Emperor of China, I now think it necessary to inform Your Excellency of the deputation of my officers and of the objects they have in view.
>
> I have to express my hope that Your Excellency will see fitting (*sic*) to depute confidential agents to point out to my officers the exact limits of the Chinese frontiers in order that no interference be exercised with the territories of your high and esteemed government...
>
> It is not the desire of the British Government to intrude into the China territory, or to ask for admittance except to such marts as are open to general traders of other countries or to secure exclusive privileges for its subjects....[9]

Determined that his efforts did not go astray, the Governor-General wrote to Sir John Davis, British Imperial Commissioner in Hong Kong who under the terms of the Treaty of Nanking (1842)

was authorized to communicate on matters of state with his Imperial Chinese counterpart stationed at Canton:

As I am led to understand that Tibet is immediately under the authority of the Imperial court at Peking I have to request that Your Excellency will be pleased to communicate the contents of the present correspondence to the officers of His Imperial Majesty and that you will take such measures as to you may appear best calculated for securing the co-operation of the Chinese authorities and more particularly the objects of the Commission so far as they are connected with the countries subject to the Empire of China.[10]

Davis was no less explicit in his letter to His Excellency Keying, China's High Imperial Commissioner:

Since the British territory and also the hilly country of Cashmere belonging to a dependent ally of Great Britain are now conterminous with that of China it becomes extremely desirable to cultivate a friendly and beneficial intercourse in order that troubles and misunderstandings may be effectually prevented. As Great Britain has supreme power in India she can as the friend and ally of China prevent the dependent states of China as well as her own subjects from transgressing the laws of mutual friendship. But in order to do this effectually it becomes necessary to ascertain the exact boundaries which divide the Thibetian territory from that pertaining to Great Britain and from that also which has been conferred on Goolab Singh. This Prince being dependent on Great Britain can be consequently controlled by the British Government provided that the boundaries are ascertained. But without such precaution, it will be impossible to prevent serious disputes and misunderstandings.

The Right Hon'ble the Governor-General perceiving this and desirous to preserve eternal peace and amity has sent commissioners to the Viceroy of Thibet at Lhasa requesting that His Excellency will appoint proper officer to settle the exact boundaries of the Chinese territory bordering not only at (*sic*) the British possessions but also on those which have been conferred on Goolab Singh who will thus be obliged to respect the Chinese frontier....[11]

Outlining his strategy in handling the hyper-sensitive Chinese, Davis noted:

I deem it necessary to avoid awakening the Chinese jealousy of encroachment at the same time that I appealed to its prevailing desire for security and peace. The hint to the contingency necessary of communicating directly with Peking is calculated to promote exertions of the Chinese Minister at Canton.

I conceive Your Lordship's objects in the mission to the Viceroy of Thibet to be twofold. First the exact ascertainment and settlement of the mutual frontiers and secondly, the establishment of commercial intercourse with the Chinese territory on an equal footing with the neighbouring states.[12]

The British Envoy's first communication to the Imperial Chinese Commissioner at Canton was sent on 18 November (1846) in which he pleaded inter alia how 'extremely desirable' it was 'to cultivate a friendly and beneficial intercourse' and 'necessary to ascertain the exact boundaries' that divided Tibet from British as well as Gulab Singh's dominions.

The Chinese reply of 13 January (received three days later) was argumentative at best. It cited the 1842 Treaty of Maritime Commerce to underline that there was in fact no provision for trade between India and Tibet. As for the frontiers,

> I beg to remark that the border of the territories have been sufficiently and distinctly fixed, and that it will be best to adhere to this ancient arrangement and it will prove far more convenient to abstain from additional measures for fixing these.[13]

The British Envoy wrote back post-haste to clear up, what he perceived, now threatened to upset his apple cart:

> With regard to the frontiers, it surely was not to affix any new boundaries but merely to ascertain the old ones that commissioners were sent to Lhasa. The Governor-General expressly declared his wish that the 'exact limits of the Thibetian frontier may be pointed out with the view of preventing any encroachment'. The Viceroy of Lhasa will doubtless be more willing to make known the ancient limits than to incur the chances of future misunderstanding by leaving the point uncertain. If the British government in India were not to be informed of the ancient boundaries (how would) it be possible to prevent mistakes and encroachment.[14]

In reply, the Chinese Commissioner now perceptibly shifted his ground. He was—was he not—a little too far away to decide for Lhasa:

> It is, however, difficult to find out what was the state of the former commerce and what the conditions of these regions as well as the nature of their inhabitants.
>
> I...the Government Minister is not a high officer of Thibet. The country is moreover distant and our commissioner at Thibet therefore who is on the spot may deliberate and manage this affair and then memorialize the Emperor on the subject. I, the Government Minister, will also faithfully transmit to my Sovereign the whole tenor of the last dispatch of the Hon'ble Envoy.[15]

Meanwhile the Governor-General in India was getting irked by delays which he had not anticipated. As the first two-man mission

drew a blank[16], he decided to dispatch another. Davis accordingly wrote to inform his counterpart that the Indian potentate

required me to inform Your Excellency again that Cashmere having become a dependent territory of Great Britain, Commissioners three in number have been appointed to proceed to the frontier and determine the old boundaries between that country and Thibet. He therefore desires that Commissioners should be appointed by the Sovereign of your Honourable nation in order that a mutual good understanding may for ever be preserved.[17]

Keying's rejoinder was brief and to the point. He washed his hands clean off the entire affair:

You (Davis) then stated that it was the 'wish to ascertain the ancient boundaries, and not to fix new ones. Cashmere having always carried on commercial intercourse with Thibet, nothing new is proposed in the continuance of this trade' etc.

I, the Government Minister forwarded a proper statement of these matters to the Throne, and received the Imperial reply that the Resident Government Minister in Thibet having been made acquainted with it, had been commanded to examine into this affair and manage accordingly; as is on record.

Your Honourable country has now deputed officers to proceed to those regions. As to the way in which the objects ought to be carried out, the Resident Government Minister in Thibet will satisfactorily and properly manage everything.[18]

On 3 January 1848 Davis reminded his Chinese counterpart of the urgency of the matter:

It is His Lordship's wish to ascertain these boundaries by Commissioners mutually appointed by the two Governments. Having already commissioned officers on the part of the British Government for this purpose and no officers having been deputed by the Chinese Government, it will be plain that everything has been done on the part of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General to prevent troubles on the border, and it is desirable that Chinese Commissioners be immediately deputed.[19]

Keying repudiated the charge of prevarication, much less delay on China's part. Writing to the British envoy four days later,

I subsequently perused a memorial from our Minister in Thibet in which he stated that at the commencement of the summer, he was not yet aware of the arrival of the Commissioners of your Hon'ble country.[20]

Nor were the Chinese the only offenders. Maharaja Gulab Singh too was dragging his feet. Writing from Leh on 20 October (1847)

Cunningham confessed to a feeling of considerable disappointment:

In my letter No. 3 of the 15th September I mentioned that both of the Agents appointed by Maharajah Goolab Singh had failed to meet the Commissioner at Hanle although there was ample time for both of them to have been there at the date specified. Coupling their absence on the frontier this year with the non-attendance of any duly appointed Agent last season when Mr Agnew and myself were in Ladakh, I am persuaded to believe that the absence of the Maharajah's Commissioners on the frontier is not the result of accident but of a designed plan to delay, as long as possible, if not absolutely to thwart altogether, the final settlement of the boundary.

It was clear beyond words

either that the Maharajah himself is unwilling to have his eastern boundary finally determined or that the Governor of Ladakh (anxious that his proceedings on the frontier should not be too narrowly scrutinized) was designedly absent in defiance of the orders of his master.

Nor was this difficult to understand. For the Governor

may feel confident that his absence might be secretly approved by the Maharajah himself although it might be openly disavowed by him.[21]

Their protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, the studied non-cooperation of the Son of Heaven no less than that of Maharaja Gulab Singh was an object lesson. The Chinese, thanks to mounting pressures by western nations on their coastal provinces, and the resultant humiliations to which they were now a prey, refused to have any truck with the British on their land frontiers. Gulab Singh had his own reasons to be suspicious of British designs and well he might.

Despite these well-nigh fatal constraints, the two boundary commissions succeeded in doing excellent work. Their learned reports which later took the form of books offered invaluable data for the geographer, the anthropologist, the historian, and even the layman. They were to form the basis of that corpus of first-hand knowledge of the Ladakh frontier which proved most useful in all subsequent explorations and boundary making on this part of the frontier.[22] Thus Lt. Strachey's map (1848) showed Ladakh's frontiers reasonably accurately with Demchok, western Pangong, the Chang-Chenmo valley, and the Khurnak fort lying squarely within the

Indian boundary. The major limitation of the two commissions lay in that they had precious little to say about the area north of the eastern end of the Chang-Chenmo valley.

IV

The first to visit the much-disputed Aksai Chin area in Ladakh were the three Schlagintweit brothers—Adolphe, Herman, and Robert. Adolphe, who crossed the desolate plains of Lingzitang and Aksai Chin on his way to the Karakash and Yarkand, was done to death (August 1857) in these bleak parts. The two surviving brothers produced a four-volume report on the results of their mission.

With a view to a more accurate determination of the alignment of the boundary, a Kashmir survey was undertaken in the early 1860s: its task completed in November 1864, and results incorporated in an atlas, four years later. A major achievement in this back-breaking task was that of W.H. Johnson, who along with Godwin-Austen carried out (1862–3) the triangulation of the area from Leh to the Chinese borders. In 1865, Johnson was commissioned for an 'extension of the survey operations of the Kashmir series beyond, and to the north, of the Chang-Chenmo valley'.

While in Leh, Johnson received an invitation for a visit from the ruler of Khotan affording him 'a very favourable opportunity' to cross the frontier, and traverse the province beyond. Sorely tempted and without awaiting the Government's formal permission—an omission for which he was later severely reprimanded—he took the plunge and repaired north. His report furnished some fascinating information about the Khotan revolt against Chinese rule, as well as detailed descriptions of the routes between Ladakh on the one hand, and Khotan and Yarkand on the other. Moreover, Johnson mapped out 'an easy though circuitous route'[23] to Ilchi and the eastern provinces which avoided the Kuen Lun range.

Johnson's description of the Lingzitang plain is hard to better:

> high extensive tablelands which might be called plains in comparison with the rugged ranges of the Himalayas, for they have a greater extent of level and hilly ground, and the hills are low and have such easy slopes that a horse may be galloped over them everywhere. The first plain is about 17,300 feet above sea level.... A second plain slopes for a distance of 30 miles in a north-easterly direction from 16,700 feet down to 15,300 feet....

The contrariety comes out vividly in another passage:

I ascended three peaks of the Kuen Lun range.... The contrast between the view to the north and that to the south was very striking, on the one side there was little but plain, on the other mountains and deep valleys. I might almost have fancied myself on one of the southern ranges of the Himalayas, with the plains of India to the south and great mountain ranges to the north.

And as he crossed the northern ridge of the Chang-Chenmo valley:

Over immense plains perfectly uninhabited and devoid of all vegetation... fresh water is also very scarce...that of the numerous lakes...being very brackish, and in many places undrinkable, owing to the whole of the country being covered over with a deposit of saltpetre and soda to the depth of from six inches to one foot.[24]

It is here, across the Aksai Chin plateau in Indian territory that surreptitiously at first the Chinese built a highway linking southern Sinkiang with western Tibet. This was in 1957–8; in the quarter century since, the network has grown and expanded considerably.

It should be obvious that on his way to Khotan, Johnson had followed the route which the ill-fated Adolphe Schlagintweit had taken: journeyed to the Lingzitang plains, crossed western Aksai Chin, reached the Karakash, and climbed three peaks of the Kuenlun. He returned westward from Khotan through a hitherto unknown country, crossed the Karakoram pass from the north, and reached Leh in the heart of December.

Thanks to the Trignometrical Survey, detailed maps soon came to be prepared. That of 'Jammu, Kashmir and Adjacent countries' was completed in 1861. Later, in 1868, three sheets of the Ladakh map delineating its eastern and north-eastern boundaries were published on the eight-mile scale at Dehra Dun, to be included subsequently in the quarter-inch Atlas sheets. Interestingly, Aksai Chin, Lingzitang, and Chang-Chenmo valleys are shown here as integral parts of Ladakh.

The Kashmir boundary alignment mapped out by Johnson has been dubbed as 'incredibly inaccurate' and 'patently absurd'.[25] Yet Johnson, described as 'the most indefatigable of observers' and 'a brilliant triangulator, impervious to hardship and danger' was not alone.[26] His associate, as noticed earlier, was none other than Godwin-Austin. Frederic Drew, a later surveyor who did yeoman's

work in etching out the state's physical contours, while bemoaning the fact that 'the same degree of detail' as characterized other survey maps was missing in Johnson's work and for good reason, conceded without demur that it had 'been the foundation of every map of the region constructed since'.[27]

V

Presently two dangers appeared on the horizon. At the outset there was the threat—actual or potential—from Tsarist Russia: the Great Game posed problems, both strategic and, even more dangerously, psychological. Doubts also began to be raised about the bona fides of Kashmir's rulers. Thus Forsyth's 1874 report was eloquent:

> On the military question whether Russia would ever think of sending a force down by Khokad, or Kashgar, and the Pamir, and direct to the Indus, I do not offer an opinion; but that the road is far easier than was supposed, and that it presents none of the obstacles which would render the Karakoram route next to impossible. Colonel Gordon's report shows.... The conquest of Khiva and the rapid steady approach of Russia to the Oxus causes the natives of Afghanistan, and of the Punjab too considerable anxiety.... The general idea is that Russia is the rising power, that she is destined to advance still further, that England is afraid of her, and will do nothing to oppose her progress, or to help those who would preserve themselves from being swallowed up....

An urgent change of stance was called for:

> I think we ought to make our influence paramount in the direction of Badakshan and Balkh. I would begin by establishing an agent at Gilgit: he would be able to gain correct information of countries which at present are a sealed book to us.... Such a movement...would strengthen the hands of our Agent at Kashgar and would be an indication to people of energy and life....

Forsyth saw doom writ large, should his advice go unheeded:

> If we persist in shutting our eyes to Russia's advances, we must at all events prepare ourselves for internal trouble...and the whole of my experience with people on the frontier and across it forbids my indulging in a feeling of security.[28]

Just about this time Ney Elias, who in 1868 had led an expedition to examine the channels of the Hwang-ho in China, and four years later traversed the Gobi desert for nearly 5000 miles, joined the

Indian government. He now travelled over the Karakoram to Yarkand and suggested 'the definite determination of Ladakh's border with Eastern Turkistan'. Inter alia, he expressed the view that the Maharaja of Kashmir wind up his post at Shahidulla. True, that prior to the retreat of the Chinese from Eastern Turkistan (1864), the place

was held by a small body of Kashmiri troops, and that the border was on the main line of road to Yarkand was considered to be marked by the fort itself....

And even though he had never seen it, he understood that it was never a position of any strength, and that it is now in such a state of disrepair that it may be considered entirely useless from the point of view of defence.

The conclusion was unmistakable

under these circumstances, I see no advantage in the Maharajah re-occupying Shahidulla either as a defensive post or as a demarcation of the border....

Whatever the merits or otherwise of the sell-away of Shahidulla proposed by Elias, a very interesting point was made regarding the demarcation of Ladakh's boundary with Eastern Turkistan:

In such a region of snowy mountains and glaciers it would neither be practicable nor necessary to survey the whole boundary line for demarcation, but merely that marks should be set up at a few points such as those where it is crossed by the heads of inhabited valleys....[29]

Elias touched on another important aspect, namely a regular communication between Ladakh and Kashmir which has a striking contemporary relevance. It must, he wrote, be borne in mind that:

it often happens that the road across the Zogi-la is closed in winter, while the passes from the side of Turkistan are frequently open, and that thus Ladakh is accessible from the side of danger but not from that of succour. It would probably be of advantage therefore to improve the road from Kashmir to Ladakh to such an extent that in all but the depth of winter it should not be entirely closed to traffic....[30]

The officer on special duty in Kashmir who scrutinized Elias's proposal for transmission to the Supreme Government did not view the matter as 'one of moment'. Moreover, he held that the

region between say the head of the Nubra Valley and the post of Shahidulla is a kind of no man's land, only frequented by passing traders, peopled by

the skeletons of men and horses, and as real a boundary between the Indian Empire and its northern neighbours as would be a vast and waterless desert.

Nor did he see any urgency in marking a boundary:

Why should we dispell such innocent imaginings (on the part of the Dogras) and seek to demarcate by pillars or piles of stones a Line which nature has already defined? It would be time enough to do so when the first symptom of a tendency to encroach becomes apparent....[31]

The annotation by the Foreign Secretary (A.C. Lyall) which the Governor-General (Lytton) endorsed without qualification makes for interesting reading:

These papers refer to the question of demarcating and strengthening the frontier of Kashmir toward Kashgar, and beyond the Karakoram. I think the matter may stand over—if Kashmir is threatened at all, it will be from the north-west.[32]

At the same time the question need not be raised with Peking for 'It might be difficult to induce the Chinese to forego any rights there that they have already assumed'.

Not long after Elias had ruled out Shahidulla for Kashmir, Captain H. Ramsay, then British Joint Commissioner at Leh (Ladakh), in a forceful memorandum pleaded to the contrary:

It was to our interest (he underlined) that this frontier should be now demarcated... it should, if possible, be placed as far north as Shahidulla....[33]

Commending Ramsay's Memorandum, the Resident in Kashmir strongly urged that the

adjustment of the whole northern and north-western frontier of Kashmir should not be further postponed... (that it was) undesirable longer to defer the settlement of this boundary.[34]

Not that it availed. For after due deliberation at the highest levels of government, Ramsay's proposal, as in an earlier (February 1888) instance, 'was allowed to drop'.[35] Durand recorded the epitaph: 'No present orders' and undertook to speak to Col. Nisbet.[36]

VI

Meanwhile as the war of nerves with the Russians hotted up, Francis Younghusband was pressed into service to explore 'what practicable

routes' might lead across the main Karakoram or Mustagh range. Additionally, he was to 'report on the general strategical aspect of this region with a view to possible offensive operations by an enemy advancing from the north'.

Briefly, Younghusband's conclusions were that

> from the Karakoram pass to the Shahidulla pass there is an immense glacier region, and though, in former times routes led across the range... these are now quite impracticable for all military purposes. West of these glaciers... three routes lead into the valley of the Hunza river... (which) may be considered as passable between from the middle of May to the middle or end of November. But though the main range is so easy to cross, the country on the southern side is so difficult... that an invading force would find it nearly impossible to force its way through, if opposed.

As to a hostile Russian demonstration towards Ladakh,

> It is somewhat easier than had been thought to bring a small force down to the Karakoram pass, for a route leads from the Russian frontier... to the valley of the Yarkand river, up which the road leads straight to the Karakoram pass, and from there Leh may be reached in twelve marches....

It follows, Younghusband concluded, that the

> two strategical points to be guarded are Gilgit and Leh of which the former is by far the most important; and between these two points there is no possibility of a force penetrating from the north.

The re-establishment of the Agency at Gilgit, coupled with other political-cum-military measures would help secure the position there even though Leh presented problems. Nonetheless the

> Kirghiz at Shahidulla... (were) very ready and willing to help us... their wish to be taken under our control and to have a representative of the British stationed at Shahidulla. If this could be carried out and the Kirghiz supplied with a hundred Snider rifles... (it would constitute a) check to the Russians, a protection to our trade and considerable gain to our prestige....[37]

Commending Younghusband's report for favourable consideration, Colonel Nisbet, the British Resident in Kashmir, underlined that

> If the Afghans and Chinese could be prevailed on to define their respective boundaries on that at present debatable ground of the Pamirs below the Tuyuk-su Pass... any aggressive attempt of Russia would receive a most important check. Again the Kirghiz of those parts would understand whom to pay allegiance to... whether to Afghans or Chinese....[38]

In a detailed memorandum submitted to the government, Younghusband reverted to Kashmir's frontiers and recalled that in 1888, when the Kanjutis (from Hunza) raided Shahidulla and the Kirghiz asked the Chinese for assistance, the latter refused for 'so long they lived beyond the frontier posts they must not expect protection'. No wonder

> The Kirghiz accordingly came to us for aid... I gave them money to repair the small fort at Shahidulla. The Chinese at first appeared to raise no objections to this.... Subsequently, however, the Russian Captain Gromchevsky, appeared upon the scene, and presumably at Russian instigation the Chinese have made arrangements for occupying Shahidulla and making it a frontier post.

The crucial issue was 'whether we should assert what claims we have' to Shahidulla and force the Chinese to retire? And even though we had 'preferable claims to the locality' there were other constraints: 'We have to take into consideration the probability of the Russians eventually occupying... Chinese Turkestan (and invading Kashmir).'

He was conscious of acute differences of opinion:

> Captain Ramsay... has pointed out the advantage of keeping the Russians as far as possible.... Colonel Bell who passed through Shahidulla on his way from Yarkand in 1887, was of the same opinion... Ney Elias, however, was of the opinion that Shahidulla was too far from our base to be held effectively... it is 240 miles from Leh, and 170 miles from the furthest village in Ladakh....

Taking 'everything' into consideration

> the advantage and disadvantage of pressing our claim upon Shahidulla would seem to be evenly balanced. On the one hand by holding the place we should, in the event of a Russian occupation of Eastern Turkestan, keep our enemies well at a distance from Leh in peace time; and the possession of Shahidulla would afford protection to our trade route. But on the other hand we should not be able to hold the place against a Russian invasion... we should also by now occupying Shahidulla give greater offence to the Chinese than is perhaps justified by the corresponding advantage to be gained.

A considerable gain had already been registered, that of preventing the Russians from staking a claim to Shahidulla and thereby 'working a wedge' between British territory and Chinese Turkestan:

The question as to whom Shahidulla should belong is now between us and China, and the Russians can never get a claim to it till they have had a war with China and taken Kashgar and Yarkand.

Important though Shahidulla was, much more so was 'a strip of country', the western end of Raskam, which lay 'dangerously close' to our northern frontier. It was imperative that the Russians should be prevented from 'getting a footing there'.

This could best be done by closing together the Afghan and Chinese boundaries on the Pamirs and thus shut out Russia from a possibility of pushing down to Raskam, till she has conquered the Chinese Turkestan, in which case the comparative value of Raskam would be lost.

Should this (viz., closing of Afghan–Chinese boundaries on the Pamirs) prove impossible

We must either take our frontier up to the Kuen-Lun mountains to include Raskam or else we must induce the Chinese (to provoke them as we have at Shahidulla) to assume an efficient control over that country.

Hence pushing Chinese claims 'would seem to be preferable', for while it would equally effect the object in view, there would seem to be no disadvantage in such a course; 'it might be said indeed that Russia will one day occupy Chinese Turkestan, and would therefore, in any case gain the Pamirs, but in such a case that belt of country would have lost its present value.'

That eventuality however was not likely for a long time to come:

In the meanwhile therefore we should use China as a buffer state in these parts with the object of keeping the Russians off our Northern frontier, and should use every endeavour to make her boundaries meet with those of our other buffer state—Afghanistan.[39]

VII

The government lost no time in giving shape and form to Younghusband's recommendations. The Governor-General, Lord Lansdowne, wrote post-haste to the British envoy in Peking:

The neighbourhood of Shahidulla seems to have been at some time in the hands of the Maharajah of Kashmir who had built a fort there and occupied it for a while. We have since learnt that the Chinese have occupied the place, and we are quite ready to acquiesce in their so doing. We have no desire ourselves to advance beyond the Karakoram range, but we have on

the other hand, a very great objection to allowing this strip of 'no man's land' to remain unclaimed and open to Russian incursions. Under these circumstances we think that the Chinese should be encouraged to assert their authority over the tract in question and up to the limits of Afghan territory...we should like to see the frontiers of Chinese Turkestan conterminous with those of Afghanistan and Kashmir, and the Chinese authority asserted up to the northern slopes of the Karakoram range....

As if the above was not plain enough, the Indian potentate further underscored:

I do not think we can over-estimate the importance of leading the Chinese to regard us as having interests identical with theirs in Central Asia and as liable to danger from the same source....[40]

Dilating on the same theme, India's formal dispatch to the Secretary of State underlined the view

if the Chinese can be induced to definitely assert their authority in these regions...the Russians will be prevented from encroaching towards our Northern frontiers except at the risk of complications with a neighbour at whose pertinacity in upholding her territorial rights they have already had experience in the Kuldja dispute....[41]

Chinese notions of their claims to the Pamirs are well brought out in the British envoy's letter to the Viceroy regarding the issue of a Peking passport for Younghusband required for his (Pamir) explorations:

where that (viz. Chinese) jurisdiction ends is a matter to be dealt with by the Imperial authorities on the spot, and it is on this account that I purposely avoided in my application any allusion to the Pamir regions. I doubt whether there exists a Chinese expression for the Great Pamir, but at all events I should not have felt justified in asserting that this district or any part of it belonged to China.... The general term of 'Border Regions to the west and south-west of Kashmir and Yarkand' which I adopted in my note to the Chinese Government will be amply sufficient for all practical purposes....[42]

VIII

It is interesting that among the 'instructions' given to Younghusband on his deputation to Chinese Turkestan in 1890 were:

You should first proceed by Leh to Shahidulla and obtain precise information regarding the reported Chinese occupation of that place.

You should then proceed to the Pamir region, and you should thoroughly examine, in communication as far as possible with the Chinese officials, all the country upto the Afghan and Russian frontier, with a view to ascertaining the exact limits of Chinese authority... you should endeavour to impress upon the Chinese officials the necessity of strengthening and asserting their occupation, so that if possible, there may be no grounds for alleging that any unclaimed strip intervenes between Afghan and Chinese territories.

You should... take opportunities of explaining to them (viz. the Chinese) our common interests in those regions and the friendly intentions of the Government of India.[43]

Writing to their Resident in Kashmir on the receipt of Younghusband's letter from Leh, the Foreign Secretary made no secret of his satisfaction that the Chinese

are taking steps in the required direction on the Kashmir border. If the question comes up, please let the Kashmir durbar see that you understand the Indus watershed to be their boundary; and please instruct the Joint Commissioners at Leh in the same sense.[44]

In a letter to Government date-lined Shahidulla, Younghusband explained its significance:

Situated between the Kuenlun mountains and the Karakoram range, and near the southern foot of the former, it is neither a town, nor a village, nor even a hamlet, but merely a patch of grass and jungle near which a few tents of the Karakash or Sarakiya kirghiz are usually to be seen, and where caravans travelling between Yarkand and India generally make a halt; and its only importance is due to its position at the northern edge of a barren stretch of mountainous country where for 170 miles grass and fuel are almost unknown.

The Kirghiz who inhabit Shahidulla... number some 40 tents, or about 120 men, besides women and children. They have always paid taxes and, in a loose way, been tributary to the rulers of Yarkand, but the Chinese upto last year had never either in their former or present occupation of Turkistan, shown any decided authority over them or sent any official beyond the Kuenlun mountains....

Albeit, Younghusband noted:

No Chinese official is at present stationed at Shahidulla and the fort is not occupied by Chinese soldiers, it is clear that the Chinese have now definitely asserted their authority over this place and the valley of the Karakash river... that they consider all the territory upto the great watershed of the Karakoram mountains to belong to China... they built a fort at Suget on account of its being nearest to the point to the Karakoram range at which grass and fuel were obtainable.

Moreover, 'We have now the satisfaction of seeing this tract claimed by a friendly power....'[45]

Younghusband's satisfaction at Chinese action was unqualified. It shows, he noted:

that, in this quarter at any rate, their views are identical with those of the Government of India; and whereas up to last year we had on our northern frontier a stretch of no man's land, we have now the satisfaction of seeing this tract claimed by a friendly power, and the option is therefore left us of selecting, for the northern frontier of Kashmir, a well-defined and easily recognized natural boundary which even in the event of Chinese Turkistan falling into the hands of an unfriendly power, is probably the best that could be chosen, and is one indeed which affords us an almost impregnable line of defence.[46]

Before long, Younghusband visited Yarkand and after a formal exchange of visits with the Amban, had a long interview with him. In a report to his political superiors, he showed himself to be more than satisfied:

The most important point about it is that I got from the Amban a distinct statement of what he considered the southern frontier of this province. This he said was the Indus watershed—the Karakoram range.

Nor was that all:

It is quite clear that the Chinese mean to assert their authority effectively in that direction, for soldiers are constantly passing through on their way to Shahidulla, and great preparations are going forward for the construction of a fort at Suget.

On the Pamirs too, the Chinese claim line seemed 'somewhat further west' and

extends at varying distances down the valleys flowing westward into the Panja branch of the Oxus...and very considerably west of where we had considered the boundary to be....[47]

The interview with the Chinese Amban at Yarkand was quite revealing. Younghusband had showed the Amban a map of Kashmir in which the Karakoram and Killian passes were marked. He stated the (Indian) Viceroy's opinion that

the best boundary between Kashmir and Yarkand was that formed by the watershed of the Karakoram range.

But last year the Governor-General

had been led to believe that the Chinese considered their frontier extending only as far as the Kilian pass.... This being an unsatisfactory state of affairs.... His Excellency was contemplating extending the Indian frontier to the Kilian Pass, and annex all the country situated between it and the watershed. He had since, however, learned that the Chinese were undertaking the protection of the trade route, and if he found this to be really the case, he would be unwilling to extend the frontier beyond the Karakoram range.

The Amban fell into the trap so cleverly laid for him:

P'an Ta-jen, in reply, stated the Chinese had ever considered the watershed, which he defined as a natural (or literally in Chinese) a heaven-made boundary, to be the frontier between Kashmir and Yarkand, and that the Chinese were prepared to protect the trade route as far as that range.

On the Pamirs too, the Amban was forthcoming for Younghusband was informed

that Sarikol (which he said extended up to the Mintaka pass) was under him, and the Pamirs under the Taotai of Kashgar.[48]

An interesting observation made by Elias on Younghusband's report was to the effect that no part of the

proposed Chinese boundary would require demarcation by us. All our policy requires is a onesided assertion of dominion by China—not an agreed frontier between China and Afghanistan, and the less our Government mix themselves up in any measures of delimitation, the less likely they are to arouse either Russian or Afghan jealousy.[49]

Lansdowne heavily underscored what Elias had made out:

I should like to accentuate what has been well said to (*sic*) Mr Ney Elias... we do not want accurate demarcation or a frontier agreement. We do want to encourage Chinese occupation up to Afghan and Russian limits.[50]

Even as Younghusband explored hitherto unknown regions and wrote his exhaustive memoranda and reports while his political masters mapped out their strategies on the roof the world, the youthful Maharaja of Kashmir and his Councillors were not, without reason, getting a little exercised over their frontier with China's 'New Dominion'. In the memorandum of 16 March (1892), the Maharaja adduced convincing evidence:

In 1947 (1890–1) it was known from the reports submitted... that by the assistance of Turdikol a fort was constructed at Shahidulla Khaja. But

that the Chinese receiving information about it knocked down the fort and arresting Turdikol carried him to Yarkand, where he is still under confinement.

On the other side of the State's frontier from Shahidulla Khaja (SK),

> at a distance of three km (the Chinese) have erected a small fort, in which some Kirghiz men and two or three Chinese officials remain as a *chauki* (post).

Among the evidence adduced in support was the fact that about thirty years ago a person named Ahmad, accompanied by thirty-eight men had been sent to SK and on his arrival, 'erected some buildings there as Cantonment'. After a stay of six months he had returned. Later, when Douglas Forsyth went on his mission to Yarkand, the Kashmir authorities 'made arrangements for the supply of provision etc. upto' Shahidulla Khaja.

Further, the memorandum noted that in 1890–1

> a Russian officer had come to visit Kashmir from Russia, via Yarkand, and a Dastedar of the State Military Department with a number of irregular sepoys was sent to Shahidulla Khaja with a letter from the Resident to disallow the above Russian from coming to this side. And as the Russian Officer had got no passport with him he went back.

In conclusion, the memorandum affirmed, 'Under the above-mentioned circumstances and reasons Shahidulla Khaja is considered the State frontier'.[51]

Nothing, however, was of avail. The British, as should be evident, had already made up their mind and no reasoning to the contrary would help. Peremptorily, the Resident informed the State Council, 'that I do not think I can recommend that the question of the occupation of Shahidulla Khaja by the Kashmir Darbar should be opened'.

As if that were not enough, he made it plain that as he understood it

> both Shahidulla Khaja and Suget are situated in a district inhabited by Kirghiz who have for many years paid tribute to China, and the water of which flows into Yarkand territory.[52]

Thus were washed out, without much ceremony, the Dogras' long-standing claims to their frontier posts, and the country gifted away to the Raj's Chinese neighbours.

NOTES

1. In his letter of 23 January 1959 to Prime Minister Nehru, Chou En-lai, his Chinese counterpart, referred to the McMahon Line as 'a product of the British policy of aggression against the Tibet region of China' which had 'aroused the great indignation of the Chinese people'. *White Paper* I, 1959, pp. 52–4. At the second round of the India–China talks in New Delhi in May 1982, Fu Hao—leader of the Chinese delegation—referred to the McMahon Line as having been 'delineated by the British Imperialists'.
2. These excerpts are from McMahon's memorandum to the Secretary of State, Proc. 231(a), in *Foreign Department*, Secret F. October 1914, Nos 134–396.
3. Twynam to Linlithgow, 17 March 1939, in *IOR*, L/P&S/12/36/29, Part I. For further details see the author's *The McMahon Line and After*, Macmillan, 1974, pp. 453–5.
4. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 24 August 1939, in *IOR*, L/P&S/12/36/29, Part I, For further details see the author's *The McMahon Line*, op. cit., pp. 453–5.
5. Assam to India, 5 August 1940, in *IOR*, L/P&S/12, External Collection 36/23, Part I. For details see the author's *McMahon Line*, op. cit., p. 456.
   Apart from the Governor, the officials included B.J. Gould, who as Political Officer in Sikkim was in charge of Tibet, as well as Political Officers of the Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tracts as well as Raja Dorji of Bhutan.
6. India to Secretary of State, 4 November 1944, in *IOR*, L/P&S/12/36/23, Part I. Also see *Report of the Officials of the Governments of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question*, New Delhi, 1961, p. IR 229.
7. Minute by Peel, 26 February 1943, in *IOR*, L/P&S/12/36/29.
8. C.L. Datta, *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics: 1819–1848*, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 187–8.
9. *Foreign Department*, Secret Proceedings, No. 1336, 25 December 1846. The letter was delivered to the Gartok Garpon by Anant (Anand) Ram of Bashahr. It was never transmitted to Lhasa. What happened to it is spelt out in Lt. H. Strachey to Frederick Currie in his letter of 25 January 1847 in No. 73, Secret Consultations, F.D., 27 May 1848, Nos 71–3.
10. H. Hardinge to Davis, 29 August 1846 in *F.D.*, SC, Nos 1331–43, KW, 26 December 1848.
11. Davis to Keying, 18 November 1846 in *F.D.*, Secret Proceedings, 28 August 1847, No. 140.
12. Davis to Hardinge dated 18 November 1846 in *F.D.*, SPs, 28 August 1847, Nos 139–49.
13. Keying to Davis, 13 January 1849 in ibid. Also *F.D.*, SPs, 28 August 1847, Nos 139–49.
14. Davis to Keying, 21 January 1847, in ibid.
15. Keying to Davis, 26 January 1847, in ibid.
16. 'I have before gathered from Mr Agnew and Captain Cunningham that either officer did not actually reach the Chinese frontier last year, or come in contact with any of the Chinese authorities', Lawrence to Governor-General, 20 May 1847, *F.D.*, SPs, 28 August 1847, No. 153.
17. Davis to Keying, 1 August 1847, No. 26 in *F.D.*, SC, 30 October 1847, Nos 26–9.
18. Keying to Davis, 8 August 1847, No. 28, in ibid.
19. Davis to Keying, 3 January 1848, *F.D.*, SC, Nos 34–7, 31 March 1848.
20. Keying to Davis, 7 January 1848, in ibid.

21. Excerpts from Cunningham to Lawrence, 20 October 1847, No. 133 in *F.D.*, SC, 31 December 1847, Nos 129–36.
22. Four studies may be listed: Alexander Cunningham, *Ladakh: Physical, Statistical and Historical, with Notices of Surrounding Countries*, London, 1854; reprint, New Delhi, 1977; and 'Memorandum on the Boundaries of Cashmir', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XVII, Part I, 1848; Captain Henry Strachey, *The Physical Geography of Western Tibet*, London, 1853; Thomas Thomson, *Western Himalyas and Tibet: A Narrative on Ladakh and Mountains of Northern India*, London, 1852; reprint, New Delhi, 1978.
23. From Lt. Col. J.T. Walker, Superintendent, Great Trignometrical Survey, to India, Dehra Doon, 23 May 1866 forwarding 'two copies' of Johnson's report in *Foreign Department*, Political A, Consultations, June 1866, Nos 135–9.
24. W.H. Johnson to Lt. Col. J.T. Walker, Dehra Doon, 22 April 1866. Johnson's report, in close print, spans ten pages (59 paragraphs), besides the description (pp. 34–6) of a 'Route, Yarkand to Kashgar, derived by Mr Johnson from Native information', in ibid.
25. Alastair Lamb, *The China–India Border: the Origins of the Disputed Boundaries*, London, 1964, p. 43.
26. Kenneth Mason, *Abode of Snow*, London, 1955, pp. 79–80.
27. Frederick Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, London, 1875, p. 332.
28. Excerpts are from 'Confidential Report' by Sir Douglas Forsyth, dated Simla 21 September 1874. A seventeen-page report in print, it comprises 104 paragraphs. Proc. 69 in *Foreign Department*, Secret, August 1875, Nos 68–81.
29. Excerpts from memorandum by Ney Alias dated 23 November 1878 in *Foreign Department*, Secret F., February 1880, Nos 2–3.
30. Ibid.
31. Demi-official by F. Henvey, Officer on Special Duty in Kashmir, forwarding copy of Elias's memorandum to A.C. Lyall, Secretary, Foreign Department, 23 November 1878 in *Foreign Department*, Secret, February 1880, Nos 2–3.
32. Note by A.C. Lyall, 3 December 1879 in ibid. Lytton's endorsement is dated 18 December 1879.
33. Captain Ramsay's recommendation was made on 17 September 1886. For details see his 'Memorandum on the northern frontier of Kashmir state', Proc. 116 in *Foreign Department*, Sect. F., March 1889, Nos 115–16.
34. Colonel R.P. Nisbet, Resident in Kashmir to H.M. Durand, Foreign Secretary, 8 January 1889, Proc. 115 in *Foreign Department*, Sec. F., March 1889, Nos 115–16.
35. Office note, initialled E.H.S.C., dated 18 January 1889, in ibid.
36. Office note by Sir H.M. Durand, dated 1 February 1889, in ibid.
37. 'Report by Captain Younghusband on his recent explorations of the main Karakoram or Mustagh mountain range beyond the Kashmir frontier', in Younghusband to Nisbet, 31 December 1889, Proc. 79, in *Foreign Department*, Secret F., February 1890, Nos 59–84.
38. Nisbet to W.J. Cunningham, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Deptt., 30 December 1889, Proc. 78, in ibid.
39. Excerpts from Younghusband's detailed 'Memorandum on some measures to be taken to check Russian encroachment towards our northern frontier', in K.W. No. 3 in *Foreign Dept.*, Secret F., July 1890, Nos 225–45. Marked 'confidential, and in close print, the memorandum covers six pages (15–20) and is divided into three parts besides the Introduction. It is datelined Calcutta, 31 January 1891.

40. Lansdowne to Walsham, 17 July 1890, K.W. No. 4, in ibid.
41. India to Viscount Cross, Secretary of State for India, 14 July 1890, Proc. 243 in ibid.
42. Walsham to Governor-General, 29 May 1890, Proc. No. 238 in ibid.
43. W.J. Cunningham to Younghusband, 23 June 1890, Proc. 222 in 'Deputation of Captain Younghusband to Chinese Turkestan in 1890', *Foreign Department*, Secret F., July 1890, Nos 214–24.
44. W.J. Cunningham to Nisbet, 21 August 1890, K.W. No. 2 in *Foreign Department*, Secret F., October 1890, Nos 141–70.
45. Younghusband to India, 20 August 1890, Proc. 159 in ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Excerpts from Younghusband to Cunningham, 5 September 1890, K.W. No. 3 in *Foreign Department*, Secret F., October 1890, Nos 141–70. A D.O. letter, it is date-lined Yarkand.
48. Excerpts from 'Report of an interview between Captain Younghusband and P'an Ta-jen, the Amban at Yarkand held on 5 September 1890'. The report was written by Macartney and formed an enclosure to Younghusband's letter to Cunningham in *supra*, n. 48.
49. Note by Ney Elias, 8 February 1891, K.W. No. 3 in *Foreign Department*, Secret F., March 1891, Nos 123–48.
50. Note by Lansdowne, 20 February 1891, in ibid.
51. Translation of a memorandum No. 176–657 dated the 5th Chet 1948 (16 March 1892) by His Highness the Maharajah of Jammu & Kashmir, Proc. 3 in *Foreign Department*, Secret F., September, 1892, Nos 1–5.
52. Resident in Kashmir to Vice-President of the Kashmir State Council, 21 July 1892, Proc. 5 in ibid.

3

Lu Hsing-Chi, the Simla Conference, and After*

A great deal of jockeying for position has invariably been a necessary concomitant of all high-level diplomacy. In the context of a recent chapter in the story of the triangular Sino–British–Tibetan contest in the heart of Central Asia, a case in point are the 1912–13 negotiations between the British Minister Sir John Jordan and the Wai-wu Pu in Peking which led to the tripartite Simla Conference. In the initial stages there was considerable Chinese resistance to the very idea and later a stern refusal to accept the bases on which the Conference was to be convened. It may be recalled that Jordan's August (1912) Memorandum long remained unacknowledged. From December 1912, when Peking initiated a preliminary discussion to June (1913), when the choice of Ivan Chen as Chinese plenipotentiary for 'Tibet negotiations' was announced, Peking fought hard and tenaciously for every inch of ground.

Lu Hsing-chi, ostensibly a tradesman in a Chinese firm of furriers in Calcutta, played an extremely significant role in setting forth and giving practical shape to the Chinese position vis-à-vis Tibet. Additionally, he, more than anybody else, appears to have grasped, indeed masterminded, the minutest details of the Tibetan question and having secured Peking's ear at the highest level, strove hard to make the best of what was a fairly bad bargain. There is little doubt that if only the Chinese had been luckier and better organized, both in regard to their soldiers in the field, and to the political situation

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at home, the Simla negotiations would have taken a completely different turn and would have been conducted in an entirely different atmosphere. Even as it was, the more important role in the negotiations was played not so much by the official Chinese plenipotentiary, Ivan Chen, but by the unofficial, unrecognized, and yet powerful Lu Hsing-chi. Although this weakness in Chen's position was evident even in the initial stages, it became quite obvious after his initialling of the first convention in April 1914 was completely repudiated by his political masters in Peking. Towards the last weeks of the Conference—1 May to 3 July 1914—Chen operated in an atmosphere of tragicomic make-believe; Peking no longer trusted him, while the British, no doubt fully cognizant of this behind-the-scenes drama in the Chinese camp, kept up appearances. After Simla, Chen vanished almost completely into anonymity but Lu continued to be active until well into the thirties.

II

Given the political situation created in Tibet by the complete collapse of Chinese authority in the wake of the October 1911 Revolution, and by the return of the Dalai Lama to his seat of spiritual and temporal authority, Lu Hsing-chi had three developments on which to base his hopes of recouping Chinese losses. The first was that General Chung Ying would remain in Tibet. Chung Ying was the Commander of the Chinese garrisons in Lhasa who had forced out the Manchu Amban, Lien Yu, literally at gunpoint, and was then himself driven away by the Tibetan populace. As Lu argued, if Chung Ying were not to withdraw from his last bastion, however untenable his position may prove to be, the mere fact of his physically remaining in Tibet was symbolic of a continuity of Chinese presence there in the post-Ch'ing era. Lu's second hope was to intimidate the Dalai Lama and his ministers into playing the Chinese game by an adroit combination of threats, handsome bribes, coaxing, and cajolery. The third was to exploit the weaknesses of the Panchen Lama with a view to projecting him as a possible alternative or rival to the seeming unity represented by the Dalai Lama's Tibet. It was evident that a proper implementation of these policies needed a clever executor who could also manipulate

a network of spies and intriguers. As the subsequent pages make clear, Lu was not found wanting in either of these skills.

After the revolt of the Chinese garrisons in Lhasa toward the end of 1911, and the pillage and lawlessness in which they indulged, the Manchu Amban Lien Yu was forced to abdicate in favour of the garrison's young and ambitious commander, General Chung Ying, who held him virtually, a prisoner in his *yamen*. Unfortunately for him, Chung's own authority began gradually to ebb as the Chinese garrisons deployed outside the capital, and reduced to a mere rabble by defeat and defection, poured into Lhasa from Pome and Pemako and Tibet's other outlying districts. For the ill-fed, ill-clothed Chinese, lack of leadership was a serious handicap; a still graver one was the gradual drying up of funds and resources in Tibet itself, in neighboring Szechuan, and finally in China proper. All three, but especially the latter two, were in the grip of a vast revolutionary upsurge. Tibet experienced the spontaneous outburst of an anti-Chinese rebellion. It was fanned, no doubt by elements—including the Dalai Lama's own numerous agents—hostile to Chinese authority and eager to seek revenge for all that they had gone through under that harsh and unimaginative rule. This revolt of Lhasa's angry, bloodthirsty, and sharply divided populace ended with the imprisonment of Chung Ying and his men in the capital's pro-Peking Tengyeling monastery.

In the opening months of 1912, Chung Ying's position became increasingly untenable with every week that passed. But he had two important assets. The first was the small body of well trained and well-armed troops which stayed loyal; unfortunately, as time passed, their ranks were more and more depleted. Chung Ying also had under his direct control, a sizeable stockpile of arms and ammunition. In his negotiations with the Tibetan authorities conducted through the intermediary of the Nepalese agent in Lhasa during the summer of 1912, Chung Ying finally obtained a safe-conduct for himself and his men that allowed him to leave the Tibetan capital at the end of 1912 and go through Gyantse into Chumbi. Throughout it had been, at best, a long and sorry tale of tortuous, spasmodic bouts of negotiations interspersed with sharp fighting because the rival parties, full of distrust of each other, often violated the letter as well as the spirit of their agreements.

With Chung Ying driven out of Lhasa early in February 1913 and headquartered in Chumbi, Lu Hsing-chi came fully into his own. Understandably, he and his principals in Peking had been urging general Chung all along to stay put. It is interesting that one of the General's telegrams addressed to Thinyik Company in Calcutta, explains 'why he withdrew' to Chumbi even though he held out a solemn assurance that he 'will delay' his departure[1] from that place which was still inside Tibet. This was a position powerfully endorsed by the authorities in Peking.[2] Lu, who at the same time appears to have been in communication with the Dalai Lama, conveyed to him a threat from Peking that 'unless His Holiness gives orders to his troops forbidding the expulsion of Chung by force from Chumbi valley, troops will be advanced from Yunnan and Szechuan'.[3] Nor were 'threats' alone considered sufficient. It is evident that Lu's secret emissaries were soon on their way to Lhasa to help 'restore' China's influence and to 'attract' Tibetan ministers who were in the Lama's confidence, by 'promising them high Chinese rank'. It may be of interest to mention here that General Chung reportedly held the view that real government was 'non-existent' in Tibet, that the Lama was a mere figurehead, and that the country was 'entirely run' by the Ganden and Sera monasteries.[4] Chung's analysis notwithstanding, Peking 'approved' Lu's more elaborate 'proposals' including, inter alia, the adoption of a 'conciliatory' policy towards the people of Tibet, thereby winning over not only the 'officials' and the 'populace', but most importantly, the Dalai Lama himself. Essentially, the latter was to be persuaded to state publicly that Tibet was an integral part of the Republic of China, withhold his recognition of the Mongol–Tibetan treaty, and put an end to his own 'rebellious' attitude vis-à-vis the mainland. What was more, he was to accept the Chinese government's orders in 'all matters concerning foreign relations and the reception of officials of other countries'.[5]

III

From what is known, it may be safely deduced that the Lhasa regime did not, in the final analysis, succumb to Peking's curious mixture of blandishments and threats. And even though it was privy to secret

contacts with the Chinese, 'through the firm Pang Ta C'hang' (Thinyik and Company?), it stoutly resisted the deputation of Lu Hsing-chi to hold a conference in Tibet. This it did for two seemingly valid reasons: one, that no orders from the Chinese President in regard to Lu's being deputed had been received; and two, that the 'entry of a Chinese official into Tibet (while the Chinese were) fighting against us in Kang pa (Kham) will aggravate the suspicions of the populace'.[6]

What is interesting is that Lhasa did not stop with a mere non-compliance but held out, what could only be viewed as a veritable counter-threat. Thus it expressed the view that as a result of Chinese depredations in East Tibet, it was 'much to be feared that a second outbreak of hostilities will occur and that the Tibetans, will be compelled to rely upon foreign assistance and that a great change will come over public opinion'.[7]

That Lhasa was, in fact, taking a firm stand is borne out by Lu's own confession and also his complaint that Tibetan authorities were growing 'prouder and more intractable'. His remedy, though, was characteristic of his thinking. Peking should, he argued, 'lose no time in sending a plenipotentiary officer of high rank at the head of several *yings* (battalions) to hold conference with the Dalai Lama's representatives and to discuss all questions of reform and relief'. And only when these matters had been 'satisfactorily disposed', Lu further reasoned, would there be time enough to begin negotiations with the British. What is more, he was emphatic that Peking 'must exclude them (the British) from any participation which may prejudice our plans'.[8]

Nor was that all. For it was clear to him that acceding to the Tibetan request for holding the conference in Darjeeling, that is, outside of Tibet, 'shall absolutely forfeit the whole of our sovereign rights over subject territory' and make it doubly difficult to restore the earlier situation. It followed that Peking should make it known to Lhasa that Lu Hsing-chi had been appointed administrator in Tibet[9] and that the Lama should be 'directed to send officials to India to escort me into Tibet where I can restore the status quo and finally settle the whole question'.

Should the Lama have the temerity to disobey the President's order 'we can settle the question by force of arms; the Tibetans will

then be able to blame the Shachas (Shapes?) only and we shall retain some foothold from which to restore our status in Tibet'. Further, Lu argued, insofar as the Lama had not yet taken a firm stand, that he

> does not want a Chinese Officer to come to Tibet, while the Tibetan official classes dread the inevitable arrival of Chinese troops... I suggest that the Government take advantage of this lack of unity... direct the Dalai Lama to arrange for my safe conduct into Tibet, discussion will then be easy and we shall have gained a distinct advantage for our negotiations with Great Britain.

Above all, Lu was emphatic that China 'must check the influence of the British and draw the Tibetan officials into closer communication with ourselves and dispel their tendency to rely on foreigners by revealing to them the oppressive nature of British administration'.[10]

Peking, it would appear, accepted Lu's advice without hesitation. Accordingly, it now sought to direct the Dalai Lama not to delay sending officers to meet and escort Lu into Tibet where the latter would be able to discuss and carry out all measures for future reform, and for the restoration of the old system of administration: 'All contention will thus be allayed, general prosperity will reign and Your Highness's hopes of spreading Buddhism and of protecting life will all be realised.'[11]

IV

Even as Lu Hsing-chi's advice was being relayed to the Dalai Lama in the form of a directive from Peking, India informed the Secretary of State that the Chinese were making arrangements 'for re-occupying and garrisoning Pomed with (Chinese) troops'. This was an embarrassing position, for the 'place lies west of Zayul, is within easy reach of Lhasa and (is) adjacent to the Abor and Mishmi country'.[12]

At about the same time that Delhi informed Whitehall, Peking was resisting both the Dalai Lama's claims to territory captured by Chao Erh-feng in the later years of the Ch'ing and the choice of Darjeeling (which the Lama had suggested) for discussions on any questions regarding Tibet. In countering these demands from Lhasa, the procedure suggested by the Chinese envisaged that the

Lama 'should first discuss with the said Administrator (Lu) who will then communicate with the central government, than dispatching delegates to Darjeeling'.[13]

Lhasa, conscious of what was at stake, appears to have reinforced its resistance to Chinese proposals by moving troops into East Tibet. In fact, Peking was soon to complain that 'the foreigner'—a euphemism it employed for the British—was endeavouring to upset the Chinese applecart there. The Chinese President in his epistolary exchanges with the Dalai Lama was at pains to underline repeatedly that 'territory formerly subject to the Manchus is now subject to the Republic and no alternative (alteration?) can be made in its status'. What is significant is not so much a reiteration of the Chinese position, as the President's stern warning to the Lama that he 'will not hanker after the restoration of ancient boundaries, a course which will lead to the gravest of consequences'.[14]

A couple of weeks later, the President's admonition was even more explicit and admitted of few, if any, reservations. 'I trust,' he told the Lama, 'that you will not again raise the question of the boundary; you will thus avoid provoking a second outburst of dislike and suspicion between Chinese and Tibetans, and making it doubly difficult to effect a pacific settlement.'[15]

While Peking, at the highest level, was reiterating its position regarding China's sacred soil, Lu Hsing-chi was hard at work on his twin objectives of storming as well as sapping: preparing the ground for an armed confrontation with the Lama's men in East Tibet as well as endeavoring to buy over his ministers. His telegram of 9 June (1913), while self-congratulatory in tone on the reported 'good progress' made in subjugating Pomed, further desired that Governor Yin

> be instructed to make earnest arrangements for the permanent occupation and protection of these regions; from them the whole of Tibet can be dominated.... The power of our troops in the Eastern districts will be sufficient to prevent the Tibetans from daring to harbour thoughts of revolt and to prevent the foreigners from venturing to indulge in ambitious schemes.[16]

A fortnight later, Lu referred to his none-too-happy exchanges with the Dalai Lama who had invited him to confer with his delegates in Darjeeling. For his part, Lu had refused to countenance the Lama's suggestion for

I felt sure that the (Tibetan) delegate would make use of the foreigners to support claims for power and increased territory; I accordingly replied that the President's instructions to me were to enter Tibet.... I dwelt upon the fact that...Tibetan territory was subject to the Republic and therefore not a matter for contention and finally that it was a singularly infelicitous proceeding to drag quarrels about power and territorial boundaries into a foreign country (for discussion)....

Aware that Shatra, who had been designated as the Tibetan representative for the proposed conference in India, had been extremely hostile to China and had distinct leanings towards the foreigners, Lu mapped out his strategy of sending 'a messenger secretly to him to persuade him to come to India and have a personal interview with me; anything requiring discussion can then be communicated to the Central Government for decision; if his demands are excessive, there would be no difficulty in orders being issued from China, directing him to return to Tibet'.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of which he could not have been unaware—'India is a very extensive country and the eyes and ears in it are very numerous'—Lu was optimistic about being able to find means to induce Shatra to adopt a friendly attitude towards China.[17]

V

The rosy hues in Lu Hsing-chi's political landscape soon gave way to dark shadows, for as the summer months wore on, reports of the civil war in Eastern Tibet and of the internecine quarrels between Szechuan and Yunnan continued to persist with annoying regularity. Understandably, these were considerably disturbing to Lu and he maintained that whatever the cost and the 'condition of our troops in the Eastern districts, their supplies and munitions of war, I beg that ample preparations be made to enable them to achieve much for our country; if we can by force of arms reach Chiangta there will be some hope of restoring the situation in Tibet; if not, then not only shall we lose Tibet, but also Pomed, Fu-yu, Pienma and other localities will be lost'.[18]

There was disenchantment elsewhere too. It would appear that both Lu as well as his Chinese masters had at one stage played with the idea of having Lonchen Shatra elected as one of Tibet's delegates to the proposed National Assembly in Peking.[19] By the first week of

August 1913, however, Lu's own earlier enthusiasm that he would be able to persuade the Tibetan minister to toe the Chinese line began to wane perceptibly. Thus he noted that Shatra, then 'Chief' of the Tibetan treasury, 'will certainly not agree to go to Peking. The ten odd Tibetan officers and representatives of Lamas who are now accompanying him to Darjeeling will gravely hinder the progress of our negotiations'.

Since Tibet was in a confused state, rendering it difficult to distinguish between who was 'well—and who ill-disposed', Lu suggested that the vacancy in the National Assembly caused by Shatra's non-compliance with Peking's behest be left unfilled until after the conference in India was over.[20]

On still another front, Lu was facing a disconcerting and depressing situation. Reports from Tibet filled him with grave misgivings: news of the civil war in China had now penetrated there while 'the foreigners' made use of false reports in the newspapers to increase the Tibetans' suspicions. Nor had the Lama vouchsafed a reply to his own numerous letters and telegrams. What was more, Shatra enjoyed supreme power while a constant succession of urgent letters passed between India, Nepal, and Tibet. Worse,

> I hear that the Dalai Lama has been prompted by the foreigners to assert that Tibet cannot receive letters and telegrams from China: that it holds an independent status; that in the forthcoming conference at Darjeeling the Chinese representative is to be treated as an equal; that, if after the conference, Chinese troops enter Tibet, the British will take action; that Great Britain and Tibet are now on very intimate terms and that they will afford each other mutual assistance.

If on top of all this, Lu argued, a tripartite conference was to be convened at which Tibet was to be treated as an equal of China, 'then in drawing up a new agreement between the three parties... as that which we regard as of most importance, i.e., the restoration of the status quo, is precisely that which the other parties desire to obliterate'.

An ugly situation by any count, how was Lu to sort it out? The answer nearest to his heart, of course, was use of 'force majeure'. The President, he argued, should 'order Governor Yin to occupy that place (Chiangta) as soon as possible; Chiangta being close to Lhasa, its occupation would afford a counterpoise to the conference.

'Failing this, I fear, we shall find it very difficult to regain our sovereign rights'.[21]

As the date for convening the tripartite conference in India drew nearer, Lu Hsing-chi's misgivings continued to multiply. His worries were not confined to Tibet alone. Money was in short supply since remittances from Peking had been irregular.[22] In addition, the Indian authorities had not only refused to recognize him as administrator of Tibet, but had strictly forbidden him to correspond with the Tibetans on pain of being ordered to leave India.[23] In spite of this misfortune and neglect, Lu displayed remarkable strength of character. His dedication to the cause was never in dispute, nor was his ingenuity in devising ways of circumventing those galling British-imposed curbs. On 26 August 1913, he informed his superiors that 'now that the Government of India refuses to recognize me as administrator and forbids me to correspond with Tibetans, I shall carry out the publication of your last telegram by sending a special messenger and thus avoid the restriction'.[24]

What worried him most was the loss of prestige which China had suffered through Tibetan impudence, sustained and emboldened, no doubt, by British connivance. Thus he could very well visualize that when Shatra, accompanied by a British official would come to visit him, 'it is to be feared that what the British official slights will be held in small esteem by the Tibetan official, our national prestige will be set at nought by both parties while our sovereign rights over subject territory will be greatly prejudiced'.[25]

If only he were to have his way, the best would be to settle the Tibetan and Mongolian question as soon as possible, because the Dalai Lama 'harbours disloyal designs to which he is prompted by foreigners; it is to be feared that many complications will arise if there is any further delay'.

Since speed was the essence of the matter, Lu desired that delegate Chen should come to the conference 'without loss of time' so as to settle the Tibetan question.[26]

Another fear which Lu harboured was soon to become a reality. Shatra and the Tibetan authorities were pressing Wang Chu-tse, the acting Chinese commissioner of customs at Yatung, to quit. Lu was adamant that Wang was not to leave his post without authority,[27] a view on which he sought and obtained Peking's unqualified

support.[28] To him the 'issue of maintaining the post was important for the Yatung customs station has been established for twenty years and maintained at considerable expense in order to protect and assert our sovereign rights and covertly to restrain the importation into Tibet of Indian tea while upholding the privileges and profits on Szechuan tea trade'.

All the 'commands' and 'orders' from China notwithstanding, Wang had quit. Lu then pleaded with his masters in Peking that 'if we can find an officer to carry on the duties of the Customs station it will have a most beneficial influence upon the situation in Tibet. I therefore entreat you to take measures for the preservation of this post'.[29]

But the situation was not one of unrelieved gloom. In mid-September, Lu reported to Peking that he had secretly bought over the retinue of some of the Tibetan officers attending the Simla conference 'partly with a view to keeping him (Shatra?) under observation and partly that they (Tibetan retinue) may, when opportunity permits, persuade him not to cast off allegiance to our country'.[30]

To give weight to a weak Chinese position in Tibet, Lu argued forcefully for the establishment of a Chinese Consulate General in India. Not only had other powers established such consulates—'we have neglected to do so'—but Ivan Chen's presence in India, Lu pleaded, should be made use of 'to cause the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to bring this point and to come to an agreement with the British Minister who should telegraph to the Court of Great Britain for instructions to be sent to the Government of India (for the establishment of such a consulate)'.[31]

VI

Apart from whatever else he was doing to undermine the Dalai Lama's position in Tibet, Lu Hsing-chi was not averse to exploiting to the fullest, the well-known rivalries and jealousies that had long bedeviled relations between the master of the Potala and the ruler of Tashi-lhun-po. It is not germane to this study to delineate at length the beginnings of this sordid tale. The narrative would, in essence, be indistinguishable from the recent history of Tibet in general, and the birth and evolution of the Gelugpa, or the Yellow

Hats, in particular. Nonetheless, it would be useful to underline the fact that a lot of misunderstanding had been generated between the thirteenth Dalai Lama and the ninth Panchen Lama.[32] This was particularly pronounced during the former's long wanderings (1904–9) in the wake of the British-mounted Younghusband expedition to Lhasa and his later two-year exile in India (1910–12). It was then that the Chinese, in turn, had asserted control and nearly succeeded in their long-cherished goal of converting Tibet into a province of their Empire. On both occasions, Peking made a valiant bid to ensure that the Panchen fill in the Dalai Lama's vacant *gaddi* as the active head of the Tibetan administration. And the abbot of Tashi-lhun-po came very close to playing the Chinese game. It was no wonder that suspicion gnawed at the mind of the Dalai Lama regarding the integrity of the Panchen.

In December 1909, the Dalai Lama, then on his way to Lhasa at the end of his first long sojourn outside of Tibet, conferred with the Panchen at Nagchuka and reportedly the two reconciled their differences.[33] Later, in July 1912, when the master of the Potala was once again on his way home from two years of exile in India, he met the Panchen at Rawling, not far from Gyantse. As a result of the meeting the Panchen Lama expressed himself as 'entirely relieved' of his previous anxiety in spite of the fact that his ministers had been 'warned'.[34] These misgivings had earlier been confided to the British to whom the two Lamas had secretly appealed for mediation in their quarrel. Shortly after this seemingly sincere rapprochement between the two, Lu Hsing-chi made a major bid to sabotage the Dalai Lama's position by making use of the Panchen Lama as the solid base on which to mount his retrieval of a nearly lost Chinese position in Tibet.

To Lu Hsing-chi's all-too-obvious blandishments, the gullible Panchen fell an early, and easy, prey. Thus, one of the first bits of news from Lu in Calcutta to his principals in Peking mentions the Lama's acceptance of the president's gifts and of a newly-bestowed title:

> I respectfully prepared (the Lama wrote) an incense altar in the monastery at Tashi lhun-po, and after lighting the incense and making nine prostrations, humbly received the present in a kneeling posture and rendered thanks for this mark of celestial favour.[35]

Gratified by this initial gain, Lu confidently wrote home about a final settlement in Tibet presenting 'no difficulty' if 'external relations' could be successfully tackled.

On his part, the Lama assured that he was now in an excellent position with the president—in fact, he had been keen to send a special messenger to Lu to thank Yuan—made a fervent plea

> requesting that an order be sent to Tashi lhun-po, through the Tanguts, directing that a representative be sent to the conference in India to take part in the negotiations between China and Tibet.[36]

Lu put in a strong word and added that the course suggested by the Panchen would greatly benefit both China and the Lama himself. Furthermore, he pleaded that as desired by the Lama, the fact that he wanted to send a representative should *not* be made known![37]

Despite its plausibility and Lu's fervid advocacy, Peking seemed to be in no hurry to reach a conclusion. It was obvious that after talking it over with Ivan Chen,[38] it questioned the wisdom of Lu's scheme:[39] 'It would appear better not to cavil at distinctions between Anterior and Ulterior Tibet, since both China and Great Britain have accepted the said representatives, it follows that they represent the whole of the Tibet.' Besides, Peking argued, 'Now that the conference has begun, there is no advantage in our raising questions of this nature; on the contrary it is to be feared that complications would ensue.'[40]

Unsuccessful in his attempts to cut Lhasa down to size by securing through the Chinese, separate and independent representation at the tripartite conference, the Panchen Lama now set himself on a tangential course. Why not, he seems to have argued, plan a visit to Peking and there seek the active support and intercession of the regime? In spite of the fact that a formal letter of invitation was sent immediately, the Chinese were not quite convinced that he would come. This alone would explain why they asked Lu 'to communicate secretly with the Tashi Lama and ascertain if he is really able to undertake this journey. Also please enquire secretly by what route he should travel and find out what conditions prevail in the places through which he will pass'.[41]

In sharp contrast to the Lama, Lu, a down-to-earth realist, could clearly visualize that the journey contemplated by the Panchen

would not be an easy one to undertake. In fact, his telegram to Peking is much more explicit than he probably meant it to be:

If the Tahsi Lama *dares to* make this journey to Peking, the situation in Tibet will no doubt be vastly improved. But the Tashi Lama secretly fears the Dalai and has the greatest dread of the British, so it may be that he is undecided and *will in the end do nothing*...if he travels through India, Britain will devise means of impeding his progress....[42]

Two expressions are of significance: 'dares to' and 'will in the end do nothing'. They are perhaps far more revealing than Lu may have intended of the true character of the ninth incarnation of the Abbot of Tashi-Ihun-po. And it may be of some interest to note that despite a pressing letter, written at Lu's behest[43] from the Panchen Lama's own agent in Peking, the Lama *dared not* move out of Tashi-Ihun-po and despite the gestures he made, remained where he was and *did nothing*.

The British were not oblivious of all that was happening, As early as 15 April 1913, the India Office wrote to the Foreign Office in London about the Lama passing completely under Chinese influence. There was an inevitable concomitant to this proposition, it noted. It was that Shigatse would become a 'centre of Chinese intrigue'.[44] No wonder that a few weeks later the Secretary of State asked the Viceroy to have the Panchen informed 'that we wish to warn him in (a) friendly manner that no influence on his behalf by Chinese could be tolerated by us and that if a collision between him and [the] Dalai Lama results from his intrigues, no protection can be looked for from us'.[45]

It is sobering to reflect that less than a year earlier, in July 1912, largely through British initiative, a scared Panchen Lama had been assured by the Dalai that he held nothing against him and that they could start afresh!

VII

To ensure itself a strong position at the negotiating table in addition to securing separate representation for the Panchen Lama, Peking had been considering the idea of making use of the three great monasteries just outside of Lhasa. In a telegram to Lu Hsing-chi which was meant for Ivan Chen, the main thesis was spelled out:

The three great monasteries of Lhasa have hitherto enjoyed the chief administrative authority; their influence will be much felt in the preparation of the forthcoming agreement; to enlist their loyalty towards China it is first necessary to excite their gratitude.

For this purpose, Peking suggested, they could be asked to send representatives to India to take part in the conference.[46] It was Ivan Chen who alone was to decide after his arrival in Tibet whether or not this course should be adopted. It may be safe to deduce, however, that he chose not to.

His own brief apart, Lu too, it would seem, had

made preparations to hand over personally to delegate Chen all important dispatches, telegrams, documents, records, together with the latest reports on Anglo–Tibetan affairs so that when the conference begins he will be *au fait* with all necessary information.[47]

As the tripartite conference in Simla proceeded, it would be clear from the preceding telegraphic exchanges in the initial stages that Lu and Chen kept each other fully posted in all that was happening.[48] The question of Tibet's boundaries came very much to the fore,[49] and threatened a deadlock. Here, as elsewhere, Lu knew what the remedy was. For, he argued, 'if we can use the map prepared by Fu Sung-mu, former Warden of the Marches, which shows Chiang-ta as the frontier, not only shall we be able to include several thousand *li* extra but every important strategical point will come into our possession'.

He deplored the absence of any 'accurate or detailed maps of the region on the various frontiers of Tibet', a subject that assumed still greater importance when it came to the Kokonor and Turkestan boundaries. Lu informed Peking that on this, as on other issues, he was holding 'periodical secret discussions' with Chen, hoping that the latter would 'give effect' to his suggestions and act on his recommendations.[50]

In the middle of November 1913, Lu was informed through his army of secret agents, that the British official (Bell?) had been 'inciting' the Tibetans to risk a decisive battle with the Chinese in the March country, conscious that it would very greatly help the Tibetan delegate's negotiating position at the conference. He was not sure whether all this was true, 'but those people (the British) are full of treacherous plans and we ought to be on our guard'.

The situation in Tibet, Lu argued, could best be remedied by decisive action in Szechuan. He, therefore, urged Peking to 'telegraph in cipher to Administrator Yin (Yin Chang-heng of Szechuan Marches) to make secret preparations'.[51]

It is significant that the Chinese Foreign Office endorsed, almost in its entirety, Lu's analysis of the existing state of affairs, and directed Ivan Chen, its official representative at Simla, to 'act upon it (Lu's advice) as circumstances dictate or opportunity offers'.[52]

It was soon clear that far more than Chen's diplomacy, it was Szechuan that held the key to the tripartite negotiations in general and to China's own position in particular. Lu was painfully conscious that in the face of regional insurrections and internecine quarrels the Peking regime might not be very effective. He, therefore, appealed directly to Chengtu's military governor evoking his sense of patriotic duty and the importance of what was at stake:

> Our country (Lu telegraphed to the Tutu) is at present in an enfeebled condition; our external relations are involved and difficult. Nevertheless, Tibet is of paramount importance to both Szechuan and Yunnan and we must exert ourselves to the utmost.

Appealing to Hu, the governor, as the 'pillar' of Szechuan, he beseeched him to 'devise means for its protection (and with that end in view) send me your instructions so that I may be in a position to assist'. More specifically, Lu argued, it 'would appear indispensable to station a strong force at Chang-ta to check Tibetan incursions. If a force could be secretly introduced into Pomed it would afford the very best means of safeguarding the frontier'.

There were dangers lurking all around and, referring specifically to the British survey parties (which had penetrated these areas during 1911–13 to help demarcate the North East Frontier line) and to their evil designs, Lu feared that 'not only will Tibet fall within the limits of their (British) influence but the borders of Szechuan and Yunnan will also be prejudiced, it will become more difficult to repress disorders and this again will render our relations with Great Britain increasingly difficult.'[53]

Both in big and small matters, Lu was conscious of what was at stake. Thus, when news arrived that the Dalai Lama's regime was pressing the Drepung monastery hard to surrender 'its rifles' and 'munitions of war', Lu once again entreated governor Hu to give his

'detailed attention' to the matter and specifically asked if he could 'enter into relations with the native chiefs (Tu-ssu of the eastern districts) with a view to inducing some of them to enter Tibet secretly and there prevail on the people to make peace and prepare the way for us?'.[54]

In acknowledging governor Hu's reply that he had not been inactive, Lu expressed his conviction that Chinese authorities 'will doubtless be greatly relieved by your arrangements for placing a large body of troops in Chiamdo and for the garrison of Pomed'. Moreover, he was curious to know 'in what locality' Hu's proposed 'Pacificator' was to be stationed.[55]

VIII

At this intriguing stage in the fortunes of the negotiations, the contents of the India Office file containing the 'Intercepted Telegrams' are, most annoyingly, exhausted. From records at hand, it is obvious nonetheless, that the exchanges did not cease nor did Lu relax his vigilance. It would thus seem that on 5 March 1914, he had once again urged the Central Government to

> maintain their present military position in East Tibet, to seize Pomed and Gyade and, if possible, make a forced march on Lhasa and to meet our (British) proposals (for dividing Tibet into an Inner and an Outer zone) for (with?) a protest in London and a categorical refusal in Delhi.[56]

After the first Simla Convention had been initialled—and Ivan Chen's doing so categorically repudiated by his principals in Peking—Lu apparently informed the Wai-wu Pu that 'some arrangement', in which China has no part, 'may be concluded' with Tibet. To him, understandably, this would be an alarming development.[57]

There are few references to Lu Hsing-chi after Simla. On 2 November 1914, Delhi informed Whitehall of a meeting between an Indian official, Mr Cardew, and Lu in Peking in which the latter confided that the real bone of contention at Simla had been Gyade which was and 'is still entirely' Chinese.[58] A decade later Lu was again seen in Peking, presumably in connection with the Reorganization Conference between the North and the South, and the arrival in the Chinese capital of the Panchen Lama. The British had by then recognized him as 'one of the principal forces operating against a settlement of the Tibetan question' at Simla.[59]

NOTES

1. Encl. in India to Crewe, 11 February 1319, No. 87 in *Foreign Office Confidential Prints* (hereafter abbreviated as *FO*) 535/16. India had made it clear that its information was based on two telegrams which it had 'intercepted'.
2. Encl. in India to Crewe, 22 February 1913, No. 13 in ibid.

   Inter alia, Delhi now informed Whitehall that 'intercepted telegrams tend to show' that Chung had been instructed by his Government 'not to hasten his departure from Tibet on any account'. At the same time, 'Lu Pawng Chi' (Lu Hsing-chi?) had been 'given authority' to 'try to get at the four Tibetan boys who are to be sent for educational purposes to England... and prevent them from proceeding... to employ Tashi Wangdi, now in India, as a channel for intrigue with Dalai Lama'.
3. Encl. In India to Crewe, 28 March 1913, No. 160 in ibid.
4. Encl. In India to Crewe, 2 April 1913 No. 177 in ibid.

   Among other things, Delhi had learned from the intercepted telegrams that 'an appeal has been made to the Chinese by the Tashi Lama and an attempt made by China to send to Lhasa secret emissaries to restore influence of China and to attract certain Tibetan ministers who are in Dalai Lama's confidence by promising them high Chinese rank'.
5. Encl. In India to Crewe, 30 April 1913. No. 213 in ibid.

   Delhi informed Whitehall that 'certain proposals' made by Lu Hsing-chi for dealing with the Tibetan question 'have been approved' by the government of China. Apart from those mentioned in the text these included:

   i. adoption of a conciliatory policy towards Tibet
   ii. dispatch to that country of secret agents with Tashi Wangdi at their head for 'winning officials and populace and Dalai Lama'
   iii. Major Peng of Chengtu to be appointed 'guardian of eastern frontier of Tibet'
   iv. participate in elections as prescribed and send an (elected?) representative to Peking
   v. afford protection to all Chinese in Tibet and ensure that no prospecting or examination of Tibet's resources and products by foreigners was 'to be permitted'.
6. Lu Hsing-chi to Peking, 7 May 1913 in *India Office Records* (hereafter abbreviated *IOR*), Political and Secret Subject Files, No. 2350/1913, 'Tibet Intercepted Telegrams'.

   Lu's telegram cited above had reproduced a 'dispatch' from the Tibetan Ministry of the Interior which said inter alia that it was 'much relieved' by the receipt 'yesterday' of the president's dispatch to the Dalai Lama 'through the firm Pang Ta Ch'ang'.
7. Ibid.
8. 'Suez' to Peking, 10 May 1913 in ibid.
9. Lu Hsing-chi was painfully conscious of the fact that China's sovereign claims on Tibet had not been fully accepted. One of the limiting factors, to him, had been the fact that under the Manchus, the title of the Imperial Resident in Tibet, literally 'Resident in Tibet, Administering Great Minister', had been translated by the English as 'Resident' which ignored the word 'Administering'. Lu now urged Peking that it should 'take the opportunity of the government's negotiations with the British Minister to adopt such a translation of the term 'Administrator' as will, in effect, restore our sovereign rights'.

   Lu Hsing-chi to Peking, 11 May 1913 in ibid.

10. Lu Hsing-chi to Peking, 13 May 1913 in ibid.
11. Peking to Lu Hsing-chi, 18 May 1913 in ibid. The president's message was routed: 'To Lu Hsing-chi for transmission to...titles...Dalai Lama.'
12. Encl. in India to Crewe, 28 May 1913, No. 238 in *FO* 535/16.
13. President to Lu Hsing-chi for transmission to Dalai Lama, 4 June 1913, see note 6.

    That the president's intent was clear beyond dispute may be gleaned from some passages in this dispatch: 'Chiamdo and the other places mentioned (presumably in the Dalai Lama's communications) were included within the limits of Szechuan in the closing years of the Manchu dynasty.... Last year the National Assembly in drawing up the schedule of electoral areas, designated these localities as constituting the eighth ward of Szechuan.'

    Also see Encl. in India to Crewe, 2 June 1913, No. 258, *FO* 535/16.
14. President to Lu Hsing-chi for transmission to Dalai Lama, 7 June 1913, see note 6.

    In his message of 4 June, Yuan Shih-kai had said much the same thing: 'Territories subject to the late Manchu dynasty have devolved upon the Republic; their status cannot be altered.'

    A later message of 11 June while alluding to Tibetan forces and their activities against the Chinese in East Tibet, in terms of the threats they posed to Chinese commanders and their purchase of 'large quantities of munitions of war', warned that Lhasa wished not only 'to upset the boundary as it existed at the close of the Manchu dynasty, but also to abolish the frontier as it existed in the reign of Yung Ching (1723–36)'. Moreover, 'territory formerly subject to the Manchus is now subject to the Republic which cannot countenance any change'.

    For details, see note 13 and president to Lu Hsing-chi 'for transmission to...titles...Dalai Lama', 11 June 1913 in ibid.
15. President to Lu Hsing-chi 'for transmission to...titles...Dalai Lama,' 23 June 1913, in ibid.
16. Lu Hsing-chi to the president and Cabinet, 9 June 1913, in ibid.

    Lu anticipated that the 'power of our troops in the Eastern districts will be sufficient to prevent the Tibetans from daring to harbour thoughts for revolt and to prevent the foreigners from venturing to indulge in ambitious schemes.... The frontier question can then be considered settled.'
17. Lu Hsing-chi to the president and the Cabinet, 23 June 1913 in ibid.

    Lu also informed Peking that 'that party among the Tibetans which desires to submit to China is rapidly gaining strength, secret strife between the two factions is growing very acute and before long will break into civil war'. Additionally, that Shatra had 'hitherto' made use of the Dalai Lama 'to obtain for himself supreme power' in Tibet.
18. Lu Hsing-chi to the president, the Cabinet, the Board of War, the General Staff, and the governors of Szechuan and Yunnan, 9 July 1913 in ibid.

    Lu took the opportunity to point out that since Chung Ying's 'failure' to maintain his position 'there have been in Tibet neither Chinese officials nor Chinese troops and the independence of the country is already accomplished'. Worse, 'the aspirations of the Tibetans are in no way altered by their desire for a conference'. He was well-informed about British activity too: 'The year before last (1911) when the British attacked Apo (Abor) their troops reached our station Limao (Rima) in E-wu and other places...these officers surveyed the country and decided upon a line of frontier, which running beyond the mountains is to

include Pomed, Fu-yu, Pai-ma-kun (Pemakoi), Ewu and other places; all this with a view to hampering the operations of our troops in the Eastern districts; they will undoubtedly make the line of the frontier effective....'

Up against this grim situation, Lu queried: 'Is this the time for Szechuan and Yunnan to remain inactive?' Ibid. for details.

A week later, the Cabinet informed Lu that governor Yin of Szechuan had reported that the whole of the Marches had been recovered and Upper, Central, and Lower Hsiang-cheng pacified. The Cabinet further directed Lu to publish this information in Tibet and issue a correction to the press to prevent misunderstanding.

Cabinet to Lu, 16 July 1913 in ibid.

19. A message of 18 July from the Mongolian–Tibetan Bureau informed Lu that Shatra had already been approached, when at the capital, with a view to ascertaining his willingness for elections to the Assembly....

    Mongolian-Tibetan Bureau to Administrator Lu, 18 July 1913 in ibid.
20. Lu Hsing-chi to Cabinet and Mongolian–Tibetan Bureau, 1 August 1913 in ibid.
21. Lu Hsing-chi to president, Cabinet, vice president, Board of Foreign Affairs, Advisory Council, Army Board, governors of Szechuan, Yunnan, and the Marches, Mongolian–Tibetan Bureau, and Pacificators, 12 August 1913 in Ibid.
22. Throughout these telegrams are numerous references to Lu Hsing-chi's need for funds and, sometimes, threats of resignation if his demands were not met. In his telegram of 28 May in which he alluded to a previous demand for 500,000 dollars 'to be used solely for my entry into Tibet', he underlined: 'the situation in Tibet exercises a profound influence on the whole state, do not let us lose this opportunity; do not let us abandon the whole enterprise because of a slight obstacle.... I beg you therefore actively to recommend the remittance of the sum I have requested... If... my request cannot be granted, it only remains for me to tender my resignation'.

    Lu Hsing-chi to Liang Yen-sun, private secretary to the president, 28 May 1913 in ibid.

    Lu's telegram of 31 August is again very eloquent on this point: 'that the sum of 10,000 dollars which I received last May has been exhausted by the purchase of presents for Tibetans and by expenses connected with the dispatch of intelligence agents into Tibet.' Further, 'My intelligence agents in Tibet and my staff in India have been without pay for several months. Our need is most pressing. Please make me a telegraphic remittance of 20,000 dollars to meet immediate requirements.'

    Lu Hsing-chi to Board of Finance, 31 August 1913 in ibid.

    In a separate telegram of the same date, addressed to the president and the Cabinet, he underlined the extreme urgency of the situation: 'The telegraphic expenses of submitting my political reports on the situation in Tibet are very considerable; there are in addition the charges for presents to the Dalai Lama and Tibetan officials; the cost of sending intelligence agents into Tibet and the expenses of carrying on official hospitality in India. For several months past I have, owing to lack of funds, been unable to pay the salaries of my staff.'

    Lu Hsing-chi to the president and the Cabinet, 18 August 1913 in ibid.
23. Lu also recalled that he 'was appointed Administrator of Tibet, Resident in India. Last June Chung Ying handed over to me the seals of office and the buildings, instituted means of publishing proclamations in Tibet, corresponded officially with the Viceroy of India and in short transacted every kind of business'. It followed, Lu argued, that the president must intercede and 'ask the Viceroy of

India to relax his attitude (failing which) our national prestige will suffer and we shall have increased difficulty in handling the Tibetan question'.

Lu Hsin-chi to Liang Yen-sun, private secretary to the president, 18 August 1913 in ibid.

24. Lu Hsing-chi to Cabinet, 26 August 1913 in ibid.
25. Lu argued that since the situation was intolerable, 'I beg the Board to come to an early agreement with the British Minister and to telegraph me instructions accordingly.'

    Lu Hsing-chi to president, Cabinet, and Board of Foreign Affairs, 28 August 1913 in ibid.
26. Lu Hsing-chi to premier of the Cabinet, 31 August 1913, in ibid.
27. Lu revealed that Shatra had been pressing Wang in a 'very threatening' manner and that the affair had assumed a most dangerous aspect. Further that there was no question of 'armed conflict' occurring at Yatung and that Wang was not 'in the slightest danger'.

    Lu Hsing-chi to Cabinet and Board of Foreign Affairs, 1 September 1913 in ibid.
28. Peking now asked Lu to give Wang 'strict injunctions to remain quietly at his post and on no account to leave the country without permission'.

    Cabinet to Administrator Lu, 8 September 1913 in ibid.
29. Lu Hsing-chi to Cabinet, 9 September 1913 in ibid.
30. Lu Hsing-chi to Cabinet, 14 September 1913 in ibid.
31. Lu desired that Chen 'could be directed' to discuss the matter with the Government of India.

    Lu Hsing-chi to Cabinet and Minister of Finance, 13 October 1913 in ibid.
32. For a detailed study of the rivalry between the two Lamas, see Parshotam Mehra, 'Tibetan Polity, 1904–37', a series of twelve lectures delivered by the author as Visiting Professor at the Seminar fur Sprach-und Kulturwissen-schaft Zentralasiens der Universitat, Bonn, in April–June 1972. The manuscript was later to appear in print: *Tibetan Polity, 1904–37: The Conflict between the thirteenth Dalai Lama and the ninth Panchen, A Case-study*, Wieshaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1976.
33. Macdonald to political officer in Sikkim, 25 October 1909, Encl. No. 49 in *FO*, 535/12.

    See also 'Note communicated by Mr Bell respecting Lhasa and Shigatse', Encl. 4 in No. 34, in ibid.
34. India to Crewe, 12 August 1912, No. 167 in *FO*, 535/15.

    According to a recent authority, the Panchen Lama met the Dalai Lama 'ten days' journey from Lhasa at the end of 1912 to accompany the Dalai Lama back to his capital'. For details see Howard L. Boorman (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), III, pp. 57–60.
35. Lu Hsing-chi to the president and the Cabinet, 6 June 1913, see note 6.

    One of Lu's agents in Tibet reported that the Tibetan officers en route were 'exercising the strictest surveillance' which explained why the Tashi Lama did not correspond 'freely', or that there was 'great dearth of news' regarding Tashi-lhun-po.
36. Lu Hsing-chi to the president, 18 July 1913, in ibid.

    To all outward appearances, Lu Hsing-chi worked with a Calcutta Chinese trading firm of furriers, Thinyik and Company which had played a significant role in arranging for the repatriation of Chinese garrisons in Tibet through India.

37. Ibid.
38. Cabinet to Lu Hsing-chi, 24 July 1913 in ibid.
 Among other things, the Cabinet had informed Lu that while his proposal must await Chen's arrival in Lhasa, in the meantime it had been transferred to the Board of Foreign Affairs.
39. Lu Hsing-chi to Cabinet, 17 September 1913, in ibid.
 In his telegram, Lu had enquired whether the Panchen Lama 'should be instructed to send representatives' as the 'present situation affects the whole of Tibet'.
40. Minister of Foreign Affairs to administrator Lu, 29 October 1913 in ibid.
 Peking now further underlined the fact that the representatives sent by Tibet to the conference were recommended by Great Britain, and that they were 'neither nominated nor sent by China'.
41. Mongolian–Tibetan Bureau to administrator Lu, 1 December 1913 in ibid.
 Among other things, the Board directed Lu that he 'render every assistance' and report 'in cipher by telegram from time to time.'
 The president's invitation to the Lama read: 'The said Lama has ever been an advocate of peace and has from the first to last shown his loyalty in the most commendable manner. His request to visit Peking is granted. The Cabinet should instruct the (Mongolian–Tibetan) Bureau to issue the necessary passport.'
42. Lu Hsing-chi to the Mongolian-Tibetan Bureau, 7 December 1913, in ibid.
 Lu, on his own, had enjoined the Bureau 'to hold secret deliberations upon the means to be adopted' to bring the Tashi Lama to Peking and, again on his own, undertook to send a special messenger to Tashi-lhun-po to hold a 'secret interview' with the Panchen Lama.
43. Sha Chung's message read: 'I beg Your Holiness to decide on making this journey and appoint a date for your start. You will be accorded a most joyous reception here, so on no account hesitate. Please send all details to Lu Hsing-chi who will transmit them'.
 From Sha Chung, in-charge of Tashi Lama's Bureau in Peking to Administrator Lu, Peking to Calcutta, 27 December 1913 in ibid.
44. India Office to Foreign Office, 15 April 1913 in *FO* 535/16.
 The India Office noted that should the Panchen Lama, in fact, come under Peking's control, it would be directly opposed to the policy of HMG.
45. Crewe to Government of India, 3 May 1913, Encl. in No. 216 in ibid.
 That Lu's intrigues with the Tashi Lama were having effect is indicated by the warning from the Government of India that Lu may be deported. India to Secretary of State, 27 July 1913, Encl. in No. 329, in *FO* 535/16.
46. The idea seems to have originated with one Shih Yu Ming whose telegram Peking had reproduced and which was 'to be retained and handed over' to Chen.
 The Cabinet's comments upon Ming's proposals are interesting, indeed revealing: 'In drawing up the Indo–Tibetan agreement of 1904, the three Great Monasteries played a leading part; it is for the consideration of the said Pacificator (Ivan Chen)...whether or not this course should be adopted'.
 Cabinet to administrator Lu, 14 September 1913, see note 30.
47. Lu Hsing-chi to Cabinet, 14 September 1913 in ibid.
48. Ivan Chen's telegram of 21 October to Lu Hsing-chi reads: 'I presume that you have received my letter of the 16th and that it accords with your views, please let me know by telegraph whether you can come here and discuss matters with me.'

Ivan Chen to Lu Hsing-chi, 21 October 1913 in ibid. See also Lu to Chen, 8, 9, and 22 October 1913 in ibid.

49. As early as 30 October, Lu Hsing-chi had wired to Military Governor Hu Ching-yi and administrator Ying Chang-heng at Chengtu: 'If you have any detailed maps of the Tibetan frontier or other documentary proof, please send them as soon as possible.... The above is of the greatest importance to the Tibetan question.'

    Lu Hsing-chi to Hu Ching-yi and Ying Chang-heng, 30 October 1913 in ibid.
50. Lu Hsing-chi to Cabinet, 13 November 1913 in ibid.
51. It is interesting that Lu had concluded that Great Britain 'has really no intention of usurping Tibet', for she is 'content merely with rendering that country assistance'. However, 'there exists in the Government of India a section using present opportunity to increase its power and privileges'. All this notwithstanding, for China the situation was not altogether hopeless for 'I think that if, at the present conference, we can show some strength and can hold out for a short time, we may reap the fruit of success'.
52. The entire telegram from Lu (for gist see notes 45–6) was repeated to him 'for transmission to Commissioner Chen' who was asked to 'examine' and 'act' upon it.

    Cabinet to Lu Hsing-chi for transmission to Commissioner Chen, 20 November 1913 in ibid.
53. Lu revealed that he had telegraphed 'a cipher to the Government and also to Commissioner Chen advising them to hold resolutely to that map of Fu Sung-mu's in which Chiang-ta constitutes the boundary....' But, 'I do not know whether they will be able to maintain this claim because the Dalai Lama relies on British support. While the British support the Sha Cha (Shatra) as a puppet'.

    Lu Hsing-chi to Military Governor Hu (Chengtu), 28 December 1913 in ibid.
54. Lu Hsing-chi to Military Governor Hu (Chengtu), 21 January 1914 in ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Encl. in India to Crewe, 14 March 1914, No. 52 in *FO* 535/17.
57. Encl. in India to Crewe, 10 May 1914, No. 119 in ibid.
58. Encl. 2 in A.H. Grant to Sir Arthur Hirtzel, 2 November 1914, in ibid.
59. *IOR*, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/16.

II

INDIA AND HER NEIGHBOURS

4

India's Land Frontiers
The Role of the Buffer*

The author's work on this vast panoramic canvas has been in the limited field of India's relations with Tibet and with Tibet's great suzerain-cum-sovereign, China. As a necessary corollary, from time to time an attempt has been made in delineating the relationship that has subsisted between Tibet and Mongolia not only as parts of the great Buddhist world over which the Dalai Lama held sway but also as the 'Outer Dependencies' of the larger whole of the great Middle Kingdom under its redoubtable Son of Heaven. It is an interesting, even fascinating world that the subject opens up, useful not only in its own right and a deeper understanding of it affords a better appreciation of some of the problems that we face today in regard to our strong and powerful neighbour across the mighty Himalayas. In point of fact, closer analysis reveals that in any worthwhile study of Tibet, of a study in depth, the problem of the frontier was always at the fore—be it the frontier with Ladakh in the west, of Barahoti and Taklakot in the middle or even the tri-junction of India, Tibet, and China to the extreme north-east. It is the evolution of this frontier and the policy pursued in relation thereto, in the contemporary period, in all its varied ramifications, that has been dealt with somewhat superficially perhaps, in the paragraphs that follow. One may hope that they evoke some interest and become the subject of controversy—for controversy is not only the breath of life but leads to a better appreciation of a point of view, different from one's own. History teaches no better lesson.

* Presidential Address, *Indian History Congress Session Proceedings*, Bhagalpur, 1968, pp. 1–19.

'Life', Soren Kirkegaard, the well-known existentialist philosopher and humanist, once remarked, 'can only be understood backwards but it must be lived forwards.' It should be obvious that in sketching out, in however embryonic a form, the outline of a frontier policy for tomorrow, it may do well to understand how we became heirs to it today. Besides, in an assessment such as the one attempted here, it would be necessary to divest oneself of a lot of jargon, of cliches that are only too commonplace in a subject of this nature. Clearer definition should also help. For convenience, one may start with a few preliminary observations about frontiers followed by a quick, albeit necessarily brief and therefore, inadequate survey of policy in this regard in the ages gone by. The British whose inheritors, for good or ill, present governments are, deserve more detailed attention—if only to help foster a better understanding, and appreciation, of their bequest. And finally to the exciting, if challenging, problems of today and, one may add, tomorrow.

II

In its strictly geographical connotation, a frontier is a line of demarcation between territories with independent sovereignties. Put differently, it constitutes an area of separation between two regions of more or less homogeneous, and usually denser, population.[1] It is of such 'frontiers' that Lord Curzon spoke when, in his classic essay bearing that name, he described them as the razor's edge on which hang the modern issues of war and peace, of life or death, of nations.[2] From this it may follow that much of human warfare in Europe, no less than in Asia or elsewhere, has raged around, and for the defence of, frontiers. Indeed names such as the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Danube, and the Rhine, no less than the Tacna-Arica (between Bolivia and Peru) conjure up crowded memories. Equally well-known, and looming somewhat portentously in the rich past of these countries, are the Great Wall of China or the Khyber pass in India.

As frontiers of more recent, and topical, interest are the 38th degree of parallel in Korea, or the 17th in the case of the two Vietnams, the long and sprawling land frontier extending for over

two thousand miles between India and China which, hitherto dormant, is now the subject of a bitter conflict between the two countries. Again, there is the much more potentially dangerous—if only because it stretches over such an enormous distance, all the way from the Tumen river on the Korean border to the Pamir roof adjoining Wakhan's tongue of land in Afghanistan—the Russo-Chinese frontier. Here too the long-simmering Moscow-Beijing rift, now boiling over in public, threatens to bring alive what had been heretofore a relatively not-so-active a frontier.[3] Yet again, and despite some sizeable breaches in the ice of the Cold War, there is the still active, if intangible, East–West frontier that has riven Europe—and not Europe alone—in twain, for nearly two decades now. For them, and around them, wars hot and cold have been waged in the past, nor has the threat, as of present showing, altogether abated for the foreseeable future.[4]

In the making of frontiers, international law has a significant role to play. For the recognition of the existence, the sanctity, and the permanence of frontiers is one of the foundations on which the law of nations has been built. Constituting as they do, the very warp and woof of international covenants, frontiers once negotiated and laid down, could not be denounced and torn up, and would to that extent remain unalterable. A caveat, however, may be entered: such alterations may be brought through a bilateral agreement or use of *force majeure*.[5] Vital as the element of power politics is, and the preceding lines are a testimony to its import, it does by no means stand alone. As a matter of fact, human geography plays an equally important part.[6] For what makes for frontiers—and frontier problems—are such factors as race, population, language, geography, and access to the sea.[7] One need hardly stress that religion in varying degrees plays a significant role, namely the birth of Israel (1948) as also earlier (1947), of Pakistan, and that the slogan of self-determination has been a powerful weapon in creating new frontiers, by disrupting ancient ones.[8]

Students of political geography draw a further distinction between a 'boundary' and a 'frontier'. It is held that the greographical and historical boundaries, shown as lines on a map, represent in fact the edges of zones or 'frontiers', that the boundary does not merely demarcate geographical regions or divide human societies

but represents the optimum limits of growth of a particular society.[9] In an address to the Royal Society of Arts in 1935, Sir Henry McMahon, famous as the father of the McMahon Line of 1914, maintained that a frontier meant a wide tract of borderland which, because of its ruggedness or other difficulties, served as a buffer between two states. A boundary, on the other hand, was a clearly defined line expressed either as a verbal distinction, that is, 'delimited', or as a series of physical marks on the ground that is 'demarcated'. The former thus signified roughly a region, while the latter was a positive and precise statement of the limits of sovereignty.[10] It would follow that the Great Wall of China connoted the domain that it was thought proper to include in the Chinese '*tien h'sia*', marking it from the 'outer darkness' of the barbarians. So too did the Roman Empire's frontiers along the Danube, which separated it from the uncivilized tribes beyond its pale.[11] Much the same would hold true of the north-western passes in Indian history. For the problem here, as in the two earlier instances, was not only one of keeping the 'barbarians' out, but also of setting limits to the expansion of an imperial system.

Another factor deserves to be constantly kept in view. Many geographers, and other keen students of social sciences, speak of natural barriers as if these were active forces, 'forbidding' or 'preventing' passage. It is easy to slip into this practice, but in fact, in the relationship between man and nature, it is man who is active; nature is passive. It is important to make the distinction, because by doing so, one approaches the historical aspect with an unimpeded mind. For instance, the Himalayas, or the Pyrenees for that matter, present a different kind of barrier to an early historical society than to an industrialized society that has mastered the aeroplane or is equipped with the frightening armoury of thermonuclear weapons: here it is not nature that has changed, but man.[12] Again, whereas a mountain system—and the extent to which it is a barrier is inversely proportional to the ease with which it can be crossed—tends to mark a separation between economic and strategic regions, a river—and the larger and more navigable it is, the more important this aspect—forms an artery within a region. Trade tends to converge on the river from both sides. Inevitably, when a large river is made to demarcate a frontier between states, two principles come to a head-on collision:

that of political separation in the midst of a natural economic unit.[13] This conflict characterizes the history of such rivers as the Rhine, and portends, if indeed it has not already, to assume a crucial role with a river such as the Amur (Heilungkiang to the Chinese).

In the light of the recent breathtaking advances in the domain of science and the art of warfare—polaris submarines and thermo-nuclear rocketry, not to mention the cosmonauts and the impending man on the moon—one wonders if the age-old division between the natural and artificial frontiers has any validity today. Thus would the sea, the desert, the mountain, and the river and what would perhaps be non-existent today—the barrier of forest and marshes, which separated the states of the Heptarchy in Saxon England, or the Pripet Marshes, which formed a barrier in the western frontier of Russia, any longer guarantee natural security, as they once did? For the mater of that, even such artificial contrivances as a neutral territory, state or zone, or a buffer state or one secured by international guarantees, namely a Laos or an Austria, do not inspire in the guarantors, or among those so guaranteed, any measure of confidence. For frontiers today are fast evolving from mere geographical barriers into human bulwarks against political ideologies and systems of government, each of them claiming ultimate perfection, and allowing at best, a modicum of peaceful, if highly competitive, co-existence.[14]

III

An apt study of a frontier wherein both the geopolitical as well as human geographical elements have played significant roles is India's long and sprawling land frontier which, for most of its length, is conterminous with Tibet. For convenience it may be worthwhile to analyse, however, briefly, its historical geography under the two obvious sub-divisions of the north-west and the north, north-east.

From the very inception of its recorded history, and the fight of Chandragupta Maurya against that post-Alexander satrap, Seleucos, India's north-west frontier has been a subject of considerable concern to her rulers.[15] One could go further and maintain that principally, it was to protect the Khyber and other passes from the north-west against these onslaughts from 'barbaric

hordes' that every powerful Indian Empire evolved a 'frontier' policy. Thus, examined against the background of their respective times, the policy of Chandragupta Maurya against the post-Alexander Greeks, or of Anangpal vis-à-vis the Ghazanivids, was in no whit different from that of Balban, when pitted against the Mongols, or of Akbar or Aurangzeb, when faced with threats from Central Asia.[16] Ranjit Singh's thinking, and perhaps more so his handling of the frontier in the post-Nadir Shah–Ahmad Shah Abdali period, has brought him the well-merited tribute of his British successors. The latter, whose span has been the most recent in Indian history, deserves a closer examination if only to underline his legacy to the present.

It may be difficult to sum up the British epoch in a nutshell, but for a summary statement, it may suffice to suggest that during the colonial period, the theory and practice of the frontier, if also the foreign and defence policy of a united India, rested on the evolution of the buffer state.

The 'buffer', as a concept of international politics, is primarily of British–Indian coinage, and came into vogue somewhere around the 1880s. It was the period of the aftermath of the Second Afghan War when Alfred (later Sir Alfred) Lyall briefly acted as Foreign Secretary[17] to two successive Viceroys, Lytton and Ripon, and in the process, did much to solidify the system of alliances that operated at the time. The device itself has been likened to the intervention of a buffer, a mechanical contrivance for breaking or graduating the force of impact between two bodies. Not unlike its mechanical counterpart, the buffer checked the violence of political collisions, though it could rarely prevent them altogether.

In working out his carefully designed system of alliances, Lyall was, in reality, defining a concept of peripheral defence. Here was an arrangement that had become almost second nature to the British rulers in India whereby they constantly adopted a policy of interposing the border of a protected country between the actual possessions they administered, and the possessions of formidable neighbours whom they desired to keep at arm's length. Years later, Curzon called it a glacis, literally 'a smooth sloping bank', to the Indian fortress. 'We do not want to occupy it,' the great Indian potentate maintained, 'but we also cannot afford to see it occupied

by our foes.'[18] Elsewhere, Lyall had ascribed the tendency to a British interest to transfer as far as possible to land frontiers the whole concept of security derived from the existence of a belt of waters around England's sea coasts.[19] Just as Britain's insular position enabled her to stand at ease behind the girdle of water upon which the Royal Navy rode, by land also, it was in her interest to throw forward a belt of protected land in front of a weak border.

Two significant features of the buffer may be noted. One, the buffer is geographically interposed between the potential enemy and the area to be defended. Two, on land, as at sea, the region must in some sense, be a protectorate. Thus, essentially, the principle of defence involved is to stave off the enemy's advance by interposing a protected zone. Here, it may be recalled that just as a fortress requires an open space around or in front of it, so also it was deemed advantageous for the security of an outlying frontier province to keep the foreign territory adjoining it free from intrusion or occupation by powerful neighbours. To cite Curzon again,

> We are quite content to let it (the glacis of varying breadth and dimensions around or in front of the Indian fortress) remain in the hands of our allies and friends, but if rival and unfriendly influences creep up to it, and lodge themselves right under our walls, we are compelled to intervene because a danger would thereby grow up that might one day menace our security.

It may be relevant to mention here, if only in parenthesis, that the buffer state must be distinguished from such interrelated concepts as neutrality, neutralism, the satellite state and the *cordon sanitaire*.[20] Each of these political contrivances has its own peculiar characteristics and operates in its own distinct milieu.

Transplanted to the present context, British India in the nineteenth century may be viewed as though surrounded by a zone of land, of varying breadth, from which outside trespassers needed to be warded off. The outer frontier, did in no case, coincide with the outer edge of administered territory, and in fact, included vast regions bound in special treaty relationship with the British government. Where a definite right of exclusion of rival influence did exist—as in the case of Afghanistan upto 1921—that right of exclusion carried with it, a corresponding duty of defence. The system was so contrived as to trace a double line of inner and outer entrenchment of buffer areas on the landward periphery which

divided British India from the outer world, and has been likened to a kernel within an outer shell and an inner husk.

Viewed thus, the frontier, in the nineteenth century British-Indian context comprised, as it were, three concentric zones or rings. In the outermost, lay on one side, the maritime route, from the eastern Mediterranean through the Middle East to the Indian Ocean, and on the other, Indo-China, then an integral part of the French Empire in the east, and the Dutch East Indies controlling the vast Indonesian archipelago.

The sea route was vital, and the British mastery thereof ensured an undisputed control over it; so too was a workable understanding with Britain's European rivals, the French and the Hollanders. The intermediate circle or shell constituted a ring of states such as Afghanistan in the west, Sinkiang in the north, and Tibet in the north, north-east. And finally, there was the soft underbelly, as it were, comprising Baluchistan, the north-west frontier tribes and states, Gilgit and Leh, Sikkim and Bhutan, and the tribal areas sundering Assam from its neighbours in the north and the south. Nepal occupied 'a very special position' in this 'inner' ring.[21]

Until 1921, Afghanistan was regarded as the classic example of a buffer state, and it is not without significance that the Russians attached importance to the description. Indeed, in 1905, in a despatch to Sir Charles Hardinge, the then British Ambassador to Russia, Lord Landsdowne wrote,

> Court Benckendorff attached importance to the expression 'buffer state' and I said that it seemed to me an appropriate description of the position which both Governments desired to assign to Afghanistan.[22]

The Afghan Amir, it may be recalled, received a British subsidy and Russia, after the compact of 1907, conceded that it lay outside her sphere of influence.[23]

Sir Charles Bell, however, thought Tibet, not Afghanistan, to be an 'ideal' buffer and defined its role thus,

> What did we need from Tibet? Put briefly our main requirement was that Tibet herself should be strong and free. With their scanty population and their dread of hot climates, the Tibetans could be no serious menace to India.... For we want Tibet as a buffer to India on the north. Tibet is ideal in this respect. With the large desolate area of the Northern Plains controlled by the Lhasa Government, central and southern Tibet governed

by the same authority and the Himalayan border states guided by or in close alliance with the British Government, Tibet forms a barrier equal, or superior, to anything the world can show elsewhere. Tibet desires freedom to manage her own affairs. Her people resent foreign interference. And it is well that it should be so, for thus is the barrier most efficient.[24]

It should be obvious that the buffer system, as developed by the British around India, depended for its practical validity and application, on its retention of, and respect for, complete internal freedom within the buffer area. It demanded too that the buffer should exclude other extraneous influences, and in the conduct of foreign relations, be guided by the (British) Indian Government. The principle was reckoned sufficiently important as to impel the British to use force to exclude rival influences from these areas—the two Afghan Wars and the Younghusband Expedition to Lhasa are instances in point. It may be pertinent to point out, however, that despite the wars, and the expedition, the British did not attempt, through use of *force majeure*, to incorporate these territories into their Indian empire. Thus, even though the buffer states may admit to a certain derogation of sovereignty in their external relations, they were in no sense satellites, much less protectorates.

To be sure, one could be more categorical and underline the fact that the buffer state would break down in the process of being transformed into a satellite. For, whereas a real buffer could aid in the prevention of war between contending powers, a satellite may serve as a bridge-head to facilitate aggression. The concept of the buffer state, in pre-supposing a free and effective political entity, ruled out partition or any form of break-up; it had little in common with neutrality or neutralism.

Thus in the final analysis, during the colonial period, Afghanistan to the north-west and Tibet to the north-east had been able, and indeed helped, to maintain a position of independence against pressures from Russia or China and, after vicissitudes, had developed a relationship of a friendly nature with the Government of India.

Apart from Tibet and Afghanistan, there was in the inner ring, a layer of Himalayan states to the north-west and the north-east which included Nepal and the tribal areas now known as North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). They had, over the years, developed more

or less a close relationship with British India, and even where that relationship was not of a direct nature, the system worked out fairly effectively in practice. Thus in the case of the princely state of Kashmir with its depend-encies of Gilgit, Baltistan, and Ladakh, sundering it from China and the desert wastes of western Tibet, the British Indian dominion was adequately protected through its close ties with the Dogra ruler. Actually, the creation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, under Gulab Singh in March 1846, owed its origins largely to a British determination not only to establish an adequate counterpoise to the then truncated Sikh state on the plains of the Punjab (itself extinguished by the annexation of the province less than three years later), but also to play the role of a British-backed sentinel in central Asia against the then much feared Afghans and the yet-distant Russians and Chinese.[25]

An interesting variant of the buffer is the related concept of the proxy buffer. It may be recalled in this context that Indian attempts to enlist the power of China, and later of Afghanistan, in contriving a defence against Russian advance towards the northern frontier on the Pamirs, proved abortive. The Chinese, like the Afghans, withdrew from much of the Pamirs, failed to assert their claims in a manner that best suited the British, favoured a solution which British India opposed, and were generally unreliable and uncooperative. Moreover, their ability to resist the Russians was extremely suspect. Thus the problem of reconciling the claims of these proxy defenders of India's Pamir interest proved almost insuperable in practice. As a keen student of the northern frontier has pointed out,

> If the Afghan Amir was an unsatisfactory champion on the upper Oxus and Western Pamirs, the Government of India had difficulties only a little less serious in its attempts to build a barrier against Russia in Kashgar and on the eastern Pamirs.... The British activities in Chitral, inspired by Russian moves, weakened the willingness of the Afghans to defend Indian interest on the Pamirs, just as British activities in Hunza affected the Chinese.[26]

No better illustration of the secondary military importance of the northern frontier may be had than the fact that the Indian government was able to entrust much of its defence to a native state, Kashmir, as a proxy defender. For although the British political grip over the Maharaja's dominion continued to tighten, the fiction of Kashmiri influence extending into the heart of central Asia was

studiously kept up and persisted in for long. This had its disadvantage but served a basic British need for the moment.[27]

In this way, the British maintained on the northern frontier what was, in effect, an inner and an outer set of buffers against any contact between the Russian frontier and the limits of direct British administrative control. Whatever the difficulties of the proxy buffer policy, and one of the most basic was that the interests of the buffers could, and did in fact, come into conflict, they were completely successful in their primary aim of avoiding conterminity and of keeping Russia back from the Hindukush passes.

A word on the Ladakh frontier may not be out of place here. And it is this that while the British rulers of India were anxious to demarcate formally, or at any rate delimit, India's borders with Afghanistan and Russia, they regarded the frontier of the client state of Kashmir, with a moribund China, as of little importance in itself.

IV

From the evolution of the concept of buffer states, and its practical application in the case of British India, the transition to its complete breakdown may appear abrupt and is yet of utmost significance.

With British withdrawal from India and Pakistan, and the importance of British policy in Afghanistan and Tibet decreasing precipitately, there is, as of today, no great western power on or near the whole of inner Asia. In fact, British power yielded place to mutually hostile, if additionally warring successors who lack the wherewithal for effective influence, not to say control, beyond their own borders. Resultantly, all the territory between the Black and the Yellow Seas is divided between a Communist-controlled Russia and a Communist-ruled China. And yet, the Russian and Chinese communists are heirs to two different pre-communist histories. Besides, whatever their idiological professions, the two regimes have inherited a rivalry which, thanks to British ascendancy and Chinese weakness in Asia, had hitherto remained dormant.[28] Again, they are heirs to two divergent traditions towards their national minorities and in the Mongolias and Chinese and Soviet Turkestans, it is not the Chinese and Russians who are in direct contact with their national minorities in large numbers—although lately their respective

percentages in the overall population has tended to increase considerably—but the Mongols and the various Turkic-speaking inner Asian peoples, who locally still constitute the majority.

With the birth of Red China, a new, yet highly unpredictable factor has emerged in this part of the world. The old political mechanism here was a passive nature, lying as it did in a static balance with a series of buffers minimizing contacts between Russian Eurasia and southern and eastern Asia directly ruled, or indirectly dominated, by the great maritime powers. The new stabilisation however, is active, for it lies in what may best be described as the moving balance. In turn, the buffers were, for a time, transformed into zones of transition, and of access of economic interchange between Russia on the one hand, and China on the other. What started as political cooperation nonetheless soon degenerated into a precarious Cold-War relationship bordering on studied antagonism, and even, active hostility. What is significant is that the two great physical colossi, representing rival imperial systems contending for mastery in inner Asia, are now joined in battle-array across their borderlands. Hence the tensions that have recently escalated in the disputed frontiers of the two super powers in the Asian heartland.

Two aspects of this new phenomenon may be taken into account. One, in the nineteenth century there existed in these areas what was then the hallmark of colonialism—drainage economies, implying the opening up of previously remote hinterlands for extraction of raw materials. Through cheap maritime transport which fed the industrial centres of the Western world, the natural wealth of the non-Russian domains of the Czar, of British-ruled India, and of a China that had been cut up into rival spheres of influence and interest, was thus drained away. A colonial economy, necessarily, took out a lot more than it brought in. Sharply in contrast as it were, in the great revolution that has now taken place, the distinguishing mark of both Russia and China and of a developing economy in India, is the strong emphasis on opening up the hinterland for development on the spot, instead of extraction. It is this fact that has transformed the relationship between these peoples and their cluster of national minorities—the Mongols, the Tibetans, the Tadjiks, the Uighurs, and to an extent, the tribes along India's eastern borders, the Daflas, the Akas, the Abhors, the Miris, and the Mishmis.

Status and politics too have tended, to an extent, to play down the kinds of pressures that may otherwise result in anti-Russian, anti-Chinese, and one may add anti-Indian nationalism. This is largely because the economy channels into satisfying careers, on an equality with the Russians, the Chinese, and the Indians, many of those who would otherwise be nationalist rebels. Modern nationalism which originated in Europe and later in colonial countries as a reaction to Western rule, has been described as 'a phenomenon of societies of institutionalized inequality', as a reaction to which nationalism became, in essence, 'the right to be different'. In inner Asia, and one may add in the tribal belt along India's northern frontier, the steam is taken out of the demand for the right to be different by offering the potential nationalist leaders, through the system of recruitment into the elite, the opportunity to be the same.[29]

V

A necessary corollary to the disappearance of the buffer state has been a series of recent developments along India's northern frontier with China, and it may not be out of place here to make a reference to these, howsoever briefly. To start with, a word about the Chinese view of their place in the world.[30]

China's frontiers, now conterminous with twelve neighbours—North Korea, the USSR, the Mongolian Peoples' Republic, Afghanistan, Pakistan (wielding Kashmir's cease-fire line), India, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, Burma, Laos, and North Vietnam—may be viewed against a background of traditional irredentism and a contemporary ideology, tampered with pragmatism. Nor should one lose sight of China's view of her own history, much less of what Geoffrey Hudson has called 'the extraordinary performance in semantics' whereby Marxist–Leninists justify the forcible maintenance of old empires in the new-fangled guise of a struggle against imperialism.[31] For China has always been the civilized world, and territory once won for civilization could not be given back to barbarism. It followed that territory which was once Chinese, must forever remain so, and, if lost, must be recovered at the first opportunity. Such a loss could by no means be considered either

legal or valid; it would at best be recognition of a passing weakness. The entire growth of the Chinese empire, through more than 3000 years of its history, has been built on this principle.

'How far back are we to go?' the late Nehru is reported to have asked despairingly at a particularly infructuous stage in the Chinese explanation of the shifting power limits of their remote past. 'As far back as suits our case', Chou-En-lai may have interjected. A recent instance in point was the Chinese assumption of a claim to Bhutan as 'a lost territory'. Basically, it was a hark-back to the days of the C'hing empire whose Amban in Lhasa wrote (in 1904) that 'the Bhutanese are the subjects of the Emperor of China who is the Lord of Heaven' and that Bhutan was 'the gateway of the south'.

Briefly, India's border conflict with China may be considered, from the Chinese point of view, on three counts: calling into dispute the entire frontier from Ladakh to Burma; questionning the validity of the Indian portion of the McMahon Line (having accepted and ratified the Burmese segment thereof), and finally repudiating New Delhi's claims to the NEFA districts of Tawang and Longju. In essence, the Chinese policy is to endeavour to win their case in Tawang and Longju, and in so doing, explode the myth of its validity over the frontier as a whole.

On the other hand, New Delhi's viewpoint on the frontier in general, and of the McMahon Line in particular, rests on more solid ground. Nor has it lost anything by claiming the (McMahon) Line while repudiating Tibet's right as an independent nation to negotiate the convention which produced the boundary. It will be conceded without much ado that Tibet was in a position to negotiate such a treaty at the time (1913–14), albeit circumstances in 1950, 1954, and 1962 were such that China was the dominant power, and thereby in a position to dictate her own interpretations.

Arguing the other way round, one could maintain that the Tibetan government was, in fact, controlling Tibet and some parts of NEFA from 1914–50, and that both the British, and later the Indian government, recognized this in their dealings with that country. It would follow that India's claim to the McMahon Line would rest on the basis of recognizing Tibet as a state which by virtue of its *de facto* independence, was in a position to enter into international commitments of a binding character.[32]

VI

In retrospect, the buffer system, which, in the Indian case, largely revolved around Tibet, has broken down because the powerful, and the then widely respected British authority all along the northern frontier, has withdrawn itself. Again, the partition of the sub-continent, with the resultant tension between India and Pakistan, has reduced India's potential, or for that matter Pakistan's, for neither is any longer in a position to furnish aid to any peripheral state menaced from without. With the end of the imperial system, the buffer state has disappeared too, and the two- or three-tier arrangement, alluded to earlier in the text, is fast lapsing. Consequently, one gets to a near approximation of the European system before World War II where compact, sovereign states jostled with one another, affording little elbow-room for intermediate protectorates, if only because their political and administrative frontiers coincided.

An interesting case-study which highlights the new situation with a certain poignance is that of Kashmir which Professor Toynbee has compared to the sub-continent's Vilna. Here, India has to maintain a frontier force in two directions—one looking at the Chinese as they probe forward in Ladakh, and another on the cease-fire line with Pakistan. Even the sure defence of NEFA is rendered infinitely more difficult by the presence of the enclave of East Pakistan. The starkness of the new realities is revealed all the more in that all through the period of British rule—from Warren Hastings to Louis Mountbatten—Tibet was always interposed between India and China. With the elimination of the Tibetan buffer, the two most populous nations of the world, for the first time in history, stand in an open confrontation along the Himalayas. The Chinese, like the Afghans, in the case of Pakhtoonistan, stake claims on ethnic grounds to the Himalayan states as being entitled to an individual existence outside the Indian world, or its orbit. The fact that East Pakistan is close to NEFA made the Chinese, in 1962, attack through the Assam Himalayas until they were almost within sight of the plains. In much the same way, as the Aksai Chin frontier of Ladakh is not far from Pakistan-held Kashmir, it poses its own peculiar problem of defence for New Delhi.

Both China and Pakistan hope that by maintaining a second front against India, sufficient pressure can be mounted so as to compel it to yield ground in the hitherto unresolved issues between New Delhi and each of the other two States. Besides, it would help further undermine India's prestige in the world at large, more so in the influential Afro-Asian community of nations. What is more, Pakistan hopes that India may thus be put on the run in Kashmir while China is keen that New Delhi be obliged to supplicate for peace with her and thereby, its already-eroded influence in the Asian-African world be rendered nugatory, if not completely ineffective.

In its border settlement with Burma,[33] Beijing has refrained from using the word vassal, or 'satellite', the buffer state itself being vociferously denounced as a device of imperialism. And yet the Chinese have attempted to establish around their own periphery, areas which would serve them—in all but name—as buffers not indistinguishable from what Mao has himself called 'intermediate zones'. Again, in negotiating these covenants, it was clearly stipulated that the countries included, namely Burma, Afghanistan, Nepal, should maintain neutrality and reject any participation in military blocks or coalitions.[34]

Nearer home, the cliché about 'neutral' enemies has been accepted without much ado. The argument, not too unfamiliar, runs somewhat in this fashion. Our efforts to stop China were belated and half-hearted. In the same manner, we were 'soft' with Pakistan on various issues, such as Kashmir. With its vast resources, population, territory, proximity to our borders and a policy of unabashed aggression, China is our 'natural' enemy. And, abetted by a variety of influences of a like nature, so to an extent is Pakistan. Here it may serve as a corrective to recall Palmerston's famous adage about the miasma of permanent friends or permanent enemies, the only abiding fact being one's own changing interests.

Indian and Pakistani attitudes of diplomatic manoeuvrings against each other have long been accepted as substitutes for policy. It was an attitude of this kind that led in Pakistan to the separation of the North-West Frontier tribal policy from foreign policy, though the security of that frontier, is a *sine qua non* for the survival of Pakistan itself. Similarly, for India, it led to a failure to realize, until it was too late, that the absorption of Tibet would lead to an open

confrontation with China on the Himalaya. Afghan pronouncements, lately somewhat muted, seem to lead to the conclusion that the yet-embryonic Pakhtoon state, carved out of West Pakistan, is destined eventually for amalgamation with Afghanistan itself. It would thereby imply a complete repudiation of the Durand Line drawn up between British India and Afghanistan in 1893. It is not quite clear whether this notional Pakhtoonistan also embraces Baluchistan, an area which is not inhabited by the Pakhtoons at all. To the layman, Pakhtoonistan corresponds roughly to the North-west Frontier Province of British India, all the way from the border with China in the north to Baluchistan in the south. Again, as late as March 1960, Pakhtoonistan enjoyed both the active as well as tacit support of Kremlin, while New Delhi's attitude has been clearly equivocal, if opportunist.[35] There was a clear refusal to realize that the stability of the north-west frontier is, on a long-range view, as much an Indian as a Pakistani interest.

On the same line of reasoning, it might have been supposed that Pakistan would have regretted an assault by China on sub-continental frontiers which lay in such close physical propinquity to both wings of the country as to threaten her equally with India. And yet Pakistan has not only not affirmed its support of the Indian frontier along the McMahon Line, but on the contrary, has given the impression that this frontier is open to re-negotiation.[36] On her own, Pakistan has negotiated a frontier with China on the Gilgit–Baltistan sector of Pakistan-held Kashmir.

If at the time of the Chinese aggression, President Ayub had deemed it fit to declare that, whatever their internal squabbles, Pakistan stood with India in the face of any attempt, from without, to compromise any frontier of the sub-continent, it would have made the actual, and indeed any potential aggressor to think a hundred times over. What is equally revealing of Pakistani short-sightedness has been the attempt to encourage the Chinese to jump into the fray during the September–October 1965 hostilities with India.

A word here about Russian support to Afghanistan on the Pakhtoonistan question may not be out of place. While it is true that through the fifties, Moscow unreservedly condemned the Durand Line as a legacy of British imperialism, its tune has perceptibly

changed of late. For over the past few years, Pakistan has been the recipient of technical help, and lately even armed assistance from the Soviet Union, while in Afghanistan, Russia has moved in a big way to render economic and industrial aid. It should be obvious that the Kremlin would hate to see its huge investments in men and machinery go waste by lending countenance to forces that are out to tear them apart.[37] Again, at Tashkent in January 1966, the Russian Prime Minister did a yeoman's job in bringing about a cessation of hostilities between India and Pakistan and curbing their bellicose tendencies. Today, therefore, it suits the Russian book not so much to stoke the fires of discord and dissension as to foster relations whereby a certain modicum of peace and stability returns to these strife-torn lands on its periphery.

It will thus be seen that it is Communist China, and not the Soviet Union, that has become involved in major questions affecting the security of the frontiers of the sub-continent. Actually the Kremlin felt highly embarrassed in October 1962 by China's assault on India's Karakoram and Himalayan frontiers. Again, while Peking has moved with force of arms to alter India's frontiers, it has failed to hold out any explicit assurances of support to Pakistan on her north-west frontier. Significantly, though it has readily agreed to admit Pakistan's occupation of northern Kashmir and to agree to a frontier settlement with her there, the agreement ostensibly retains its provisional character.

It is imperative to bear in mind the fact that all the frontiers, whether these be Indian or Pakistani, are of equal import, and, by implication, of equal danger to both states. Neither could afford, therefore, in its own selfish interest, to compromise any of them. Thus India on the Durand Line, and Pakistan on Ladakh, or on the McMahon Line in NEFA, must necessarily uphold each other. Would it be perhaps too much to negotiate a *quid pro quo*, a commit-ment for the defence of the Durand Line in return for a guarantee of the McMahon Line?

While underlining the seeming paradox in 'the present consecration of these British-made lines as heirlooms in the successor states' national heritages', Professor Toynbee[38] fails to stress the obvious, namely that the frontiers of the sub-continent have, for the first time, been exposed to pressures unknown under

the Raj. How the latter would have reacted if faced with the post-1947 stresses and strains of Central Asia's now visible momentum, is anybody's guess. What is certain is that the sanctity, if not the consecration of the Durand Line was an accepted fact of British policy on or in regard to the north-west frontier. And so it may stand to reason what would have been the McMahon Line in the years after it had been laid, if a near-independent Tibet had not then intervened between the Assam Himalaya and a China then racked by civil strife.

It may be pertinent to recall here, that not long ago, the Political Department of the People's Liberation Army in one of its work bulletins, spelt out a succinct statement of attitude: 'For the time being we cannot take back Taiwan, so that the United States must remain for a long time in a blameworthy position, but the legality of its arbitrary position will certainly not be recognized.' It stands to reason if something like this typically Chinese political philosophy, arising from an entirely different moral premise, should not form the basis of the Indian approach towards China. In other words, realpolitik demands that while recognizing that territories on our frontier taken by China cannot be wrested back in the immediate future, we must refuse to legalize their forcible occupation. Peking must remain 'for a long time to come in a blameworthy position.[39]

For the Chinese, it need hardly be emphasized, the 'blameworthy position' of neighbours or rivals is an active constituent of policy, not always or necessarily to be improved upon by removing the offence. To Peking, in the long run, irredentism appears to subserve a continuing purpose. In this context, not only may their response to apparent laws of history prove radically different—as the recent story of the Cultural Revolution and its off-shoot, the Red Guards—has demonstrated—but the precept and practice of the ruling party requires, as a condition precedent to internal advance, the maintenance of external tension.[40] There must persist a spectre of excitement around an incompletely established perimeter.

VII

The age of laissez faire on, or in regard to the frontier is a thing of the past; the history of the last few years in our case is, in fact, an

eloquent testimony to its sad, if sudden, demise. To be sure, the Chinese aggression of October 1962 and the Pakistani armed assault in September 1965 are symptomatic of the threats posed by our neighbouring lands.

Again, one must boldly face the fact that the prospective development—economic, political, and social—of a large part of the world will not conform to one's own pattern of thinking, and quite possibly, not to one's liking. It will be, for a long time to come, an unsettled and even dangerous world to live in. Conduct of frontier, and of foreign policy must therefore necessarily be based on prudence and sobriety, buttressed by fully-maintained strength. Patience is a greater attribute of statesmanship than sabre-rattling. For the individual as well as a society, there is an emotional catharsis in losing one's temper and threatening one's opponent with dire consequences.

It is necessary, indeed imperative, to size up problems of national security in their proper perspective. Thus to conceive of national security, as is the wont, as a state of armed readiness—a vast, if frightful and forbidding arsenal of weaponary—is palpably wrong. Again, one tends to assume that it is primarily this purely military ingredient that creates security; the concept of military hardware haunts statesmen, as it does, nations. Actually, in a developing, modernizing society, security means development. As the now-retired US Defence Secretary Robert McNamara once said: 'Security is not military hardware—though it may involve it. Security is not traditional military activity—though it may encompass it. Security is development.' McNamara's remarks have an aptness and an applicability today in India that needs stressing. In fact, without development of a sort, there would be no security for us. A developing nation that does not develop could not long remain 'secure' for if its security implies anything, it implies a minimal measure of order and stability.

It would then follow that without internal development of at least a minimum degree, order and stability are simply not possible. They are not possible because human beings cannot be frustrated beyond intrinsic limits. They react, because they must.

Security apart, one of our problems today is to build bridges to span the chasms that separate us from our neighbours. There being

no one-cliff bridges, if one has to span a chasm, it is necessary to rest the structure on both cliffs. By their nature, however, cliffs are hazardous, and yet in a thermo-nuclear world, one could scarce afford any political acrophobia. By building bridges to those who make themselves our adversaries, we can gradually create a community of trust, and a community of effort. It may seem a long-range view, albeit in relation to our immediate, short-ranged, day-to-day problems, it has a certain relevance—both as an immediate guide, as well as a distant goal.

In history certainly, and even in sociology, one cannot build a comparative study out of dissonant and unique components. A study of the problems of our frontier policy are bound to reflect the evolution of that frontier over the past many centuries and its co-relationship with our internal tensions no less than with our international commitments in the altered circumstances of today. The benefit of any thorough and periodic re-examination—an appraisal, agonizing or otherwise—lies in the hope that it may lead our decision-makers, and the general public, to envisage and grasp new opportunities afforded by changing circumstances, and to give a greater sense of awareness to the conduct of our international relations.

NOTES

1. Brigadier-General Sir Osbert Mance, *Frontiers, Peace Treaties and International Organisation* (Oxford, 1946), p. 1 and C.B. Fawcet, *Frontiers: A Study in Political Geography* (Oxford, 1921), p. 21. Two other studies may be listed here: Sir T.H. Holdich, *Political Frontiers and Boundary-Making* (London, 1920) and Owen Lattimore: 'The Frontier in Human History', in his *Studies in Frontier History* (Oxford, 1962).
2. George Nathaniel Curzen, *Frontiers: The Romanes Lectures* (Oxford, 1907).
3. In an article quoted by Tass, the Soviet Communist Party newspaper *Pravda* maintained that the attitude of the Chinese Communist Party leadership on a thermonuclear war 'aims at undermining not only the struggle against another war but also the struggle against imperialism itself' and that Beijing's refusal (to sign the test ban treaty) 'placed her in the company of the most bellicose sections of imperialism', the *Statesman* 14 August 1963, Later (*The Stateman*, 5 April 1964) the same paper charged that Beijing 'went over to open political warfare' aimed at dividing the international communist movement and intentionally 'doing everything to exacerbate differences'.
4. The fact that Beijing has openly repudiated, and France tacitly torpedoed, the nuclear test ban treaty initially signed by USA, UK, and the USSR early in 1963 (and later subscribed to by a very large number of countries, including India) bodes ill for the easing of international tensions.

5. W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central Asia,* 2nd edition (Oxford, 1958), p. 308.
6. Harold George Nicolson, *Peace-Making* (London, 1919), pp. 130–1, charged that geographical, economic, and transport considerations were not given enough weight in determining the best frontiers for a stable, territorial arrangement at Versailles.
7. Sir Osbert Mance, op. cit., p. 1.
8. Sir Alfred Cobban, *Self-Determination,* 2nd edition (Chicago, 1948) is a valuable contribution to an understanding of the havoc wrought by the workings of this doctrine.
9. 'All objective frontiers have some width. The common conception which is expressed in such terms as "frontier line" and "border line" is a result of the natural human tendency to think of things in sharply defined separate compartments: it is not based on a careful observation of facts.' Fawett, op. cit., p. 17.
10. Sir Henry McMahon, 'International Boundaries', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts,* Vol. 84, 1935, pp. 2–13. Professor Lattimore contends that 'the linear frontier', as it is conventionally indicated on a map, 'always proves, when studied on the ground to be a zone rater than a line'. Owen Lattimore, 'The Frontier in Human History', in his *Studies in Frontier History,* pp. 469–70.
11. Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China,* 2nd edition (New York, 1951), pp. 238–40.
12. 'The changing significance, for changing societies, of an unchanging physical configuration... leads to the axiomatic statement that frontiers are of social, not geographic origin', Owen Lattimore, 'The Frontier in Human History', op. cit., p. 471.
13. And here it is as well to remember that of the two main functions of a frontier—that of securing protection and of facilitating, or at any rate allowing intercourse—the precise use varies considerably both in time and place.
14. Reference here is to the 'Iron Curtain', or its counterpart in Asia loosely, and certainly very inaccurately, described as the 'Bamboo Curtain'. These 'curtains' have a connotation apart from mere geography. UNESCO's emblem stressing that defence against war must be built in the hearts of men is another case in point, so also is the Berlin Wall.
15. In R.C. Majumdar (General Editor), *The Age of Imperial Unity,* History and Culture of the Indian People, II (Bombay, 1951), Dr Radha Kumud Mookerji gives, in chapters 2 and 3, pp. 39–70, a connected account of foreign invasions—both Persian and Macedonian—and the evolution of a Mauryan Imperial Policy towards them.
16. A.S. Beveridge, 'The Khaiber as the Invaders' road to India', *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society,* 13 (1926), pp. 250–8 and 308–74, attempts to trace the routes of the seven great invaders of India from Alexander (327–26 BC) to Nadir Shah (1738–9).
17. Sir Alfred Lyall, 'Frontiers and Protectorates', *The Nineteenth Century.* Lyall who entered the Indian Civil Service in 1856 was Home Secretary, 1873–4, and Foreign Secretary, 1878–81. Later he became Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Provinces (1882–7) and a member of the Secretary of State's India Council, 1887–1902.
18. Ronaldshay, *Life of Lord Curzon* (London, 1928), 3 Vols, II, 30, No. 174, August 1891, pp. 312–28.
19. For much of the reasoning here, the author is indebted to 'Buffer States', *The Round Table,* No. 180, September 1955, pp. 334–45.

20. P.L. Mehra, 'Satellites and Satellitism: Tibet and Outer Mongolia as Proto-types', *Journal of Indian History*, XLII, 3, December 1964, pp. 727–61.
21. This line of reasoning is developed in C.S. Venkatachar, *Geographical Realities of India* (New Delhi, 1955), pp. 50–1, and Sir Olaf Caroe, 'The External Problems of India and Pakistan', *Asiatic Review*, 44, 1948, pp. 303–9.
22. *British Documents on the Origins of the War* (1898–1914), Vol. iv, p. 521. In 1907, Sir Edward Grey, then Foreign Secretary, minuted on a dispatch from Sir Arthur Nicolson, the British Ambassador to St. Petersburg, 'We cannot go back on what Lord Lansdowne said about a "buffer state", but there is no recognized definition of the phrase .' Ibid., p. 535.
23. Alluding to the Anglo–Russian Convention of 1907, a recent study makes the point that,

    '...The Russians declared Afghanistan as outside her sphere.... All her dealings with the Amir would be passed through the British Government. On their part, the British undertook not to annex or occupy any part of Afghanistan.... The Great Game was over.' Arthur Swinson, *North West Frontier* (London, 1967), p. 266.
24. Charles Alfred Bell, *Tibet, Past and Present* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 190–1 and 246.
25. My attention has been drawn to this by my colleague Dr S.S. Bal who presented a paper entitled 'British Interest in Creating the State of Jammu and Kashmir' at the *XXIX Session of the Indian History Congress,* at Patiala, in December 1967.
26. For a detailed account, see J.G. Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier* (London, 1963), pp. 22–4, 233–5, 237–8, 252–4, 279–80. For the citation, ibid., p. 314.
27. Ibid., pp. 315–16.
28. For the territorial rivalries in Central Asia between the two communist giants, see Sir Olaf Caroe, 'China in Central Asia', *The Round Table,* No. 224, October 1966, pp. 379–86.
29. I have drawn on the line of reasoning in Owen Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 501–13.
30. An excellent exposition is in C.P. Fitzgerald, *The Chinese View of Their Place in the World: Chatham House Essay* (Oxford University Press, 1962).
31. G.F. Hudson. 'The Nationalities of China', in his (editor) *Far Eastern Affairs* (London, 1960), p. 61.
32. The Dalai Lama has maintained that,

    If Tibet did not enjoy international status at the time of the conclusion of the 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. On the other hand, if the McMahon Line is valid and binding, the Simla convention must be valid and binding. And therefore, it follows as a logical corollary that Tibet did possess sovereign and international status at the time when she concluded the Simla convention.

    For details see the Dalai Lama, 'The International Status of Tibet', *India Quarterly*, XV, 3 July–September 1959, pp. 215–20 and H.E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 231–2.
33. For a study see D.E. Whittam, 'The Sino-Burmese boundary', *Pacific Affairs,* 34, 1961, and Dorothy Woodman, *The Making of Burma* (London, 1962).
34. Francis Watson, *The Frontiers of China* (London, 1966).
35. In an interesting chapter 'Pushtunistan Unjast' (literally, 'there is Pushtunistan'), J.C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan* (London, 1967) has spelt out the

genesis of the Afghan demand. He maintains that 'apart from the sentimental attachments of the Royal family', there is a subconscious desire to unite the several disparate Pathan areas under a modicum of Afghan control, that the dispute has fluctuated in intensity for 20 years, and that though poised on the brink of disaster, it has never actually 'toppled from its precarious ledge into open conflict'.

36. N. Ahmad, 'China's Himalayan Frontiers: Pakistan's Attitude', *International Affairs*, October 1962.
37. 'All the same and granted that the Russian attitude has been modified, the ingredients of the situation still exist. A similar cycle of suspicion, protest and combat, could all too easily be set in motion again.' J.C. Griffths, op. cit., p. 59.
38. Arnold Toynbee, *From the Jamuna to the Oxus* (Oxford, 1964), p. 70.
39. Parshotam Mehra, 'Chinese Aggression: Ladakh, a Case-study', I & II, the *Hindustan Times*, 13–14 May 1963.
40. Francis Watson, op. cit., p. 201.

5

The Elusive Triangle
Tibet in India–China Relations—A Brief Conspectus*

The scope of this brief exercise is vast: perhaps a little too vast and ambitious. It may therefore be useful if the principal strands woven into the narrative are presented in a summary statement. This has been attempted in the first few opening paragraphs.

In its long and chequered annals, Tibet's links with India and China date back almost to the dawn of her recorded history. They rested largely on close Buddhist ties: Tibetan lamaism is an offshoot of the Mahayana school of Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, a Bodhisattva. Moreover, the Tibetan script was based on Devanagari, the language itself leaning heavily on Sanskrit. With the learned *panditas* travelling to and fro with loads of religious texts, India became, for the average Tibetan, a sacred land, a land of pilgrimage. In sum, the ties between India and Tibet were spiritual bonds, with a trickle of overland trade thrown in on the side, as it were. There was an apparent change of stance under the British rule but, as the Younghusband expedition of 1904 clearly demonstrated, British India was *not* interested in making Tibet into an imperial protectorate. The only assurance it sought was that neither Russia nor China make Tibet into a base for mounting hostile operations across the Himalaya.

The beginnings of Tibet's links with China go back to the mid-seventh century of the Christian era when a Tibetan ruler married

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a Han princess of the ruling Tang dynasty. Chinese influence came in its wake: in manner of dress and modes of living. Centuries later, especially in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, the Mongols, whose vast empire embraced China as well as Tibet, established close links with Tibet's lamas, after accepting their faith. The pattern was that of the traditional *guru-chela* relationship; the lay prince, buttressing the authority of the high priest, who in turn extended him spiritual support. Under the Manchus (1644–1912), the relationship evolved further. But, in essence, the Dalai Lamas treated it as a purely personal, almost familial one: with the Manchu emperor, *not* the Han people. Understandably this was to become a major bone of contention in the wake of the October (1911) Revolution, the birth of Sun Yat-Sen's Republic and later, Mao's People's Republic of China.

II

Tibet—'Bod' or 'Po-yul' to the Tibetans, and 'Xizang' in the new fangled *pinyin* of contemporary Chinese—is a vast, physical expanse lying athwart the mighty Himalaya, all the way from Kashmir in the west to Arunachal Pradesh and beyond in the east. 'Po-yul', meaning literally 'snow country', or 'Gang-chen', roughly equivalent to *Himavat* in Sanskrit, heavily underlines Tibet's unusual elevation, which ranges from a low of 4000 feet to a high of 17,000 feet, the average being 12,000 feet or some 3600 metres above sea level.

The barren and treeless wastes of Tibet's high plateau inhabited by a small, and far from growing population, living under a mediaeval, if not a primitive social system, have played no mean role in Asian history. This is largely because Tibet lies between two huge, populous and powerful neighbours—India in the south, and China to the east. Also to Tibet's north and west, the sprawling, and by no means distant land mass of Russia looms portentously. Tibet is hedged in by Asia's, and indeed the world's highest mountain systems. To its north, stretches the Kunlun range while to the south lie the mighty Himalaya. In the east, separating her from China, lie the Hengtuan (Hengduan) mountains. To the west, are the Pamirs and the Karakoram. Not surprisingly, a large number of Asia's great rivers have their birth in the Tibetan plateau. The Tsangpo

meanders first east, and then south, to become the Brahmaputra. The Makong, farther to the east flows into Burma and Laos, as does the Salween into Burma. The Yangtze and the Huang He (Yellow River) in the east flow into China proper; the Sutlej in the west flows into Pakistan while the Indus makes its foray into Ladakh.

The elevated, wind-swept Tibetan plateau grows almost nothing and can barely meet the needs of its scanty population. Nonetheless, it boasts a rich and varied landscape of snowclad mountains, glaciers, green forests, grass lands, and salt lakes. Lhasa, which is on the same latitude as Cairo and Los Angeles, has an elevation of 12,000 feet but, being deeply ensconced in a valley, has little winter snow.

Both in area, as well as in population, Tibet lacks precise definition. Official Beijing estimates for the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) are an area of 1.2 million sq km and a population of 1.89 million, according to the 1982 Census. Tibetan estimates are more impressive: an area of 3.8 million sq km and a population of 10 million.

To the average Tibetan, India is the holy land to which he/she aspires to go one day on pilgrimage. It is the birthplace of the Buddha, the founder of Tibet's religion and the fount of its wisdom. In Tibet, India is 'rGya-ghar', the land where people wear white or 'Phagsyul', the holy land. The present Dalai Lama has called Tibet 'a child of the Indian civilization'.

As in its religion, so also in its language and writing—as well as in its literature and history—Tibet has a distinct identity. Yet, in making what may be called their fabric of civilization, the Tibetans borrowed their impulses—in generous fashion—from India. The influence of China has been marked too but more in material things: the habit of drinking tea, the mode of dress, of furnishings in a Tibetan home. All these were China's not so unobtrusive gifts to the land of the lama.

In the second half of the eighth century, Mahaguru Padmasambhava who was born in the Swat valley and educated at Nalanda, wandered all over the Himalayas as a Siddha and, in religious bouts, worsted Tibet's indigenous Bon priests. Prior to that, an active liaison existed between some Siddhas of ancient India and the mystic saints of Tibet. An assiduous cultivation of Sanskrit

characterized such well-known Tibetan centres as Sakya, Tashilhunpo, and Derge, all under the influence of learned *Panditas* from India. It is now widely accepted that Buddhism spread to Tibet long before Songtsen Gampo's reign (*ca.* 620–49) which would imply that the development of the Mahayana school in the Swat–Gilgit–Pamirs region, and the emergence of Tantric deities and rituals, is very relevant to the history of Buddhism in Tibet.

Significantly, in Tibetan, *pandita* was the only acceptable description for an Indian monk-scholar, while the lamaist hierarchy began only with Atisha's (AD eleventh century) disciple, Dromton. The order of priests came to be known as *kadampa* which later merged into Tsangkapa's Gelugpa sect—better known as the Yellow Hat sect to which the Dalai Lama as well as the Panchen belonged.

In the succeeding centuries, until the advent of the British in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, India's ties with Tibet suffered grievously. For one, Mongol invasions from the north increasingly riveted Tibet's attention on happenings in China. Nearer home, the advent of Islam in India, and the virtual eclipse of Buddhism from the land of its birth, dried up, as it were, the mainspring which had kept their links alive and flourishing. These links were essentially of a non-military, non-political character, the major emphasis being on cultural ties with an uninterrupted traffic in 'pandit-hunting' and in sacred religious texts. This is not to gainsay the fact that a trickle of overland trade continued all through.

III

Songtsen Gampo, briefly referred to earlier, was Tibet's first great king and its real unifier. With him begins the Chinese connection—through his marriage in 641 to a Han princess of the ruling Tang dynasty (AD 618–906). Another reputed marriage of the Tibetan ruler to a Nepalese princess lacks wider acceptance. The Chinese queen who swore by the Buddha's faith encouraged tribal chiefs to visit Ch'angan, now Xian, the Tang capital. At the same time a minister was sent to Kashmir—then a flourishing centre of Buddhism—to work on a written script for the Tibetan language, based on Sanskrit. As has already been mentioned, Buddhism was at that time not unknown in Tibet.

Many centuries elapsed before the next active link was established. This came when the Mongol prince, Godan (?–1251), a grandson of Chenghiz Khan (1162–1227), and his armies marched into Tibet, to within some sixty miles of Lhasa. This impelled some of the Tibetan clerics to move to Godan's seat of authority. Before long, they were successful in persuading the Mongol chief to embrace their religious tenets. Later in 1251, a Mongol army marched into Tibet and helped place Buddhist lamas in positions of temporal authority. This was to mark the beginnings of the much debated Mongol–Tibetan (later Manchu–Tibetan) priest–patron relationship, better known in India as the *guru-chela parampara*. Apart from this, the new tie signified for the Mongols, an introduction to a more formal culture, to a written script, and to a hegemony over Tibet that guarded their entire southern flank. For the Tibetans, especially the clerical elite, it meant the acquisition of supreme power in their land, and the ability to maintain that power with the help of a strong ally.

In 1368, a Chinese dynasty—the Ming—succeeded their barbarian Mongol predecessors who had adopted the dynastic title of the Yuan (1260–1368), and soon consolidated their hold over China. However, they upheld the Mongol policy towards Tibet by inviting its leading clerics to visit the imperial capital, Beijing. Unfortunately, there were few takers, and for good reason. The Ming, a weak dynasty, ineffective at home, and almost powerless abroad, was unable especially to halt the Mongol tide. It is little wonder then that from 1566 to 1644, when the fortunes of the Ming declined, political relations between Beijing and Lhasa were in limbo, and virtually non-existent.

The fifth Dalai Lama (1617–82) came to power at the time of the ongoing Manchu–Mongolian warfare and an acute intra-Buddhist rivalry. The Dalai Lama appealed to Gusi Khan (1584–1656), leader of the Koshot Mongols, to help his Gelugpa or Yellow Hat sect against its lay and spiritual rivals in Tibet. This Gusi Khan did, and in the bargain assumed the title of Po Gyalpo, or, the religious king. Gusi Khan did not stay in Tibet for long, but his office survived until 1717. The Great Fifth who came to wield considerable spiritual as well as temporal authority, and enjoyed the powerful support of the Mongols, built the Potala and created the office of the *Panchen*

(*Pandit-chen*, literally the 'Great Pandit'), elevating his own teacher to that rank.

Invited to visit Beijing in 1646, and again in 1647, the Dalai Lama did not undertake the journey until 1652. Tibetans claim that the Shunchih Emperor (1638–61) came out of Beijing expressely to greet him; Chinese sources, however, maintain that he was out hunting and met the Dalai Lama by chance! In any case, the Lama was spared the traditional *kowtow* and only kneeled before the Son of Heaven. This visit is a major benchmark highlighting the ambiguity in the relationship between the two countries. How Tibet saw it, is clear enough: the Lama had been sought after and was treated as though he were an equal, independent, political entity. The perceptions of the Manchu emperor in Beijing however, were different: Tibet was an important part of his fledgling empire which fostered Buddha's cult of non-violence. His cordial reception of the Dalai Lama would act as a moderating influence on the militant Tibetan-Mongol cultures, and to that extent, make Beijing's dealings with them easier. Above all, friendly ties with the up and coming Gelugpa would serve to mollify the ever-turbulent Mongols.

Not long after the death of the Great Fifth, Tibet found itself in dire need of help. The Dzungar Mongols had infested the land and wrought rack and ruin. The incumbent Dalai Lama appealed to the Manchu ruler for help, and in 1720, a Chinese army arrived to throw out the intruders. In its wake, Beijing introduced two systemic reforms: it created the office of the Regent, and established a Ministerial Council.

Before long however, the Regent and his Council were at loggerheads and an internecine power struggle ensued. To put things in order, another Manchu army was sent in 1728. In its wake was created the office of the Amban, which continued until the end of the Qing dynasty in 1912. At that time it was agreed that a Chinese garrison of 2000 men would be stationed at Lhasa. Later, the number was reduced to 500 and later still to only a hundred men for the garrison. The year 1750 was witness to yet another imperial intervention against the Dzungars. And for the third time, in as many decades, Manchu armies marched into Lhasa.

In 1792, Tibet was subjected to Gurkha incursions from the south. In their wake a Chinese army marched into Tibet, entered

Nepal and fought the invaders back, to within twenty miles of their capital.

Following earlier institutional changes in Tibet's administration, the Manchus, in 1793, introduced a golden urn to be used by the Amban in the choice of the Dalai Lama. It may however be noted that in the case of ninth, thirteenth as well as the fourteenth Dalai Lamas, the urn was *not* used. Significantly the life spans of the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth Dalai Lamas (1805–75) were unusually brief. All the four died young, for the most part before attaining majority, and under 'mysterious circumstances.'

Until the early decades of the present century, Tibet remained a closed book, hermetically sealed, as it were, from all extraneous contact. China, it would appear, fostered its isolation; Tibet encouraged it. It was mutually beneficial for both: for Beijing, to prevent invasion and imperialist encroachments into Tibet; for the lamas of Tibet, to keep out opposing and conflicting ideas, while safeguarding their traditions and monopoly of political power.

IV

Both Tibet and China proffer rich historical data and details to plead their respective cases: Tibet to claim virtual independence from outside control; China to assert that Tibet was and continues to be an integral part of the mainland. To begin with, Tibet boasts a unique language and culture, a written script based, however, on Sanskrit and *not* Chinese. Lhasa also claims a continuous central government from the seventh century onwards. The priest–patron relationship that had been initiated with the Mongols even before they came to rule over China, had continued with the Manchus. It was, Lhasa contends, a purely personal, familial relationship: with the Manchu emperor, *not* the Han people. For when the October (1911) Revolution toppled the Qing dynasty, the Dalai Lama repudiated all ties with the new-born Republic.

The Tibetans also maintain that the Ambans were originally intended to be 'security guards' to the Dalai Lama, and were always appointed from among the Manchus, *not* from the more numerous Han. Tibet also maintains that it did not accept the Anglo–Chinese Convention on Sikkim of 1890, nor the Trade Regulations framed

under it, three years later. It had not been consulted in the drafting of either document. On its own, however, Tibet had concluded treaties with Nepal, in 1856; with Great Britain, in 1904 and 1914; with Outer Mongolia, in 1913. Moreover, in 1912, when the Manchu dynasty fell, the Lhasa government evicted all Han nationals from Tibet and the thirteenth Dalai Lama proclaimed Tibet's independence. From then until 1950, the Chinese government, in effect, exercised no control or influence in Lhasa.

Tibet has also had foreign diplomats stationed on its soil: from Nepal, since 1856; from Great Britain, between 1936–47; from independent India, during 1947–56. While China was a belligerent and part of the Allied war effort in World War II, Tibet remained neutral. In 1943, a Tibetan Bureau of Foreign Affairs was established in Lhasa.

In January 1943, when the British and US governments renounced their extraterritorial rights in China, Tibet remained unaffected. As a matter of fact, extraterritoriality was not renounced in Tibet until as late as April 1954.

Lhasa also insists that the 17-point Agreement with China in May 1951, was concluded under duress, and with forged seals, and was therefore illegal *ab initio*.

Beijing's case strongly repudiates most of the above claims. To start with, it maintains that the government in Lhasa was a local or regional entity, *not* a national government. Nor do a distinct Tibetan language and culture by themselves connote independence. According to Beijing, the Ambans at Lhasa were, for long periods of time, in virtual control of Tibet's government and administration. After 1712, when the Manchu armies marched into Tibet, China's power reigned supreme in all its border regions, *including* Tibet. Tibet's treaties with foreign powers, especially those of 1856 and 1904, were concluded in the wake of military debacles inflicted first by the Gurkhas, and then by the British under Younghusband. And significantly, the expression 'foreign power' in the Lhasa Convention of September 1904, did *not* include China. Again, this treaty was materially modified by the Anglo–Chinese Adhesion Agreement of 1906, and the Anglo–Russian Convention of 1907. Beijing also asserts that Tibet's treaty with Outer Mongolia in 1913 has remained shadowy—and may possibly be only a figment of Tibetan

imagination; that the 1914 Simla Convention was altered *after* China's delegate had withdrawn from the tripartite conference. In any case, China had repudiated its plenipotentiary's action and had refused to ratify the convention. Moreover, Beijing argues, the Dalai Lama's declaration of independence in 1912 was unilateral; it could have only been valid if accepted by the other party. And, the Chinese add, if the country were truly independent, why did its plenipotentiary accept the 1914 treaty which *inter alia* recognised Tibet as a part of China and the latter's suzerain rights over the land?

V

After the fall of the Qing dynasty, and the emergence of the Republic, and later still, after the rise of Mao's China—Beijing's stance on Tibet has undergone little actual change. And this despite laboured semantics on the rights of minorities including those of self-determination and secession.

To start with, Sun Yat-Sen underscored the oneness of the Chinese by stressing the need for assimilation and absorption of all non-Han minorities, including the Tibetans, into the larger stream of Han culture. Later, under Soviet Russian influence, the National Congress of the Kuomintang in 1924 not only accepted the 'equality' of all national minorities but also 'recognize(d)' their 'right of self-determination...in a free and united Chinese Republic.' KMT actions both in Tibet and Outer Mongolia, however, belied these professions while Chiang Kai-shek, writing in *China's Destiny* (1947) talked unambiguously of ethnic minorities constituting various 'stocks' emanating from a common blood line! Or, as one commentator put it, tribes springing from a single race, the Han.

It was now the turn of the Chinese Communist Party to go through the motions. Article 4 of the November 1931 (Juijin) Constitution declared that all nationalities—the Han, Manchus, Mongols, Moslems, and Tibetans—living in China 'shall be equal before the Soviet law and shall be citizens of the Soviet Republic'. The Soviet government even accepted that 'all' of them 'living in the territory of China shall enjoy full rights of self-determination, i.e., they may either join the Union of Chinese Soviets or secede from it and form their own state as they may prefer'.

Less than five years later, the Party changed its position. Talking to Edgar Snow in 1936, Mao expressed the hope that the Outer Mongolian Republic 'will automatically become part' of the Chinese federation 'at their own will' while 'Mohammedan and Tibetan peoples, likewise, will form autonomous republics attached to the Chinese federation'. Ten years later, on the eve of the birth of the People's Republic of China in 1947, Mao talked of 'first' recognizing Outer Mongolia 'as a natural entity' and then organizing a sort of United States of China to meet Mongol aspirations. 'The same,' he added, 'is true of Tibet'.

Three years to the day when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established, the *People's Daily* made it clear (2 October 1952) that 'at this juncture any national movement which seeks separation from the Chinese People's Republic for independence' must be branded as reactionary. For this would be tantamount to undermining Han 'interest' and would only accrue to the 'advantage of imperialism'. As if this was not clear enough, Article 2 of the 'Common Programme' of the PRC for the 'Implementation of the Regional Autonomy for Nationalities' underlined that each national autonomous region was 'an integral part' of the territory of the People's Republic. Its government was therefore only 'a local government' which, while competent to draw up 'special regulations', must submit these to the higher echelons of the PRC for approval.

Later, Article 3 of the 1954 Constitution declared China to be 'a single multinational state' of which the national autonomous regions were 'inalienable parts'. This position has remained unchanged in the Constitutions of 1975 and 1982. In the event, the PRC continues to be 'a unitary multinational state' of which the national autonomous regions are 'inalienable parts'.

Various explanations are offered for this shift in the Chinese position, from the first decade of Sun's Republic to the rise of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the early thirties and later. The growing uncertainty on China's borders is emphasized, as also its seeming humiliation in having to accept the independence of Outer Mongolia in its new incarnation as the Mongolian People's Republic. There were, in addition, known Soviet Russian designs on Xinjiang and Manchuria, amply demonstrated in the decades preceding World War II, and in its immediate aftermath. Also, in the thirties,

there was Japan's successful weaning away of both, Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, as well as its virtual stranglehold over Korea for four decades following the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5). Again, the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, followed by the stern refusal of the United States and the United Nations to recognise the PRC, were bad enough. Much worse was Washington's overt as well as covert support to the runaway Kuomintang (KMT) regime in Taiwan, which, under the discredited Chiang Kaishek, had established its rival 'Republic of China'.

Nor was that all. Washington had lent strong support to the post-World War II return of the French to Vietnam where later it mounted its own massive offensive. The US also launched suspect cloak and dagger operations all the way from Tibet to Laos on China's southern flank. Faced with this grim and desperate scenario, was it any wonder that the PRC reacted the way it did?

The Chinese case spelt out in the preceding paragraphs is deemed valid in its own right, even though it does less than justice to a distinct Chinese historical tradition. Namely, the primacy of inner Asia and its defence, as being integral to the security of the Middle Kingdom itself. This would, in large measure explain the various institutional devices which Beijing's rulers forged to maintain control over these vast regions. The latter had, over the centuries bred invaders or served as the royal road to penetrate the mainland and thereby challenge the authority of the Son of Heaven. The whole story unfolds a fascinating panorama which goes as far back as the construction of the Great Wall under the first emperor, Shih Huang-i (221–10 BC). Constraints of space, however, permit only a passing reference to the inner Asian or frontier policies of the Manchus (1644–1912).

In a predominantly Islamic milieu such as that of Turkestan, the Qing rulers confirmed the Begs in their traditional office while opening up the prospect of a lucrative trade with the mainland for their subjects. This is not to underplay the role of the Manchu garrisons and provincial governors that were stationed at such important centres as Kashgar, Yarkand, Urumchi and the far away Ili valley. The system worked well, and ensured a measure of Qing control that was both effective, as well as responsive to their needs. In both Mongolia and Tibet, the Gelugpa sect was used—or subtly

manoeuvred—to keep these unruly people under imperial control. The Mongol princes and their fractious 'leagues' were kept on the leash through the appointment and confirmation of all titles and the fixation of territorial boundaries by the Emperor. The Dalai Lamas at Lhasa were roped in through the Amban with the use of his golden urn. It is only fair to point out that the Manchu ruler himself had been accepted as a god in the Tibetan pantheon, taken to be an incarnation of Man-chu-shih-li (Chinese for Manjusri), just as the Dalai Lama was considered to be an incarnation of Chenrezi, the god of compassion (Avlokitesvara). Following the October (1911) Revolution in China, which swept away the Manchu dynasty, the Dalai Lama repudiated all links with the Han, while Yuan Shih-kai's primary preoccupation was to declare Tibet and Outer Mongolia as integral parts of the new Chinese Republic. Sun Yat-sen, and later, Chiang Kai-shek, did the same. As did Mao. Within less than a year of the proclamation of the PRC, Beijing sought to establish complete control over Manchuria, to evict all foreign consulates from Xinjiang and to 'liberate' Tibet, while paying no attention whatever to Chiang's banner of revolt in nearby Taiwan. In doing all this, the PRC conformed to known, and indeed predictable patterns of behaviour that had evolved over two millennia of China's historical development.

VI

Tibet's relationship with China defies any precise, clear-cut definition. It should be plain that the country never enjoyed 'independence' as the term is commonly understood. Yet, at the same time, it never was 'an integral part' of the mainland. Notwithstanding the lip service Beijing has paid to Tibet's 'autonomy', it has sought to maintain its hold over Tibet. US policies in the early fifties, China's breach with the Soviets in the sixties, and a whole series of international developments briefly alluded to above, served to reinforce a well established Chinese historical tradition. And Beijing imposed its rule over Lhasa in a most ruthless, if unimaginative manner. The March 1959 rebellion in the Tibetan capital, followed by the flight of the Dalai Lama and hordes of refugees to India, made things difficult if not almost irreversible for Beijing.

Unfortunately for the PRC, developments over the past four decades have manifested an unambiguous repudiation of Beijing's mailed fist by the Tibetans, as also the undiminished relevance of the Dalai Lama to any lasting solution of the Tibetan question. Whether one consequence of what happened at Tian'anmen Square on 4 June 1989 will be a further tightening of the noose around Lhasa's uneasy neck remains to be seen. But for the record, first under Mao and now under Deng Xiaoping's rule, Tibet has been subject to bouts of martial law, and worse. The historian is not a soothsayer, nor does he have a crystal ball to divine the shape of things to come. One may, however, hazard the guess, that in the long run, a measure of genuine regional autonomy—in terms of the Dalai Lama's 5-point Strasbourg proposals—may be a better way out than collectivisation and stern Han control with its almost interminable blood-letting. One may also ask, if only in hushed tones, whether and how these proposals are materially different from the not so unwise counsel given by New Delhi in October 1950, and many times since. Namely, that Beijing should accept a 'legitimate Tibetan claim to autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty'.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

There is no dearth of literature on Tibet. Beginning with a trickle in the early decades of the present century, it has swollen into a sizeable stream especially in the wake of t he Chinese 'liberation' of Tibet in October 1950. Not only in output, but in its character too, the change has been marked. Insofar as Tibet had for long been a closed book to which access was difficult, if not indeed impossible, earlier studies were largely tales of individual adventure seeking to satisfy an almost insatiable curiosity about the land beyond the horizon, encompassed in all its mystery and snow. From a large crop of such works, four may be identified as typical of the genre: Sarat Chandra Das, *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow* (1893, reprint, 1965); L.A. Waddel, *Lhasa and its Mysteries* (1905); Marco Pallis, *Peaks and Lamas* (1940); and Alexandra David-Neel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (1971, reprint, 1988).

Thanks to the rapidly changing scenario of the fifties, which culminated in the March 1959 rebellion in Lhasa, hosts of Tibetan refugees led by the Dalai Lama himself poured into India (some of

them later found shelter in Europe and beyond). They helped to shatter the myth and the mystery that had hitherto enshrouded Tibet. Thereafter, a new breed of scholarship made its appearance, concerned not so much with the mumbo-jumbo of lamaism and its God King but with the historical, social and political contours of the land. The list is long, but given the limited purview of this paper, reference is made only to works that have a direct bearing on the India–China–Tibet relationship.

To start with, mention may be made of Charles Bell's *Tibet, Past and Present* (1924) and his *Portrait of the Dalai Lama* (1946). Both are authentic, balanced, first-hand accounts by a remarkable man who came to be very close to the thirteenth Dalai Lama. H.E. Richardson's *Tibet and its History* (1962, second, revised edn, 1984) falls into the same category. Like Bell, Richardson too mastered the Tibetan language and was a shrewd observer of Lhasa's political landscape from the mid-thirties to the morrow of India's independence.

Heinrich Harrer's *Seven Years in Tibet* (1953) stands apart, in a class by itself. A great mountaineer, with unbounded fascination for unknown lands, Harrer arrived in Lhasa in 1942, a fugitive from a British internment camp, and virtually, a beggar. Very quickly, he came to know the town and its people on very intimate terms. More importantly, he was a witness to the chaos that Lhasa presented on the eve of its 'liberation' by the PRC.

Evocative of the new interest in Tibet are three studies done in the sixties which encapsulated, a great wealth of archival detail as well as sound scholarship. Alastair Lamb's *Britain and Chinese Central Asia* (1960); Parshotam Mehra's *The Younghusband Expedition: An Interpretation* (1968);[1] and, almost indispensable from a Tibetan viewpoint, Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa's *Tibet: A Political History* (1967).[2] Parshotam Mehra's *Tibetan Polity 1904–37* (1976) is a monograph that highlights the personal rivalry between Tibet's supreme incarnate lamas, the thirteenth Dalai Lama and the ninth Panchen Lama, with its profound ramifications for India as well as China.[3] Some new works need to be noted. Premen Addy's *Tibet on the Imperial Chessboard* (1984) is an excellent *tour de horizon* of British policy towards Tibet in the first quarter of the present century.[4] Melvin C. Goldstein's *History of Modern Tibet*

1913–1951 (1985) is both well researched as well as highly empathic to the Tibetan cause. Lamb's more recent *British India and Tibet 1766–1910* (1986) is a revised edition of his earlier study.

A. Tom Grunfeld's *The Making of Modern Tibet* (1987)[5] is thoroughly researched and serves as a good backdrop to the complex issue of Tibet's 'independence' and China's stout repudiation thereof. Michael Praag's *The Status of Tibet* (1987) belongs to the same category, it is a detailed scholarly work buttressed by a great deal of impressive juristic evidence in favour of Lhasa's claim to being an independent identity. And last, but by no means the least, is A.K. Jasbir Singh's *Himalayan Triangle* (1988), which, as compared to Grunfeld and Praag, has different concerns. The 'triangle' in this case being Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan. Essentially an archivist, Singh heavily underscores the extent to which British policy in Tibet was influenced by the complicated and sometimes stormy events in Sikkim and Bhutan, to both of which China laid claim.

NOTES

1. Now in its second edition with a new chapter, 'A Hundred Years on' (New Delhi, 2004).
2. Charles Allan, *Duel In The Snows: The True Story of the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa* (London, 2004), makes for fascinating reading.
3. An expanded version that brings the story to 1989, and even beyond, has now appeared—*From Conflict to Conciliation: Tibetan Polity Re-visited* (Otto Harrasowitz, Wiesbaden, 2004).
4. For a more detailed analysis see Parshotam Mehra 'Tibet on the Imperial Chessboard: A Select Bibliographic Survey (c. 1924–84),' *Indian Historical Review*, XI, 1–2, pp. 174–84.
5. Now in its second revised edition (ME Sharpe, New York, 1996).

6

A Forgotten Chapter in the History of the Northeast Frontier, 1914–36*

On the fateful day of 3 July 1914, the second Simla Convention was signed and sealed by Sir Arthur Henry McMahon and Lonchen Shatra (actually, while the Lonchen signed and sealed, McMahon initialled and sealed): Ivan Chen, who had initialled the first, earlier in April, kept his own counsel. A joint British–Tibetan declaration, stipulating that its terms would apply to China only when the latter fell in line with its two other signatories, was attached to the Convention. On that same day, in Simla, the new Trade Regulations between British India and Tibet were signed.

In the years immediately following, the Chinese made a number of efforts to resume the Simla basis for negotiations. Three of these initiatives stand out from the rest—1915, 1916, and 1919, the last being the most elaborate, if formal, and going a long way toward clinching a settlement. None, however, came to anything. Meanwhile, in 1918, in East Tibet, where fighting had been endemic since the October (1911) revolution, and consequently, Peking's authority had eroded, a truce of sorts and a temporary boundary line were worked out. This was achieved largely through the indefatigable efforts of Eric Teichman, a British consular official, then serving in China.

In Delhi, as in Whitehall, the Simla Convention and the McMahon Line were soon forgotten, and as fate would have it, within days after its conclusion, its principal architect, McMahon, left the Indian

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shores, never to return. Within weeks, Europe's long-rehearsed dance of death had begun its slow yet certain march in all its tragic grimness. Was it any wonder then that the months and years that elapsed, consigned to the limbo of oblivion the busy, hectic parleys at Simla and Delhi, and all that had preceded them? The Convention was all but forgotten and, significantly, Delhi's compendium of 'treaties, engagements and sanads,' the redoubtable Aitchison volumes in their 1928 edition, made no mention of it. Nor, for that matter, did the Survey of India etch the McMahon contours on its maps.

The heavy, deep spell of slumber continued almost unbroken, for twenty long years, when the distant, yet now faintly audible, rumblings of an approaching storm shook the Indian authorities. They, in turn, tried, not always successfully, to rouse their British masters in Whitehall. The pages that follow are largely an effort at reconstructing the sequence of events that revived these old memories, to rephrase Wordsworth, 'of long, unhappy, far-off' things and battles, principally diplomatic, waged long ago.

During the early months of 1932, the uneasy, albeit now fifteen year old truce in the fighting in Kham, was suddenly broken. What started as a series of minor skirmishes, born of rival monastic loyalties across the border, soon developed into full-scale fighting that culminated in the Chinese crossing in strength, the Teichman Line in 1918. Despite the good offices of the British which were stoutly spurned in Nanking, and the Lama's own efforts through a direct exchange of messages with General Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese onslaughts continued, and they appeared, for a time, to carry all before them. Later, due to the outbreak of a civil war in Szechuan itself by June 1933, the edge of the fighting was sharply blunted and a settlement of sorts, at the purely local level, was negotiated. In October of that year, the then British Political Officer, Williamson, informed his principals during a visit to Lhasa that the Lama had confirmed that the 'terms have been carried out by both sides and that troops have been withdrawn accordingly'.[1]

Despite his limited success, the Dalai Lama's optimism in negotiating with the local Chinese commanders in eastern Tibet, a successful return of lost Tibetan territory remained a day-dream. Here, apart from the traditional Chinese reluctance to oblige, the Lama's death in December 1933 prevented such a consummation.

And with his death, more than a boundary settlement with China seemed stuck in limbo. Even in the best of times, a political system wherein succession to supreme authority in the state means a long wait for the discovery, installation, and growing into manhood of a new ruler, is far from ideal for stability. And Lhasa, on the morrow of the Lama's death, presented the somewhat sorry spectacle of a ruthless struggle for mastery with the Regent and the Kashag arrayed on one side and the Dalai's old favourities on the other. Above them all, in addition, hung the seemingly sinister shadow of the Panchen Lama, whose absence from Tibet, known hostility to the regime in Lhasa, and apparent fondness for Chiang's (Kuomintag) China—on whose political support he leaned heavily—visibly darkened the prevalent gloom.

Nor was Nanking slow in capitalizing on this godsend opportunity. Before long, it announced the despatch of a high-powered mission headed by General Huang Mu-sung, then President of its Committee for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs. General Huang's ostensible purpose was to mourn the thirteenth Dalai Lama's death, but in reality, his aim was to coax or cajole the new regime in Lhasa into accepting Chinese hegemony. The wilful, errant child who had defied his parents so long may yet be persuaded to return to the fold.

Despite six months (April to October 1934) of interminable negotiations, interlaced with generous helpings of gold, and liberal promises to buy any known recalcitrant, Huang Mu-sung's achievement was far from impressive. In the words of Norbu Dhondhup, the British official in Lhasa, who, on behalf of his master, Williamson kept a close watch on men and affairs while the Huang mission was around, Tibet's admission of Chinese over-lordship was to the following effect:

> On repeated pressure from Huang Mu-sung and in order to show the outside world and as Tibet adjoins Chinese territory we admit that we are subordinate to China, but all our external relations and internal administration will be carried on by Tibet.[2]

Here was a paper admission, however qualified, of Chinese suzerainty that the thirteenth Dalai Lama would perhaps have never accepted. Besides, however vague, theoretical, and face-saving a formula, Tibet's acceptance of its subordination to China was viewed by Nanking as a 'sufficiently definite', meaningful concession. Nor

was that all. From the point of view of the virtual independence it had enjoyed for more than a score of years, the presence in the Tibetan capital, of two members of Huang's mission who were left behind with the wireless installation, and also a Chinese official from Kansu, were compromises which were profoundly disturbing, not least to Tibet's southern neighbour. To meet what seemed a deliberate, high-powered Chinese offensive, the then Political Officer in Sikkim Williamson suggested that he visit Lhasa, 'sufficiently supplied with money' to offer the regime

1. exemption from payment for munitions for three years in the first instance;
2. training of more Tibetan officers and troops at British expense;
3. allowing it to buy more arms.[3]

Further, Williamson's brief stipulated that should a permanent Chinese representative appear at Lhasa, the question of appointing his British counterpart was to be 'seriously considered'. Again, the desirability of 'becoming a party' to any agreement reached between Tibet and China was to be kept in mind. Tibet was to be treated as completely autonomous and no negotiations were to be entered into with China without Lhasa being fully represented 'on equal terms'.

It followed that every possible effort was to be made to buttress Tibet's morale in resisting Chinese pressures and to 'save her from domination' by the Nanking regime. For while the

> re-establishment of Chinese control might not be an actual military danger [it] would be at least a source of constant irritation and annoyance along our North-East frontier.[4]

Out of the blue, the British suddenly became aware of their Indian empire's north-east frontier, which had, over the years since the Simla Conference, been largely neglected, if perhaps forgotten. This awareness was now the greater in that the political vacuum in Lhasa, created by the Dalai Lama's death, boded ill for the stability of the new regime. It may be useful to summarize these intervening developments since 1913–14, if only in passing, because they help to put in proper perspective the brief given to Williamson on his visit to Lhasa in 1935.

The agreement at Simla—including the terms of the Convention, the Tibet Trade Regulations, and the maps showing the India–Tibet

and the Inner–Outer Tibet boundaries, did not, for a variety of reasons, become widely known for many years. Apart from the fact that barely a month after they had been concluded, the onset of World War I thrust them completely into the background, there was the fateful departure of McMahon from the Indian scene—he was appointed High Commissioner in Egypt. Besides, in the initial stages, the view held was that until an understanding with Russia was arrived at, the latter could legitimately object to the terms of the Convention.[5] Despite the more pressing preoccupations of the War, there might have been an element of urgency to seek such an understanding if the Chinese had agreed to sign the compact. Since they had refused, Russia was officially informed and assured that it would be consulted before the British acted upon any of the provisions of the 1914 Convention which came into conflict with the 1907 Agreement between the two countries. This happened on 11 July 1914, a little over a week after the Simla negotiations had broken down. As the Chinese had persisted in their refusal to sign throughout the year 1915, the British Foreign Office held that the

> Tibetan question has since been modified so profoundly...that the acceptance by the Russian Government of its [Convention of 1914] provisions in the limited form proposed last summer would no longer seem to possess the same value as an off-set to a revision in their favour of the existing arrangement with regard to Northern Afghanistan, as it did when the negotiations were suspended.[6]

The above view was shared by the then Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, who felt that India's interests in Tibet were

> safeguarded for the time being by the Anglo–Tibetan declaration and there appears no prospect of China signing the Convention in near future. I therefore strongly deprecate any concession whatever to Russia as price of her prospective consent to [the] Convention on the chance of its eventually being signed by China.[7]

There was a slight flaw in this line of reasoning insofar as Russia could,

> strictly speaking, object to the British availing themselves of the Anglo–Tibetan declaration of 3 July 1914, on the plea that insofar as it conflicted with the 1907 Convention, it was 'invalid'. Further, Russia could also refuse to amend the 1907 Convention 'except in return for a quid pro quo' in Afghanistan.[8]

In the thick of World War I, with Russia on the brink of a mighty revolution, the India Office was playing with the idea of securing Russian consent to a revision of the 1907 clauses in return for the British accommodating her on a freer access to the Dardanelles. Thus in 1916, India was to suggest that Russia might 'reasonably agree' to

> our continuing the present practice, to which she has as yet taken no exception, and allow us directly to advise and assist the Tibetan Government—in despite of Article II of the Tibetan Agreement of 1907—and herself abstain from all interference in this country.[9]

Later in October 1917, this course of action was ruled out by the British Minister in Petrograd; he held it to be a 'most inopportune moment' to negotiate,[10] considering the forceful impact of events which had intervened. By the end of the year, the Foreign Office deprecated any suggestion regarding British representation at Lhasa lest it should offer Russia an excuse for tearing up all agreements concerning Afghanistan, a contingency 'of which the disadvantages would be greater than any advantage' accruing in Tibet.[11]

By 1918, while outlining the Indian 'Desiderata for Peace Settlement', the Political Department of the India Office noted that it was necessary to

> wait until there is a Russian Government with which we can negotiate and then endeavour to get rid of the self-denying ordinance in Tibet without the embarrassing conditions that the Tsar's Government, desired to impose in 1914.[12]

This, however, was not to be. Contrary to a good deal of wishful thinking, the Bolsheviks stayed on in power, and, in the initial stages at any rate, scrapped all treaties and agreements—both secret and open—to which Tsarist Russia had been a party. Later, in 1921, the British Foreign Office ruled that the Anglo–Russian agreement of 1907 was no longer to be regarded as valid, and therefore such restrictions as it imposed on British action in Tibet would not operate any longer.[13]

Release from Russian anxiety was to mark the beginnings of a new phase in which China took the place of Russia, as far as British sensitivity was concerned. Initially, it may be recalled, the publication of the 1914 Convention had been held in abeyance in the hope

that China might, at some stage accept it, albeit in a modified form. There was also a lurking suspicion that if it were to be published in its entirety, it would not only ruin any chances as there were of reaching an accommodation with China but also give the latter a handle to mount a strident anti-British campaign of 'imperialist designs' on Tibet.

As early as February 1920, the Foreign Office in London, desirous of including the texts of the Simla Convention and the joint Indo-Tibetan declaration of 3 July (1914), in the forthcoming issue of 'State Papers', asked the India Office about the 'expediency' of publishing them.[14] In reply, the then Secretary of State for India, Mr Montagu ruled that

> so long as there remains any prospect of a final settlement of the Tibetan question by negotiations with the Chinese government it will be better not to give unnecessary publicity to the provisional arrangements of 1914.[15]

Publication was accordingly withheld.

Five years later, in 1925, the India Office informed the Foreign Office that although the India–Tibet Trade Regulations of 1914 might be regarded as being in force between the two countries, their publication may be held up for fear it would 'have the effect of arousing in China renewed public interest in Tibet, and anti-British comments'.[16]

Publication, however, was to be permitted if the Government of India thought it 'desirable' or attached 'importance to it'. Delhi, of course, did neither.

Three years later, in 1928, when the Tibet chapter of *Aitchison's Treaties* was being revised, the Government of India omitted any explicit reference to the Trade Regulations of 1914 lest

> publication now of the facts of the Declaration of 3 July 1914 (though it seems unlikely that China is still unaware of its existence) may force her to take overt notice of it, and so afford a fresh handle for anti-British propaganda.[17]

The result was that *Aitchison's* new edition carried a colourless narrative that omitted not only all mention of the Trade Regulations but also of the Convention itself and the joint Declaration by Britain (for India) and Tibet! Significantly, this was a position in which both the India as well as the Foreign Office concurred.[18]

In 1934, the question presented itself in yet another form, for a Declaration in Council was deemed necessary with regard to the British Trade Agents' entitlement to exercise foreign jurisdiction in Tibet. Since the Trade Regulations of 1914 from which this authority was derived had not been agreed to by the Chinese Government, it was felt that if they were now specifically cited in the 'Declaration' in question, the Chinese might conceivably take exception to it. As Walton at the India Office pointed out, 'It has been our policy in recent years to avoid raising questions relating to Tibet with China as far as possible and to let sleeping dogs lie'.

Two alternatives presented themselves: the first, to cite in the proposed Order-in-Council, the authority of the Trade Regulations of 1914 (and the fact that these were not published, 'could not matter'); or second, to mention the Trade Regulations of 1908, to which China had agreed, and which appeared to be 'just as extensive'. But as far as the latter were concerned,

> a possible disadvantage of referring to them might be that China on 9 October 1928 had addressed a note to His Majesty's Minister, Peking, which China might represent as constituting the demand for revision referred to in Art. XIII of the Trade Regulations.

As it happened, the 1928 'note' had been ignored. But, it was now argued, a reference to the 1908 Trade Regulations 'might conceivably' bring the Chinese into the field.[19]

The long and short of it was that 'a general recital of treaty rights' in the Order-in-Council, in place of any specific mention of the Regulations of 1908 or of 1914, was deemed adequate for the purpose, a viewpoint with which India concurred.[20]

A footnote may be added here. Repeated references in the preceding lines to the Trade Regulations are borne out by the nature of the documentary evidence alone. These should not, however, lead to any loss of perspective. For what is patent is that for nearly two decades after 1914, the dubious risk of attracting Russian, and later Chinese attention continued to be the principal reason for the non-publication of the Simla Convention and its adjuncts, the Trade Regulations, and the India–Tibet boundary agreement.

In 1935, the Foreign and Political Department in New Delhi seemed suddenly to awaken to the realities of the situation. Part of

the explanation may perhaps lie in the fact that the travels of W. F. Kingdon-Ward, the botanist, brought into bold relief the question of the McMahon Line. Kingdon-Ward who, in 1934–5, traversed Monyul in Balipara, caused New Delhi considerable embarrassment[21] by his highly critical views on the 'casual way' things were being done. Inter alia, he revealed

that while the main [Himalayan] range might be *de jure* frontier, there would be no doubt that the *de facto* frontier lay much further south since the Tibetan Government, through Tsona Dzong and Tawang, was actively... administering the whole of Monyul, while the influence of the Tibetan Church extended almost to the edge of the Assam plains—that is, into territory which had nothing to do with Monyul except propinquity.

The solution he proffered was 'direct' administration and 'effective occupation by 1939 or at the latest, 1940.... The alternative is complete retreat'.

Kingdon-Ward forecast the future with a grimness that sounds almost frightening;

sooner or later India must stand face to face with a potential enemy looking over that wall into her garden—or fight to keep her out of the Tsanpo valley. With Monyul a Tibetan province, the enemy would already be within her gates.[22]

And although Captain Nevill, then Political Officer at Balipara had, after a visit, sounded a similar note as early as 1928: 'Should China gain control of Tibet, the Tawang country is particularly adapted for a secret and early entrance into India',[23] the botanist's warning was to prove more accurate.

Not long after Kingdon-Ward, the astounding 'discovery' was made that in Assam there had been 'considerable misunderstanding' as to where the international frontier between India and Tibet lay. In a letter to Shillong on 28 November 1935, New Delhi asked whether it would

accept the latter [the Indian–Tibet frontier] 'as delimited by Sir Henry McMahon and accepted by Tibet' as a correct presentation of the position as regards the frontier between Assam tribal areas and Tibet.[24]

At the same time, New Delhi had told the Political Officer in Sikkim what it thought of Assam's ignorance of its territorial limits in the context of the boundary dispute with Bhutan. The matter,

New Delhi argued, was complicated by a likely claim that Tibet might look

> to the area in the foothills between the Deosham and the Dhansiri Rivers and his [Williamson's] recommendation is apparently coloured by the thought that it might be expedient to cede to Bhutan, whose foreign relations we control, an area in these hills before Tibet, a less controllable neighbour, can present an effective claim.

Since in the Kingdon-Ward case Tibet was said to have reaffirmed the Red (namely, McMahon) Line, it appeared that it (Tibet) 'could not in any case put forward a claim to sovereignty over any territory in the foothills east of Bhutan'.

But even if it did, neither the 'presentation' nor the 'acceptance' of such a claim by Tibet was to cloud the issue of the 'inviolability' of the Indian frontier.[25]

On 6 February 1936, New Delhi categorically informed Assam that it was

> now clear that the whole of the hill country upto the 1914 McMahon Line is within the frontier of India and is therefore a tribal area under the control of the Governor of Assam acting as Agent for the Governor-General.

At the same time, Shillong was asked if in the course of the last twenty years it had exercised 'any measure of political control' in this area; and whether, to its knowledge, the Tibetan government honoured the frontier, more particularly in the vicinity of Tawang.[26] To all this Shillong's reply was that to ascertain the precise situation, it had asked the Political Officer, Balipara, to tour the tribal area, south of the McMahon Line.[27]

On 9 April 1936, New Delhi communicated its 'findings' to London and underscored the fact that the matter was deserving of urgent attention for

> there is a real danger that important matters of this kind may go wrong if we refrain any longer from publishing our agreements with Tibet...the Government of India [may] think that there would be advantage in inserting in their published record copies of the 1914 Convention, the exchange of notes on the boundary between Sir Henry McMahon and the Tibetan Government and the Trade Regulations.[28]

Three arguments were adduced. One, that failure to publish might well be used by the Chinese 'in support' of their argument that

'no ratified agreement between India and Tibet' was in existence. Two, in the context of India's new (1935) Constitution, it was necessary to define the tribal areas in the northeast which it was proposed to place under the political control of the government of Assam. And finally, the impending separation of Burma, which was responsible for a part of the frontier, made such a definition imperative.

Nor should any more time be lost, for failure hitherto to show the correct frontier had meant that such atlases as the *Times* delineated the frontier wrongly—along the foothills of Assam.

Reaction in Whitehall was far from enthusiastic. Walton noted that the proposal was not 'free from doubt' and that the arguments advanced were 'unconvincing'. The 'only thing' that went in its favour, he remarked, was the 'not improbable' assumption that the Chinese, aware of the Indo–Tibetan declaration of 3 July 1914, would view its non-publication as an argument 'that we doubt' the agreement's validity. Walton's conclusion, therefore, was that there was 'no strong balance' of argument 'either for or against' publication, and that if the Foreign Office were willing, 'we might perhaps decide to publish'.[29]

Denys Bray, then a Member of the Secretary of State's Council in London, while generally agreeing with Walton put in a rider. Inter alia, he counselled that

> Ostentatious publication would be unwise and unless the Government of India are contemplating a re-issue of the Aitchison volume, they should... wait for it. But the maps might be corrected in any case, in the absence of any special objection.[30]

The Foreign Office concurred and India was informed accordingly. Writing to Olaf (later Sir Olaf) Caroe, then Deputy Secretary in the Indian Foreign Department, on 16 July 1936, Walton, however, queried, 'Would it not suffice to arrange for publication when the next edition of *Aitchison's Treaties* is produced in normal course?'

Besides, he warned, it was 'most desirable' to avoid 'unnecessary publicity' and therefore the subject was to be kept from the press or news agencies. Additionally, the text of the declaration of 3 July 1914 was not to be published, its place being taken by an explanatory note. All this notwithstanding, the Survey of India 'could show' the frontier correctly 'forthwith'.[31]

In the process of formulating its policy in this case, Whitehall was not unaffected by developments in Outer Mongolia. It may be recalled that the conclusion, on 12 March (1936), in Ulan Bator of a 'Protocol of Mutual Assistance' between the Soviet Union and Mongolia had provoked a strong protest from China. The latter had maintained that insofar as Mongolia was 'an integral part' of the Chinese Republic, 'no foreign state' could conclude with it any treaty or agreement. It followed, Nanking maintained, that the Protocol was 'illegal' and that China could, 'in no circumstances', recognize it nor was in any way 'bound' by it. The Chinese protest was, of course, categorically rejected by the Soviet Union,[32] but the India Office felt concerned lest Nanking should take a similar line with respect to any treaty 'between us' and Tibet. Mercifully, these considerations did not modify the 'tentative support' which Whitehall now gave to India's 'desire to publish'.[33]

Nor did New Delhi take long in reaching its own conclusions. It resolved to take 'immediate steps' for showing the international frontier in this sector in the Survey of India maps while, and 'with as little delay as possible', a revised edition of Vol. XIV of *Aitchison's Treaties* was to be published. To have waited for an overall revision of the series, as suggested by the India Office, 'would take 15–20 years'.[34]

In retrospect, in the decades that followed, the 'forgotten chapter' had a profound impact on developments in Tibet and on the frontier. For one, it was argued somewhat convincingly that the (British) Indian refusal, or inability, to make the (McMahon) Line good, even on paper, and over a span of twenty long years, cast profound doubts on its authenticity. For another, Lhasa—and this despite the conclusive character of the March 1914 exchange of notes—put forth the view that the validity of the Line in general, and the cession of Tawang in particular, was conditional upon China's acceptance of the Dalai Lama's regime. The fact that the Chinese, the Kuomintang, no less than the Communists who succeeded them, stuck tenaciously to their own political contours of the frontier added a third dimension to a situation already sufficiently complicated. The story of how the Raj papered over the cracks which it bequeathed to an independent India, and how the latter failed to emulate their example, belongs to another chapter which being much more recent, is not nearly that obscure.

NOTES

1. Williamson to India, 14 October 1933, in *IOR*, L/P&S/12/577.
2. Williamson to India, 20 January 1935, in *IOR*, L/P&S/12/36/12.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Grey to Buchanan, 10 July 1914 in *IOR*, L/P&S/10/455. In a communication to the India Office on 14 July 1914 the Foreign Office made clear that HMG 'can only act upon the initialled (Simla) Convention so far as it does not violate the 1907 Agreement'. For details, see *IOR*, L/P&S/10/344.
6. FO to IO, 30 April 1915 in *IOR*, L/P&S/10/455. Earlier, the Russian Ambassador in London had submitted a memorandum suggesting that questions relating to Afghanistan 'be settled in accordance with the wishes then (namely, 1914) formulated by the Russian Government', ibid.
7. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 13 May 1915, in *IOR*, L/P&S/10/455.
8. Secretary of State to Viceroy, 17 May 1915, in ibid.
9. Extract from secret letter, No. 85, from India, 29 September 1916, in ibid.
10. Buchanan to Balfour, 2 October 1917, in *IOR*, L/P&S/ 10/3260/1917, Paras 1–3.
11. FO to IO, 21 December 1917, in ibid.
12. Indian 'Desiderata for Peace Settlement' (Note by Political Department, India Office), para 23, in ibid.
13. The 1907 Convention was formally cancelled by Article II of the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 7 August 1924.
14. FO to IO, 26 February 1920, Proc 134 in *Foreign*, External B, May 1920, 134–5.
15. IO to FO, 8 March 1920, Proc 135 in ibid.
16. IO to FO, 3 July 1925, in *IOR*, L/P & S/10/857. Also IO to India, 13 August 1925, and FO to IO, 27 July 1925, both in ibid.
17. India to IO, 22 May 1928, in *IOR*, L/P&S/10/1192.
18. India Office approved of the Government of India's suggestion, as did the Foreign Office. For details, IO to FO, 19 June and FO to IO, 5 July 1928, both in ibid.
19. India Office minute, Walton to Legal Adviser, 28 September 1933 in *IOR*, L/P&S/10/575. Also see Foreign Department, Simla to Chief Secretary, Punjab, 1 July 1933; Punjab to Foreign Department, 27 June 1933; Chief Secretary, UP, to Foreign Department, 19 June 1933 and FO to IO, 18 August 1933, all in ibid.
20. The Legal Advisor in the India Office was of the view that the Trade Regulations of 1914 'being completed and operative' between India and Tibet 'would be sufficient foundation' for an Order-in-Council. Minute, 29 September 1933 in ibid. Also see Viceroy to Secretary of State, 16 January 1934 in ibid.
21. Gould noted that as a result of Williamson's visit to Lhasa, in August–November, 1935, 'The attitude of mind engendered... facilitated a friendly settlement of the Kingdon-Ward escapade which otherwise might have tended to prejudice....' Gould's report on 'British Mission to Lhasa, 1935', in *IOR*, L/P&S/12/36/12.
22. W.F. Kingdon-Ward, 'The Assam Himalaya: Travels in Balipara', *JRCAS*, XXV, 4, October 1938, 610–19 and XXVII, 2, April 1940, 211–20. Ward's addresses to the RCAS, reproduced in the JRCAS, were based on his earlier (1934–5) travels, referred to in the text.
23. Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam, 1883–1941*, Shillong, 1942, p. 291.

24. Caroe to Hutton (Chief Secretary, Assam), 28 November 1935, in *IOR*, L/P&S/12/36/23, Part I.
25. Caroe to Battye (Trade Agent, Gyantse), 28 November 1935, in ibid. Also see Williamson to India, 10 June 1935, in ibid.
26. Caroe to Dawson (Chief Secretary, Assam), 6 February 1936 in *IOR*, L/P&S/12/36/12.
27. Dawson to Caroe, 28 February 1936, in ibid.
28. Caroe to Walton (India Office), 9 April 1936, in ibid.
29. India Office minute by Walton, 4 June 1936, in ibid.
30. India Office minute by Denys Bray, 8 June 1936, in ibid.
31. FO to IO, 8 July 1936 in ibid. Also see IO to FO, 13 June 1936 and Walton to Caroe, 16 July 1936, both in ibid.
32. For the texts of China's protest, 7 April 1936 and of Soviet rejection, 8 April 1936 *IOR*, L/P&S/12/36/23, Part I. The Soviet Union maintained that the new protocol did not change the 'formal or actual relations' between China and Outer Mongolia, nor did it affect the 'sovereignty' of China 'in the slightest degree' for the Peking agreement of 1924 still 'retains its force.'
33. India Office minute by Rumbold, 9 July 1936, in ibid. This was just a week before Walton wrote to Caroe according Whitehall's approval to India's proposed course of action.
34. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 17 August 1936 in ibid.

7

TAWANG
A Brief Sum-up*

In the strife-torn annals of the India–China conflict relating to the frontier in India's north-eastern corner, nothing has excited more controversy than the district of Tawang in the newly-christened Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh. Peking has maintained that the British imperialists purloined large areas of what was once the domain of its so-called Tibet region of China which, it is further alleged, had been bullied into acquiescence. Of this supposedly large-scale loot, Tawang is regarded as the most typical, if brazen example. Interestingly, some British travellers under the Raj and lately some armchair academics, both at home and abroad, have buttressed Chinese claims by repeating more or less in unison to the effect that Tibet's, and by definition China's, claims to Tawang have indeed been strong.

Three facets of the problem need emphasis. One, that McMahon drew his line on the Survey of India map-sheets after the greatest deliberation, and that as late as January 1914, only after Bailey and Moreshead had categorically confirmed that Tawang was Monba and *not* Tibetan in character, the contours of the boundary were modified in the sketch map attached to the tentative draft convention of February 1914. It may be added here, if only in parenthesis, that the line suggested by Ivan Chen in his sketch map of October 1913 was far more favourable to India than the one McMahon was to draw later and had indeed put Tawang squarely within Indian territory.

* Paper presented as 'Tawang: A Documentary Study', in the 12th Annual Session of the Institute of Historical Studies (Calcutta), in Shillong from 7 to 9 October 1974.

Another point that bears emphasis relates to the interregnum between McMahon's disappearance from the Indian stage which synchronized with the signing of the Simla Convention in July 1914, and the travels of the British botanist Kingdon-Ward in what was known as the Balipara Frontier Division or Tract in 1935. Few in New Delhi, and fewer still in Assam or in the office of the Political Officer in Sikkim at Gangtok knew at the time about the contours of the eastern frontier. Kingdon-Ward it was who caused a virtual flutter in the dovecots as it were, and sounded a note of warning which in retrospect was to prove prophetic beyond his ken. In brief, he reported to his political bosses:

> That while the main (Himalayan) range might be the *de jure* frontier there would be no doubt that the *de facto* frontier lay much further south since the Tibetan Government through Tsona dzong and Tawang, was actively...administering the whole of Monyul...(in the result) sooner or later India must stand face to face with a potential enemy looking over that wall into her garden—or fight to keep her out of the Tsanpo valley. With Monyul a Tibetan province, the enemy will already be within her gates.[1]

Between 1935 and 1940—years at once momentous and event-filled in the case of Tawang—India's British rulers changed their stance from one of making the McMahon frontier effective to that of well-nigh abandoning it. New Delhi's major difficulty arose from Lhasa's refusal to withdraw its tax-gatherers, euphemistically called administrators for, other things apart, rack-renting the Monbas was a most lucrative proposition. The British in turn did not want to create a rumpus in Lhasa lest the Chinese, now their partners in the global confrontation against fascism, tar them with the self-same brush of imperialist aggrandizement as they did the Japanese. There was also the Raj's typical *bania* mentality, for Twynam, the acting Governor of Assam in 1939, computed that making a frontier on the Sela and the Digien river would cost almost a quarter of what the Tawang alignment would.[2] More than anything else, it clinched the issue in New Delhi. A later occupant of the Governor's House in Shillong, Reid, went a step further and proposed that Tawang be handed over to the Tibetans on a platter as it were, by the British representative at the time of the fourteenth Dalai Lama's installation ceremonies in Lhasa in 1940.

Between 1940 and 1951, two major developments intervened. By 1945, British control was gradually seeping into areas hitherto abandoned to the tender mercies of the Tibetan rack-renters. It had just about touched Dirang dzong. Lhasa however continued to be contumacious—not that it did not accept McMahon's Red Line, but it was involved in a head-on confrontation with China over large territories which the latter claimed. The British view was that Tawang would, at best, serve as a bargaining counter but only if, in return, Lhasa unconditionally accepted the rest of the McMahon frontier. It is interesting to recall, that on the eve of the transfer of power, India's British rulers played with the idea of carving out a separate dominion embracing almost the entire tribal belt in the north-east which would be outside of New Delhi's purview. And, by implication, HMG's special preserve.

In its essence, the Tawang story ends here. What follows is the aftermath of making Indian control effective over the area. This was achieved early in 1951 through the efforts of a distinguished frontier statesman and his second-in-command, a Tangkhul Naga, Bob Khating. At the top in New Delhi however was the same chronic lack of decision, of ambivalence, of the absence of a sense of direction to which many of us are no strangers. The atmosphere is best captured in the words of the Advisor to the then Governor of Assam:

> It is possible now to jeep to Tawang in a day. Bob Khating and his forces had to slog it over on their feet for a fortnight before they could reach their destination.... The Tibetan officers were visibly shaken on Bob's sudden appearance in their midst.... They promptly reported to India's Consul General in Lhasa who reported to the Political Officer in Sikkim, who reported to the External Affairs Ministry in Delhi who reported to the Advisor to the Governor in Shillong who reported back to Bob in Tawang. We were naturally concerned not to wound Tibetan susceptibilities, and as international issues were involved, thought fit to consult Delhi while advising Bob how to proceed.... Delhi in turn consulted Gangtok who consulted Lhasa and so it went on while the unfortunate Bob was left holding the baby on the hill-top.[3]

This exercise in futility, and the game of musical chairs ended at long last when New Delhi awoke to the realization that making good the Tawang frontier in Kameng was perhaps the only alternative left to it. In a situation in which Red China's massive physical presence

in Lhasa had made Tibet's entire southern frontier bristle, fiddling in high places was no longer possible without inviting the gravest of consequences.

NOTES

1. F. Kingdon-Ward, 'The Assam Himalaya: Travels in Balipara', *JRCAS*, 35, 4, October 1938, pp. 610–19 and 37, 2, April 1940, pp. 211–20.
2. Twynam to Linlithgow, 3 April 1939, in *IOR*, L/P&S/12/36/29.
3. Nari Rustomji, *Enchanted Frontiers: Sikkim, Bhutan and India's North-Eastern Borderlands*, Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 126.

III

INDIA AND CHINA
1962 AND AFTER

8

India, China, and Tibet, 1950–4*

Relations between India and China vis-à-vis Tibet have undergone a virtual rightabout turn over the past few years. From an initial phase of grave distrust of, and strong protest over, Chinese action in invading this hermit kingdom we have gradually veered round to an unqualified acceptance of Peking's exercise of complete control and authority over Lhasa. In the process has been born a new relationship in place of the old that had subsisted over the past half a century or so. Critics claim that rights and privileges that had previously accrued to India's diplomatic and consular representatives in this land of mystery and snow beyond her frontiers, have, in consequences, been modified, curtailed, washed out with a remarkable callousness and indifference to our basic interests, and their place taken by a friendship of somewhat dubious worth. Apologists, however, contend that the new ties that bind the two countries now rest squarely on a firm basis, and that, in reality, our position has not only been legalized but placed on a proper and recognized footing, as never before.[1] It is clear that the nature of the new relationship, no less than its mode of evolution, deserves careful study and close analysis.

The Historical Background

Over the past few centuries, every Chinese regime—be it Manchu, Republican or Nationalist—has staked a claim to, and sometimes actually exercised governmental and administrative authority

* First published in *India Quarterly*, 12, 1, January–March 1956, pp. 3–22.

at Lhasa. Recently, a painstaking Italian scholar has traced in detail, developments leading to the establishment of what he calls a Chinese 'protectorate' over Tibet.[2] Progressing through various stages of political experimentation, this protectorate ultimately took the form of the Imperial Chinese Residents at Lhasa, officially called Ambans, exercising rights of control and supervision, even of direct participation in the Tibetan Government and administration. In theory—and sometimes in practice—during the last few years of the Manchu regime, Chinese armed forces were in occupation of Lhasa and the country around, and the Emperor's control lasted to the very day the dynasty was overthrown in China. The newly proclaimed Republic, hardly was in the saddle when it hastened to lay its claims on Tibet, perhaps out of fear that, unasserted, these might go by default. A 'Presidential Mandate' proclaimed the Dalai Lama's domain to be a province and an integral part of China, laid great emphasis on the unity and equality of the five races comprising the new-born Republic, and assured the Tibetans of the same status as accorded to the Manchus, the Chinese, the Mongols, and the Muslims. In this and subsequent pronouncements, references to the 'five races united into one family' were not infrequent.[3]

Throughout the life of the Republic—both before and after the Nationalist Kuomintang took over—the basic, long-range objective of China's policy towards Tibet continued to aim at her complete integration into the administrative structure of the mainland. It was plain that the policy objectives of Republican China had much in common with those of the Manchus, nor indeed were their policy measures—coercive military tactics, actual or projected—very different. A major development under the Republic, however, was the enunciation of a clear and unequivocal claim to sovereignty based on the concept of Chinese nationalism, a concept that was alien to the Manchu rulers.[4] To the extent that this doctrine had taken root in the minds of Chinese officialdom, and the vocal segment of the Chinese public, it served to make China's stake in Tibet, and in such other outlying regions as Inner Mongolia and Turkestan, much more formidable.

Partly due to factors beyond her control, and partly because she could not skillfully exploit the opportunities which offered themselves, Republican China did not succeed in re-establishing control

over Outer Tibet.[5] At the end of World War II, China's position in Lhasa was far weaker than had been the Manchu position in 1905–11, and perhaps even less strong than that which existed traditionally in Manchu times. It will be recalled that after the surrender of Japan, the Nationalists were so bogged down in the quagmire of the civil war at home that they were in no position to devote time or attention to the problem of Tibet.

This is not to suggest that the balance sheet was all the time weighted on the debit side. Thus it would do well to remember that under the Kuomintang, considerable progress had been made in the absorption of inner Tibet and its integration into the Chinese administrative structure, a slow development that was considerably hastened by the Japanese aggression and by World War II. It may be well to emphasize, however, that the physical area of the two newly carved out provinces of Hsi'kiang and Ch'inghai, which embraced large parts of inner Tibet, was no greater than the territory that had been under the control of the Manchus; nor yet were the Nationalists able to secure the political allegiance of the people thus placed under their direct rule.

Such then was the nature of the inheritance bequeathed by Republican–Nationalist China to its successor: in theory a strong, though completely unsatisfied claim to sovereignty, interspersed in practice by loud, yet futile, periodical proclamations and threats to integrate the country fully into the administrative structure of the mainland.

What was the nature of the bequest made over by the British Raj to independent India?

The Indian Inheritance

Since the days of Warren Hastings (1772–84), and throughout the course of the nineteenth century, the British in India had made persistent efforts to open up Tibet for commerce. They endeavoured, unsuccessfully it is true, to deal directly with the Dalai Lama's Government and, failing that, through the intermediacy of Manchu China. Frustrated, the impatient Lord Curzon dispatched, in the autumn of 1903, a military expedition which had originally started as a commercial mission. The Francis Younghusband Expedition,

whose ostensible aim was to negotiate some trading rights and to help settle some outstanding border disputes with the representatives of Tibet's god-king, ultimately dictated terms of peace to the war-worsted Tibetans under the very shadow of the golden Potala. Over the next four decades, Britain's relationship with Tibet stemmed basically from the terms of this settlement. Briefly, these secured her exclusive extraterritorial rights, and large trading privileges. Three British trade marts were to be established in Tibet—at Yatung, Gyantse, and Gartok—and the valley of Chumbi, the highway to Lhasa, was to be occupied for three years. A British-owned (and operated) telegraph service upto Gyantse was also part of the deal.

Under the stress and strain of succeeding decades, and for well-nigh half a century after the Lhasa Convention of 1904, the British were not only able to maintain these privileges, but even to slightly extend them. Partly to ensure their continuance, and partly as a matter of policy, they endeavoured to establish Tibet as an autonomous buffer state over which they would not exercise any political control, as long as Chinese authority there was either kept to the minimum, or completely excluded. By a fortuitous combination of forceful personalities—the thirteenth Dalai Lama and Sir Charles Bell, the British Political Officer in Sikkim, who became the Dalai Lama's close personal friend and confidant—aided by a favourable set of circumstances, notably an interminable civil war in China which did not really end with the Japanese invasion, the British were amazingly successful in realizing their aims and accomplishing their objectives. Tibet thus remained independent for all practical purposes, with Chinese authority almost non-existent, and with British–Indian influence rarely exercised in the political sphere, on the whole quite powerful. Would free India endeavour to uphold the status and the position to which she had succeeded? In the autumn of 1950, as the clouds gathered thick and fast on the Tibetan horizon, that question was repeatedly, anxiously asked. The answer was no easy one: it depended on a number of imponderables.

The 'Liberation' by China

The Chinese (Communist) Government that succeeded the Nationalists on the mainland in September 1949, had given every

indication that it would pursue the old objective of uniting Tibet with China. It had also given ample demonstration of its skill in the art of political appeal by adopting a very comprehensive 'Common Programme' for all the nationalities within the borders of the newly proclaimed People's Republic. They were all declared equal, and each was promised its 'national regional autonomy' and its individual 'political, economic, cultural and educational construction work'. In this, there was nothing unexceptionable. Nor was there anything extraordinary in the proclamations, repeatedly made, that the new regime sought to 'liberate' Tibet, or even in its concentration of forces in the border provinces of Hsi'kiang and Ch'inghai. It may be recalled here, that under circumstances which bore a close parallel, President Yuan Shi-kai had, in April 1912, while declaring Tibet a province and an integral part of China, appointed a General Yen Chang-heng, then Governor of Szechuan, to be the Commander-in-Chief, of what were called the 'Chinese Western Expeditionary Forces', and that the new commander, heading an army of a hundred thousand men, had openly announced his resolve to proceed to Lhasa in order to re-establish Chinese sovereignty there.[6]

Where, then, between 1912 and 1949, did the point of departure lie? It lay in the fact that within a few months of their coming into office, the new rulers of China had been able to consolidate power in the country on a scale hitherto unattained by any former regime. The result was that their words did not sound, like those of former regimes had often before, as mere empty threats. Perhaps the most conclusive evidence thereof was the reaction provoked by these events inside Tibet, a reaction that was nothing short of sheer panic. In 1912, the Dalai Lama's answer to the Chinese proclamations was to end his years of exile in India and repair to the seat of his government; in 1950, the fourteenth reincarnation of Chen-re-zi[7] hastened to pack his bags for a place of shelter and security close to the southern border of his country. Suddenly awakened as it were, by the not-too-distant rumbles of the approaching storm, the Lhasa authorities initiated a variety of measures, not all of them marked by forethought or deliberation. Almost the first was the beginning of regular broadcasts by Radio Lhasa, repudiating China's claims and stressing Tibet's desire to remain independent. Diplomatic missions composed of monastic officials and lay nobles were

despatched to Peking, Delhi, Washington, and London to apprise the world of Tibet's standpoint. Actually, they never succeeded in going farther than India. Meanwhile, the Tsongdu, or Tibetan National Assembly, composed of secular and monastic officials, transferred its deliberations to the Norbulingka, the Dalai Lama's summer palace outside Lhasa. Meeting day after day, it had lately given the impression of being scared to death. Two other measures which smacked of an element of statesmanship and some quiet confidence were, first, to reorganize that pitifully small and poorly organized force, miscalled the Tibetan Army. Never designed to meet any large-scale invasion, its reorganization would have doubtless instilled some modicum of confidence in the people, and would serve to tone up civilian morale. The second measure was the decision to invest the young Dalai Lama with full powers, two years before he came of age. This was designed to forge unity in the ranks of the populace who would, it was hoped, rally to a man around their ruler who inspired genuine and universal confidence—in contrast to the corrupt and unpopular clique which surrounded the Regent. These small gains added up, might have been worth something, but in actual fact they were more than counterbalanced by the news of the Dalai Lama's decision to flee from his capital.[8]

Against the People's Liberation Army poised threateningly on the frontier and ready to strike, these last-minute frantic measures of the Lhasa authorities availed but little. However, before the Chinese struck, there was a spate of diplomatic activity in evidence. Thus, late in September 1950, a somewhat curious Mission from the Chinese border arrived in Lhasa with the offer of self-government, if the country would voluntarily join with China.[9] There was also the Dalai Lama's eldest brother, the Abbot of Kumbum in the Chinese province of Ch'inghai, writing to the Pontiff while also sending another brother, Tagchel Rimpoche, to influence the young ruler and persuade him to see things the Chinese way.[10] In the meantime, a Tibetan delegation on its way to Peking had been held up in India, while awaiting visa and passport clearance and final instructions from Lhasa. In Delhi, they were able to establish contact with the newly arrived Chinese ambassador.[11] While these discussions were proceeding in Lhasa and in Delhi, the People's Liberation Army fired their first rounds and, on 7 October 1950, attacked the Tibetan

frontier at six places simultaneously.[12] The Chinese invasion, the news of which was kept away from the world for some weeks, was to provide an opportunity for Delhi, Peking, and Lhasa to state their respective positions, and peg their individual claims.

International Repercussions

First in the field was the Government of India. Its protest Note of 26 October was somewhat vaguely worded, though there was no mistaking its intent. Expressing 'deep regret' over the Chinese action, it deplored this resort to force, in place of a settlement by peaceful methods and negotiations. Was that not contrary to the often repeated desire of the Chinese to seek a peaceful solution of the 'Tibetan problem'?

> The Government of India do not believe that any influences hostile to China have been responsible for the delay in the Tibetan delegation's departure (for Peking).... In the present context of world events invasion by Chinese troops was deplorable and in the considered judgement of the Government of India not in the interest of China, or of peace. The Government of India express their deep regret that in spite of friendly and disinterested advice repeatedly tendered by them (a solution was being sought) by force instead of by the sober and more enduring methods of peaceful approach.[13]

China's rejoinder to this homily on peace, and roundabout, mild reproach for her precipitate action was rather harshly worded, and full of unmistakable insinuations. At the same time, it was a very firm statement of her stand vis-à-vis Tibet, as understood by the successors of the Kuomintang. Nor were any unnecessary words wasted—'Tibet is an integral part of Chinese territory and the problem of Tibet is entirely a domestic problem of China. The Central People's Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people and defend the frontiers of China. That is the resolved policy of the Central People's Government...' The Note ascribed delay in the Tibetan delegation's arrival in Peking to 'outside instigation', and although the Chinese still had faith in a peaceful approach, and 'regardless of whether the Local Authorities of Tibet wish to proceed with negotiations, the problem of Tibet is a domestic problem of China, and no foreign interference will be tolerated'. Countries hostile to China were attempting to misconstrue this action of the

People's Republic 'to exercise its sovereign rights in its territories of Tibet' in order to obstruct China's participation in the United Nations; 'therefore with regard to the viewpoint of the Government of India on what it regards as deplorable, the Central People's Government cannot but consider it as having been affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet....'[14]

Cut to the quick, the Government of India categorically repudiated all suggestions impugning its honesty, integrity, and independence; its reply was a succinct statement of the position, as it had evolved during the past half a century, and in the context of which it envisaged a solution. It foresaw '...the settlement of the Tibetan problem by peaceful negotiation, adjusting the legitimate Tibetan claim to autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty. Tibetan independence is a fact...'. And what was India's stake in the whole issue? 'The Government of India repeatedly made it clear that they have no political or territorial ambitions in Tibet and do not seek any novel privileged position.... At the same time they have pointed out that certain rights have grown out of usage and agreements which are natural between neighbours with close cultural and commercial relations.' The Note summed up these rights: the Mission at Lhasa, the Trade Agencies at Gyantse and Yatung, the post and telegraph offices on the trade route upto Gyantse, and the small military escort to protect the trade route, which had been stationed there 'for over 40 years'. These establishments, the Indian Note was quite emphatic on the point, 'do not detract in any way from Chinese suzerainty over Tibet', and the Government of India was quite determined that they be continued. Nor was New Delhi unconcerned with what happened in Tibet: 'Well-meant advice by a friendly government which has natural interest in the solution of problems concerning its neighbours by peaceful methods (could not be misconstrued) as unwarranted interference in China's internal affairs.' Emphasis, however, was once again on a peaceful approach: 'The Government of India had advised Lhasa to send its delegation to Peking. This advice had been accepted. Again in the interchange of communications between India and China assurances were given of a peaceful settlement. There has been no allegation that there has been any provocation on the part of the Tibetans.... (But with the Chinese invasion well

under way) the Government of India are no longer in a position to advise the Tibetan delegation to proceed to Peking...unless the Chinese Government...order their troops to halt their advance.'[15]

The second Chinese Note, which was not released for publication, was said to reiterate the position as outlined in the first. India was roundly accused of 'blockading a peaceful settlement' in order to 'prevent the Chinese Government from exercising its sovereign rights in that country'.[16]

In this battle of words and wits between China's loudly proclaimed sovereignty over Tibet, and India's firm stand that she could claim no more than a vague suzerainty, the Tibetan position was expressed with considerable clarity in its representation to the United Nations. Herein the Dalai Lama's Government charged the Peking regime with 'this unwarranted act of aggression'. The problem, the Tibetans underlined, was simple: 'The Chinese claim Tibet as a part of China. Tibetans feel that racially, culturally, and geographically, they are far apart from the Chinese. If the Chinese find the reaction of the Tibetans to their unnatural claim not acceptable, there are other civilized methods by which they could ascertain the views of the people of Tibet or should settle the issue by purely juridical means. They are open to seek redress in an international court of law.'[17]

Tibetan efforts to secure the intervention of the United Nations in their dispute with China however, were to prove still-born. The Tibetan protest had pointed out that the attempt to incorporate their country within the fold of the 'Great Motherland' constituted a 'clear-cut case of aggression'. Elsewhere, in their representations, Tibet dubbed the Chinese action as the grossest instance of 'violation of the weak by the strong'. Will 'the conscience of the world', the Tibetans had asked, 'allow the disruption of their state by methods reminiscent of the jungle?'

Curiously enough, the conscience of the world, to which the Tibetans had addressed so fervid an appeal, refused to be aroused. No one in that august assembly of nations felt sufficiently stung to raise the issue in the Security Council, the body which is invested under the Charter, with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Even in the more ponderous General Assembly, which happened to be in session at the time, it

was left to the tiny little republic of El Salvador to condemn this 'unprovoked aggression' of the Chinese, and to propose the creation of a Special Committee to study the measures which should be adopted 'to meet the situation'. The Indian delegate, whose reaction was watched with the closest attention by everybody, and whose stake in the issue was rated the highest,[18] expressed the hope that China and Tibet, left to themselves, would reach a peaceful settlement of the dispute. On that assurance, the debate was adjourned, never again to be resumed.[19]

Reactions in Tibet

While this diplomatic activity at Lake Success, interspersed by the none-too-friendly exchange of Notes between Delhi and Peking continued, the People's Liberation Army did not cease its operations. There were no orders to the troops 'to halt their advance' as the Indian Government had demanded. These operations however, were seemingly somewhat freakish. Thus, after the fall of Chamdo—the eastern town that traditionally marks the frontier between Tibet and China—on 19 October, units of the Liberation Army fanned out in various directions. Organized Tibetan resistance, for what it was worth, had been knocked out completely after the surrender of the frontier fortress in the east. Nor were the Chinese out to conduct a full-scale military campaign if they could accomplish their objectives without paying a heavy price in men and money. The motto here was sap rather than storm, and the aim was to be achieved by a subtle campaign in political warfare, a campaign all the easier in a country where the mass of the people are as ignorant, inexperienced, and politically unsophisticated as they are in Tibet. A not inconsiderable factor which helped the invaders was the exemplary behaviour of the soldiery. Even unfriendly critics agreed that there was little of the plunder and burnings which marked the trail of the invading Chinese forces in 1910.[20]

In 1950, as also earlier in 1910, Tibet indeed lacked a Fifth Column—an organized, underground opposition to the Dalai Lama, which was at the same time, in the pay of the Chinese. But the Panchen Lama, traditionally useful to the Chinese, and a natural rallying-centre for all those disgruntled with the Lhasa Government,

played an important role. As the fates conspired, the tenth reincarnation of the Abbot of Tashi-lun-po was a Chinese creature, and a convenient protege.[21] His open advocacy of 'peaceful liberation' by his Communist masters did help to sow those seeds of discord and disruption which blunt the edge of resistance to alien domination. This was all the more pronounced in the political vacuum and confusion created after the Dalai Lama's flight from Lhasa.[22] Two other gains of the Chinese in this respect—and these were secured in the very opening stage of the campaign—were the Tibetan Minister, Kalon Ngaboo-Ngawan Jigme, and the British radio operator, Robert W. Ford, being taken prisoner at Chamdo. The two of them were destined to play important roles: the one as a major link between the Chinese Government (whose causes he now made his own) and the Dalai Lama, and the other as Exhibit No. 1 of alleged foreign disruptionist intrigues on the Roof of the World.[23]

As part of their deep-laid, long-range strategy, the edge of the Chinese invasion seemed to peter out after the fall of Chamdo—publicly, at any rate. There was increasingly less talk now of the progress of armies, of the fall of towns, or of the surrender of garrisons, and more and more of 'co-operation' with the Tibetan people, of 'fruitful association' with them in joint endeavours. It was against this helpful background that contacts were soon established between the opposing sides. It now being clearly impressed on the Dalai Lama and his associates that further resistance was useless,[24] several delegations of Tibetans and Chinese moved to and fro between Lhasa and Chamdo, while a thick cloud of secrecy hung over these 'goings on'. The first definite step which indicated that discussions had reached an advanced stage, was the arrival in New Delhi, on 25 March 1951, of two members, of what was described as the Tibetan Peace Delegation which was now on its way to Peking to negotiate with the Chinese.[25] The leader of this five-member delegation was Ngaboo, who had already crossed into China by the overland route. In Peking, 'official' negotiations opened in the latter part of April, and the world was told of a 17-point agreement, signed on 23 May 1951, between the 'Local Government of Tibet' and the Central People's Government of China.[26] This agreement, which concerns us here only indirectly, spelled out in detail, measures for what it termed 'the peaceful liberation of Tibet' and, in theory at any

rate, forms the basis of the relationship that now subsists between that country and China.

The Sino–Tibetan Agreement and After

To a student of international relations, the importance of this agreement is twofold: first, it is not a deal as between two equals who, sitting round the table, sort out and adjust their differences. Basically it was designed (to use the language of the agreement itself) 'to fit Tibet into the family' of the People's Republic so that she may enjoy the same rights of national equality as did the other members. Second, it made no reference to India, or to relations between that country and Tibet—except a somewhat indirect and veiled one, assuring 'neighbouring countries' of the 'establishment and development of fair commercial and trading relations'. Apart from these two, a few more of its salient features may be noted: (a) The Tibetan people were to drive out what the agreement called 'imperialist aggressive forces' from Tibet, and the Local Government was actively to assist the People's Liberation Army in entering Tibet and consolidating her national defence. The Tibetan forces were to be integrated into the People's Liberation Army in stages. (b) No change was envisaged in the existing political system in Tibet, nor were the status, functions, and powers of the Dalai Lama or of the Panchen Lama to be modified or curtailed. The lama monasteries were to be protected, and no change was to be effected in their income, nor was there to be any compulsion on the part of the Central Chinese Government in matters relating to various reforms. (c) There was to be, what the agreement called, 'centralized handling' of Tibet's external affairs. (d) To ensure its implementation, the Chinese Government was to set up in Tibet, a military and administrative committee, and a military area headquarters.

In the years that have elapsed since the conclusion of the agreement, China's hold over Tibet and her affairs has considerably tightened.[27] Working through the old and traditional institutions of the country, political no less than social and economic, the present Chinese regime has been far more successful than any of its predecessors in ruling the roost at Lhasa.[28] It has refused to introduce any radical or far-reaching reforms, concentrating more

on changing the 'substance' rather than the 'form' of things. Thus, in theory, the Dalai and Panchen Lamas still wield absolute power, as they did in days of yore, and yet their lives are less cloistered now than they used to be: they travel about more freely and are trying to be 'good mixers'.[29] Again, superficially at any rate, the lives of the monks and of the monasteries seem to have remained undisturbed, although powerful forces have been unleashed to undermine their stagnant and dreaded monopolistic hold over the land. Thus, a recent measure is the introduction of free primary education throughout the country.[30] It is significant in this context that China's present rulers do not profess to convert Tibet into a Socialist or Communist state but to help her retain her distinct individuality.[31]

The New Pattern of Indo–Tibetan Relations

The May 1951 Sino–Tibetan agreement and developments in the hermit kingdom thereafter, afford a convenient vantage point for a consideration of the new Sino–Indian relationship vis-à-vis Tibet. It has already been noted that references to India in the main body of the agreement were only indirect and quite casual in nature. As a matter of fact, after the heat generated by the exchange of Notes in the autumn of 1950, the two countries' relations still remained frigid. Nor did the May 1951 agreement seem to improve matters; actually it raised quite a few new problems. Was India consulted on this new accord between Tibet and China? Did she accept it? Did the new sovereign–dependent relationship at Lhasa involve any change in, or modification of the rights or privileges which India or her agents enjoyed in Tibet? These were all vital questions and for some time they were the subject of fevered myriad speculation and fancy guesses. The first streak of light—which gave out very little, though it foreshadowed pretty accurately the shape of things to come—was the announcement in New Delhi, on 15 September 1952, that the Indian Mission in Lhasa was henceforth to be designated as Consulate-General, and that the three Trade Agencies at Gyantse, Gartok, and Yatung were to be under the general supervision of the Consulate in Lhasa. The press communique announcing this made the point that the change in status resulted from the fact that the foreign relations of Tibet were now conducted by the People's Republic of China.[32]

The bald statement in the press communique, it was obvious, was of momentous importance. It was plain that the Government of India had now conceded the Chinese claim that Tibet did not enjoy the right to deal directly with her neighbours and that, in that country and her autonomy, we had no interest whatsoever apart from the small overland trade we carried.[33] Again, the new position was clearly a reversal of the stand which the Government of India had taken in the autumn of 1950, namely, that they had a 'natural interest' in the solution of problems affecting Tibet.[34] It will be recalled that the bases for this interest were the tripartite Conference of 1913–14 held at Simla and the fact of being a party to the agreement dealing with China's relations with Tibet.[35] Now, obviously, the tables were completely turned—an agreement between China and Tibet was no concern of the Government of India, and although a little late in the day, the latter had fully accepted and endorsed the new position.

The Sino–Indian Agreement

The September 1952 announcement, it appears in retrospect, was only an interim one, for the bare bones of the communique were lacking in flesh and blood, and needed filling up. To settle what were called 'all the pending issues' between the two countries, negotiations opened in Peking on 31 December 1953. The Sino–Indian Agreement on 'Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India' emerged from these protracted discussions and was signed on 29 April 1954. It comprised the main agreement itself and the Notes which were exchanged between the Indian Ambassador in Peking and the chief Chinese negotiator.[36] The Preamble contained the now well-known Five Principles which were to form the bases of the agreement. In view of the importance they have acquired, it may not be out of place here to recapitulate them, and inquire into their possible origin. As enunciated in the Preamble, the Principles were: (a) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; (b) mutual non-aggression; (c) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (d) equality and mutual benefit; and (e) peaceful coexistence. And what of their origin? It will be recalled that the second Indian protest Note, on

31 October 1950, had said *inter alia*: 'It has been the basic policy of the Government of India to work for friendly relations between India and China, both countries recognizing each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and mutual interests....' Again, Article 14 of the May 1951 agreement between Tibet and China had made the point: 'The Central People's Government shall conduct... centralized handling of all external affairs of the area of Tibet; and there will be peaceful coexistence with neighbouring countries and establishment and development of fair commercial and trading relations with them on the basis of equality, mutual respect for territory and sovereignty.' Obviously, the addition was in respect of 'mutual non-aggression'. And with that excepted, were not these principles a mere elaboration of a part of the Indian Note of October 1950 and of Article 14 of the May 1951 Treaty?

Apart from the Preamble, the April 1954 Agreement comprised six articles which dealt with such matters as India's Trade Agencies at Yatung, Gyantse, and Gartok; the rights and privileges of her Trade Agents; the markets in India and Tibet where trade may be carried; the routes which may be open for pilgrims; and finally, the regulation of commercial and diplomatic traffic between India and Tibet. On most of these points, it did not refer to any previous treaty or convention between the parties, and yet it would be readily discernible that in most of its details, the terms of the Lhasa Convention of 1904, and of the Trade Regulations of 1908, were generously drawn upon. The major points of departure (and the most important emanated from the entirely different set of circumstances under which the two were conceived) related to: (a) a permanent Trade Agency at Gartok instead of only a seasonal one as heretofore; (b) special provision for Hindu, Buddhist, and Lamaist pilgrims from India to visit Tibet; (c) recognition of thirteen customary trade marts for Indian traders, as against only three in the past;[37] and (d) opening of two additional Trade Agencies for the Chinese in India (previously there had been only one).[38]

The Agreement, as must be evident, was by and large a matter of detail, concerned with enumerating trade marts and pilgrim routes. More important matters were left to be dealt with in the Notes exchanged between the two signatories. In these, India undertook to withdraw the small military escort which she had maintained at

the trade marts at Gyantse and Yatung.[39] She also decided to hand over, as a gift, the postal, telegraph, and public telephone services, together with their equipment, which she had maintained and operated in Tibet ever since 1904.[40] India was also to part with the twelve guest-houses which she had built in Tibet, and which had been of great use to officers and travellers alike.[41]

If only as a postscript to the April Agreement, mention may be made here of a trade pact that was recently (October 1954) concluded between India and China. The most significant point of this agreement, in which the need 'for maintaining and developing the existing customary trade between India and the Tibet region of China' was specially recognized, lay in the fact that separate trade arrangements were concluded for Tibet. According to press reports, the Government of India successfully maintained its stand against China's strong opposition that the problems of Tibet were somewhat special in their nature and character, and must find place in a separate agreement.[42]

Significance of New Relationship

A great deal of controversy has raged around the provisions of the April Agreement. As briefly mentioned earlier, critics have maintained that with remarkable abandon, we threw away in Tibet, all those rights and privileges which we had enjoyed for so long, that we sacrificed our diplomatic status and substituted in its place a somewhat dubious consular representation. Nor has the sacrifice been accounted worthwhile. For instance, the frontier line between India and Tibet in the north-east still remains undemarcated and Chinese maps persist in showing parts of India as though situated within the borders of China.[43] Nor is much store set by the intangible goodwill and friendship which we now claim in return for these solid concessions.[44] For the record, it is recalled that we had been among the first non-Communist countries, after Burma, to recognize the new regime in China; that, in season and out, we had been championing the country's admission to the United Nations. Our reward for these 'services': in the face of the most categorical assurance of her peaceful intentions—the Chinese moved their armies into Tibet and faced us with a *fait accompli*; our protests

were brushed aside and we were roundly accused of being the West's stooges and lackeys.[45]

To subject the Agreement and its main clauses to a somewhat cool and more dispassionate analysis is not necessarily to be an apologist for it. Two factors here deserve consideration. First, and as has been pointed out earlier, the present Chinese regime, in asserting its control over Tibet is doing no more than taking up a position which every previous Government of China has consistently maintained, namely, that Tibet is an integral part of China and that what happens there is China's concern, and no one else's. One may recall in this connexion the Chinese Government's despatch of troops to Lhasa, early in 1910, to assert its control over the administration. With the coming of these invaders, and their trail of blood and plunder, the Dalai Lama fled and sought shelter and refuge in India. The British could, in the conditions of those days, have made the Chinese kowtow, grant the Dalai Lama political asylum, and compel the Manchu Emperor to restore the Pontiff to his throne. (Under circumstances not very dissimilar, the Government of India, early in 1951, successfully insisted on the restoration of King Tribhuvan of Nepal.) But in 1910 the Indian authorities took a different line; they lodged a mild protest with Peking over what they termed was the subversion of the 1904 and 1906 agreements, and treated the Dalai Lama's arrival in India as a purely personal visit, demonstrating towards him, an attitude of the strictest neutrality. 'Definite information,' wrote the then Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy, 'should now be made to the Dalai Lama that there can be no interference between Tibet and China on the part of His Majesty's Government.'[46] Ultimately, the maximum 'assurance' which the British Government demanded from Peking was the somewhat vague one, that China should undertake 'scrupulously' to fulfil her treaty obligations.[47] This, in actual fact, proved needless, for the Chinese had always taken the position that their actions in Tibet were aimed only at making the latter honour those very obligations! Critics of Indian policy who maintain that we accepted the Communist position too tamely, seem conveniently to ignore the fact that in the heyday of their power, the mighty British did not behave differently towards a Chinese regime that was wheezing out its last gasps. Surely, as between British India and Manchu China in 1910, the situation, political and military, was

much more favourable to our side than that between independent India and Communist China in the autumn of 1950.

A second major factor in considering the new relationship between India and Tibet is the fact that in warding off an attack from a hostile or unfriendly Power in the north, India's best defence lies in the states of 'the inner buffer': Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal. And in plugging the leaks here, the Indian authorities have not been found wanting. As a matter of fact, with a statesmanship bordering almost on prescience, we concluded a treaty with Bhutan in August 1949, thereby anticipating by a whole year, China's action in the north.[48] The arrangement enabled us to secure a strong friendly influence over the state's foreign relations, an influence which over the years has tended to expand into other spheres.[49] With the border state of Sikkim too mutual interdependence increased appreciably, when, in 1949, in the wake of largescale disorders, Indian troops were called in, and, for a brief period, took charge of the administration. Later, in December 1950, a regular treaty was worked out as a result of which the state became an Indian protectorate. With the right to station her troops anywhere in its territory secured, India has, in recent years, increasingly helped Sikkim in her development projects with money and administrative talent.[50] As for Nepal, though completely independent and sovereign, she has been a very close friend and ally—a development all the more pronounced since the overthrow of the hereditary Rana regime there, early in 1951.[51]

Apart from these buffer states which separate us from the north on the part of the frontier where the border with Tibet is conterminous with our own, India has by no means ignored the dangers that threaten her from without.[52] It is not without significance that in all these cases, the action of the present government bears a close parallel to that of British India. In 1910, on the morrow of the arrival of their troops in Lhasa, the Chinese raked up their claims to Sikkim and Bhutan, as parts of Tibet. The British answer was the Treaty of 1910 with Bhutan, and the cementing of closer ties with Sikkim and Nepal.[53] Their concern at the time, it is apparent, was not with what happened in Tibet as a result of Chinese troops marching in, but its likely repercussions on what we have called, the buffer states.[54]

Apart from these two broad points, a detailed examination of this so-called give-away reveals some interesting and sobering facts.

Thus, the military escort at the trade marts, stationed, as we have noticed, in the wake of the Younghusband Expedition, had a very specific purpose. It will be recalled that the escort, a remnant of the small British occupation force in the Chumbi valley from 1905 to 1908, was covered by Article XII of the Tibet Trade Regulations of 1908 which read, *inter alia*: 'It being the duty of the Police and Local Authorities to afford efficient protection at all times to the persons and property of the British subjects at the marts, and along the routes to the marts, China engages to arrange effective police measures at the marts, and along the routes to the marts. On due fulfillment of these arrangements, Great Britain undertakes to withdraw the Trade Agents' guards at the marts, and to station no troops in Tibet, so as to remove all cause for suspicion and disturbance among the inhabitants. . . .' After 1908, except for a brief interlude in 1910, China was at no time in a position to ensure what the clause referred to as 'the due fulfillment of her obligations'.[55] But could one question her ability to do so in the year 1954? Again, apart from purely the point of view of prestige, what use is an escort of 120 in a land where Chinese troops are said to number nearly 25,000 to 30,000 men? The Government of India, in its second Note to the Chinese Government had made the point that the Trade Agencies, or the escort 'did not in any way detract from Chinese suzerainty over Tibet'. But China claimed no vague suzerainty; instead, she demanded definite and effective sovereignty. And it was a sovereignty not very different from the one we asserted when we stopped the British from maintaining recruiting centres for the Gurkhas in India, and insisted that they must make alternate arrangements; or when we objected to technically neutral American planes transporting French troops to Indo-China flying across Indian territory.[56] With what justification, then, could we insist on main-taining armed men on the soil of another country?

A second part of the 'give-away' was the transfer of the telegraph and telephone services. Here, it may be recalled that Article VI of the 1908 Convention had laid down: 'Great Britain is prepared to consider the transfer to China of the telegraph lines from the Indian frontier to Gyantse when the telegraph lines from China reach that mart. . . .' There could hardly be any question that in the years from 1951 to 1954 China had linked important marts in Tibet with

telegraph lines. Obviously, therefore, it would be difficult to continue to own and operate a segment of these lines on alien soil. As for the gift we made of it to Peking, the small 'gesture of friendship' was symbolic of the close ties which we want to emphasize in our relations with New China.

And, finally, the rest-houses sold for 'due compensation'. On closer examination, it is found that the measure was no more than a belated fulfillment of an earlier undertaking. Here a perusal of Article VI, cited earlier, is instructive: 'After the withdrawal of the British troops,[57] all the rest-houses built by Great Britain upon the routes leading from the Indian frontier to Gyantse, shall be taken over at original cost by China and rented to the Government of India at a fair rate. One half of each rest-house will be reserved for the use of the British officials employed on the inspection and maintenance of the telegraph lines from the marts to the Indian frontier and for the storage of their materials, but the rest-houses shall otherwise be available for occupation by British, Chinese, and Tibetan officers... who may proceed to and from the marts.' After the troops had been withdrawn (1908), and the need for the officers maintaining the telegraph lines had been obviated, there was scarcely a pretext under which India could continue to keep these rest-houses.

In conclusion, as has been pointed out already, India's special position at Lhasa before 1950 was born of the arbitrament of war: a military expedition from India after successfully wending its way to the country's capital had dictated terms of peace to a defeated people. In this armed encounter between British India and Tibet, the hermit kingdom's traditional overlords had kept their own counsel. Hence the Anglo–Chinese Convention of 1906, and the Trade Regulations of 1908 amounted roughly to an acceptance by China of the inconvenient fact of Britain's paramount influence at Lhasa. On either occasion, the British made due allowance for, and paid the necessary lip service to, the fiction of China's ultimate control. In 1954, the fiction had given place to the reality of fact, for China's ultimate authority at Lhasa was incontrovertible—only four years earlier, our protests against that country's open and unabashed aggression had been unceremoniously turned down. The September 1952 announcement and the April 1954 Agreement came therefore, in the wake of a new power equilibrium—an equilibrium very dif-ferent from the old. In the altered set of circumstances thus

brought about, the art of statesmanship consisted, as it always does, in recognizing that which was possible and practicable. The new relationship that has emerged between India and China over Tibet is a recognition of the plain truth that underlies the ever-evolving phenomena in the realm of international relations—namely that it is the hard core power equations alone that are clothed in the flesh and blood of treaties and agreements between states.

NOTES

1. See, 'Sino–Indian Relations with Special Reference to Tibet', *Foreign Affairs Reports*, Sapru House, New Delhi, Vol. III, No. 10 (October 1954).
2. Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early Eighteenth Century*, Leyden, 1950.
3. *Tibet*, prepared by the Foreign Office, Historical Section, Vol. XII, No. 70, (London, 1920), pp. 40–1. Also see Sir Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 17–18.
4. Dr Sun Yat-sen, *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary* (London, 1918), p. 228. He wrote: 'We shall establish an united Chinese Republic in order that all the peoples—Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, Tartars and Chinese—should constitute a single powerful nation.... We must facilitate the dying out of all names of individual peoples inhabiting China...satisfy the demands and requirements of all races and unite them in a single and cultural political whole.'
5. At the Simla Convention (1914) among Great Britain, China, and Tibet, it was decided that, as looked at from China, Tibet should be treated as forming two entities—Outer and Inner Tibet. In the former the Chinese were to exercise no control; in the latter power was to be shared as between China and the Lhasa authorities. The Chinese did not ratify the Convention because they did not agree with the demarcation line separating Inner from Outer Tibet. For details see, *The Boundary Question Between China and Tibet*, (Peking, 1940). This book contains the entire proceedings of the Tripartite Conference of 1914 and was published by the Japanese occupation regime.
6. See Yao-ting Sung, *Chinese–Tibetan Relations, 1870–1947* (an unpublished Doctoral dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Minnesota, 1949), pp. 84–5.
7. The Tibetan Pontiff claims to be a reincarnation of the Bodhisattava Avalkoitesvara, the 'Lord of Mercy', Chen-re-zi in Tibetan.
8. Heinrich Harrer, who left Lhasa in November 1950, was a close eyewitness and gives a graphic account of these events. Most of the material in this paragraph is based on two chapters of his *Seven Years in Tibet* (London, 1953) entitled 'Tutor to the Dalai Lama' and 'Tibet Is Invaded'.
9. H.E. Richardson, 'The State of Tibet', in *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. XXXVIII (1951), pp. 112–22. Richardson, who had been Trade Agent at Gyantse, was Officer-in-Charge of the British Mission in Lhasa from 1934 to 1940. After a break, he was again from 1946 to 1950 head of the British and after 1947, the Indian Mission in the Tibetan capital.
10. Harrer, op. cit., p. 261.
11. Werner Levi, 'Tibet Under Chinese Communist Rule', in *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1 (January 1954), pp. 1–9.
12. Harrer, op. cit., p. 261.
13. For the full text of the Note, see The *New York Times*, 28 October 1950.

14. The *New York Times*, 3 November 1950.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 17 November 1950.
17. Ibid., 14 November 1950. The Tibetan representation was received at Lake Success on 13 November 1950. Levi, op. cit., mis-states the year as 1951.
18. As early as 10 December 1949, the London *Economist* had written: 'India must take a lead... support the independence of Tibet, and the British and the United States may extend diplomatic recognition.... If, however, India prefers to abandon Tibet to its fate, the Western Powers are in no position to object to a Chinese reconquest of Tibet.'
19. The *New York Times*, 17, 18, 19, 22, and 25 November 1950.
20. Harrer, op. cit., p. 275. See also Levi, op. cit.
21. The ninth Panchen Lama fled to China in 1924 as a sequel to some differences with the Lhasa authorities. In China, he played an important role in persuading the Nationalist authorities to regain Tibet, and in 1937, while on his way to Lhasa he expired. There were disputes about his successor: both the Chinese and the Lhasa authorities putting forward rival claimants. During the last days of the Nationalist Government on the mainland, the Chinese installed their candidate officially at the Kumbum monastery in Ch'inghai as the Tenth Panchen-Ngo-Erh-Teh-Ni. A few months later when the Communists approached Chi'inghai, he and his court went over to the new regime and openly advocated the liberation ofTibet. Lhasa, meanwhile, made a half-hearted attempt to put the rival candidate on the Panchen's throne. With the Chinese invasion under way the attempt proved still-born. For more details see, Sir Charles Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama* (London, 1945); Tsunglien Shen and Shen-chi Liu, *Tibet and the Tibetans* (Stanford, 1953); and Gordon Bandy Enders, *Foreign Devil* (London, 1945).
22. The Dalai Lama left Lhasa on 19 December 1950 and *not* 19 December 1952 as stated by Levi, op. cit. This was nearly a month after he had assumed full powers.
23. Ngaboo, ever since his capture, has played an important role in Sino–Tibetan affairs. He was the leader of the Tibetan delegation which negotiated the May 1951 treaty with China, and recent reports suggest that he is to be the Secretary to the Preparatory Commission for the Tibetan Autonomous Region which was set up by the Chinese State Council in March 1955. The *Times of India*, Delhi, 9 April 1955. As for Ford, after nearly five years of detention on the twin charges of espionage and disruptive activities in Tibet and Sinkianng, he was released and deported from China on 28 May 1955. The Chinese announced that 'during his imprisonment for his crimes' Ford had expressed 'regret and pleaded guilty'. The *Statesman*, New Dehi, 4 June 1955.
24. Ngaboo had written to this effect to the Tibetan authorities in Lhasa and in other provincial towns early in 1950. Levi, op. cit., wrongly mentions the date of this letter as December 1951.
25. These two members were Dzasa Kunsang Tse, the Commander-in-Chief of the Tibetan Army, and Trunik Champo Lantra. While in New Delhi, they met officials of the External Affairs Ministry. The *Statesman*, 27 March 1951.
26. For the full text of the agreement, see Appendix in Tsung-lien Shen and Shen-chi Liu, op. cit., pp. 191–3.
27. Levi, op. cit. Another recent writer, P.B. Henze, 'The Strategic Significance of Recent Events in Tibet', *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. XL, April 1953, pp. 169–73, maintains that the Communist control is none too complete and that administration is in local hands. He, however, concedes that the Chinese are consolidating their hold.

28. During the Dalai Lama's recent absence from Lhasa, July 1954–June 1955, the Ganden Ti Rimpoche acted as the Regent and was assisted in his work by the Head Lamas of the Sera and Drepung monasteries. The *Statesman*, 30 July 1954. It will be recalled that the same arrangement was made by the thirteenth Dalai when he fled Lhasa in 1904, ahead of the invading British.
29. Apart from a year's absence in China ('our motherland'), the Dalai Lama recently addressed a public meeting in Lhasa—both rather unusual phenomena for the Tibetan Pontiff. The *Statesman*, 2 July 1955.
30. *New China News Agency* quoted in *Asian Recorder*, New Delhi, p. 224.
31. Ibid.
32. The *Statesman*, 16 September 1952.
33. Some time after the exchange of Notes, and before the end of the year (1950), New Delhi informed Peking of its desire to settle the question of frontiers and cultural and trade missions to Tibet. The immediate Chinese answer was that they would not keep any unequal treaties. The *Hindu*, Madras, 8 and 28 December 1950.
34. In a Memorandum of 5 August 1943, the British Foreign Secretary had written to the Chinese Prime Minister: 'They (HMG) have always been prepared to recognize Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, but only on the understanding that Tibet is regarded as autonomous. Neither the British Government nor the Government of India have any territorial ambitions in Tibet.... They would welcome any amicable arrangements which the Chinese Government might be disposed to make with Tibet whereby the latter recognizes Chinese suzerainty in return for an agreed frontier and an undertaking to recognize Tibetan autonomy....'

    Quoted by D.K. Sen, 'India, China and Tibet, the Status in International Law' in *India Quarterly*, Vol. VII, No. 2 (1951).
35. According to D.K. Sen, op. cit., the suzerainty of Tibet which the Governments of Britain and Tibet recognized under the Simla Convention *did not confer* on China the power: (a) to convert Tibet into a Chinese province; (b) to interfere in the administration of Tibet; (c) to send troops into Tibet; and (d) to enter into any negotiations' or agreements regarding Tibet with the Government of Tibet, or any other Power.
36. For the full text see, 'Sino–Indian Relations with Special Reference to Tibet', op. cit., Appendix B, pp. 129–32.
37. These 13 markets are specified in Sub-sections 1 and 22 of Article II of the Agreement. Article II of the Lhasa Convention of 1904 mentioned only 3 trade marts, namely, Gyantse, Gartok, and Yatung. For the full text of the Convention see Bell, *Tibet, Past and Present* (Oxford, 1924), Appendix VII, pp. 284–7.
38. Vide Article 1 of the April 1954 Agreement, the additional Chinese agencies were to be established at New Delhi and Calcutta; formerly there had been only one, at Kalimpong.
39. The military escort, numbering about 120 men, was an aftermath of the Younghusband Expedition of 1904. China accepted these vide the Anglo–Chinese Convention of 1906 and the Tibet Trade Regulations of 1908. For the texts see Bell, op. cit., Appendices VIII and X, pp. 287–9 and 291–7.

    The escort was finally withdrawn on 1 October 1954. The *Statesman*, 8 October 1954.
40. Originally (vide para 22 of the letters of exchange) these services were to be handed over to China 'at a reasonable price'.
41. The agreed price for these rest-houses, paid by China to India, was Rs 3,16,828. The protocol making the transfer of the rest-houses, as also of the telegraph and

telephone services, was signed at Lhasa on 1 April 1955. The *Statesman*, 2 April 1955.

42. The *Statesman*, 16 October 1954.
43. In a recent article, 'The Physical Geography of China', in the fortnightly journal *People's China*, considerable publicity was given to a map which showed the border along northeast India lying about 200 miles south of the accepted international boundary. The *Statesman*, 17 January 1955. Previously, in 1953, an identical map had been used, and resulted in an official protest by New Delhi to Peking.
44. For a vigorous presentation of this viewpoint, see the present writer's 'Tibet, A New Portent?', in Caravan, New Delhi, No. 127 (February 1951), pp. 25–31. Also see *Eastern Economist*, Vol. XV (1950), pp. 663–4 and *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, 28 October 1950.
45. In Parliament, the chief critics of the Agreement have been the leader of the Praja Socialist Party, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, and the liberal, Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru.
46. East India (Tibet) *Papers Relating to Tibet*, (London), Cd. 5240, (1910) Nos 347 and 349.
47. Ibid., No. 350.
48. The treaty was signed on 8 August 1949. It enhanced the state's annual subsidy, fixed at Rs 100,000 in 1910, to Rs 500,000 and gave her back the much-coveted Duars territory—originally taken by the British in 1866. The *New York Times*, 9 August 1949. For the earlier period, see John Claude White, *Sikkim and Bhutan, Twenty-one Years on the North-East Frontier, 1887–1908* (London 1909), pp. 280–1. The full text of the 1910 treaty and the negotiations leading to it are found in Bell, op. cit., pp. 297 and 99–106.
49. In 1953 the ruler of Bhutan visited India and recently (June 1955) a highly placed Indian official (the Foreign Secretary) returned the visit. A survey of developments over the past few years envisaged 'an era of growing co-operation'. The *Statesman*, 4 and 9 July 1955.
50. Developments since 1949 are surveyed by S. Banerji, 'Sikkim, the Corridor between India and China', in *Modern Review* (Calcutta), Vol. 91, No. 3, March 1952, pp. 212–13.
51. See *Nepal Today*, by 'Wayfarer', New Delhi, 1951, and *Nepal*, by a Special Representative of the The *Statesman*, New Delhi, 1952.
52. In September 1954 the Government of India announced the creation of a new section in the External Affairs Ministry charged with the 'welfare of Indian residents in the areas along the country's northern border', The *Statesman*, 22 September 1954.
53. *Tibet Papers*, Cd. 5240, NO. 332. Also see Bell, *Potrait of the Dalai Lama*, p. 85.
54. Mark C. Freer, 'India's Himalayan Frontier', in *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. XXII, No. 11, October 1953, makes the point that should any of the three inner buffers go Communist, it would constitute a dangerous 'Yenan area'. Hence, he emphasizes, New Delhi's concern to make these areas a showcase for democracy.
55. These troops were stationed under the Regulations of 1908 and *not* of 1910, as mistakenly reported in a news agency despatch. The *Statesman*, 8 October 1954.
56. The *New York Times*, 29 August and 6 November 1952, and The *Statesman*, 23 April 1954.
57. Reference here is to British troops stationed in the Chumbi valley from 1905 to 1908, as a guarantee for Tibet's fulfillment of the terms of the 1904 treaty.

9

Nehru and the Border Dispute with China
A Reassessment*

Going way back almost to the morrow of India's independence (August 1947) and the emergence of the Peoples' Republic of China (October 1949), New Delhi's border dispute with Beijing remains largely unresolved. Lately though, over the past decade or two, through mutual agreement its earlier volatility has largely disappeared, while serious efforts are afoot, both at the broader political as well as the local military level, to sort things out. Happily, the initial rhetoric about the resolution of the dispute as a necessary precondition to an improvement of relations between the two countries, has virtually died down.

The early 1950s were to mark the beginnings of the conflict, and helped map out its broad contours. To start with, China's 'liberation' of Tibet (1950–1) led to acrimonious exchanges, with New Delhi insisting that the use of force in resolving the issue was far from desirable. Sharply worded, Beijing's retort was unmistakable in its intent. Tibet was, it insisted, a domestic problem of China which would tolerate no interference in its affairs. The country has, it is hardly necessary to underline here, been 'central' to relations between China and India. Anticipating events by a decade, it may be recalled that New Delhi's reaction to the March (1959) rebellion in Lhasa, and the flight of the Dalai Lama was to mark an important

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stage in a sharp deterioration of relations between the two countries leading to Beijing's October 1962 assault on Indian positions on the frontier.

Nehru's overall policy was one of befriending China so as to ensure that under the larger whole of India–China leadership, there was peace in Asia. And the West, especially the US, kept out of meddling in its affairs. Nor was the Indian Prime Minister by any means unaware of his country's lack of military prowess in an unwanted armed confrontation which would largely explain his soft approach—what his critics have dubbed, a policy of appeasement towards China. To start with, he was unwilling to embarrass Beijing by lending any overt support to Tibet's cause at the UN—partly, it would appear, because of French and Portuguese colonial pockets that still existed on Indian soil, and partly to continue with New Delhi's role as an interlocutor in the Korean crisis (1950–3). In the event, he helped to soft-pedal the issue. Nor was that all. For he was also strongly supportive of Beijing taking its rightful place in the UN Security Council, and even though offered by Washington on a platter, as it were, resisted the temptation of taking China's place on the highest UN body. Also, he fought for Beijing's active participation in the negotiations at San Francisco for a peace treaty with Japan (1950–1). Again, he refused to condemn Beijing when its troops crossed the Yalu River in the course of the Korean War.[1]

For the record, though, Nehru mildly rapped Beijing over the knuckles for its occupation of Tibet but failed at the time to realize the true import of all that was to follow. And the geographical and strategic consequences flowing from China's incorporation of the land of the lama in its vast domain. As noticed, Nehru lent the Tibetan ruler little countenance, nor did he deem it possible or perhaps even desirable, thanks partly to Whitehall's pusillanimity, to raise the question in the UN.[2]

II

For a clearer appreciation of what was to follow the Chinese 'liberation' of Tibet, briefly referred to above, and to help put things in sharper focus—it is imperative to view the decade and a half of Nehruvian domination of Indian foreign policy (*ca.*1949–64) in

broad outline before going into details. To start with, it is hardly necessary to underline that friendship with China was the cornerstone of the whole edifice of his worldview and the broad structure of policy Nehru envisioned. His numerous critics and detractors notwithstanding, he placed great trust on the 'Chineseness' of Mao's Red China, its national pride, and its Asianness. It is also to his abiding credit that despite rebuffs, the Indian Prime Minister worked tirelessly for amity—*not* enmity—towards India's great neighbour.

Nehru's voluminous writings do not convey any clear concept of a political India, or of India as a modern state. Instead, they lay much store by a vaguely–defined civilizational, cultural, geographical whole, by no means a spatially finite entity. It may bear mention here that the political map of India, in the decades preceding the transfer of power, was no better than a chequer-board of British Indian provinces, protectorates, and indirectly administered tribal areas, interspersed with large and small princely states enjoying varying degrees of 'sovereignty'. Moreover, the India the Raj bequeathed to its political legatees in August 1947, had been partitioned with the emergence of Pakistan as an independent entity while more than five hundred princely states still awaited integration with the (Indian) Union. In sharp, if refreshing contrast Mao's concept of China was not so much civilizational as political, and therefore, territorial. Again, by the time the Chairman proclaimed the PRC in October 1949, he had taken concrete steps to convert its erstwhile frontiers into the limits of its sovereign space; the recovery of these territories becoming the primary goal of his foreign policy.

Nehru's reaction to Mao's 'liberation' of Tibet which he had strongly criticized, and which drew Beijing's sharp reaction as 'unwarranted interference', was three-pronged. To begin with, he declared that the McMahon Line was India's non-negotiable boundary on the north-east—'map or no map'. Oddly though, there was no such pronouncement with regard to Ladakh. All the same, Nehru did draw his security frontier along the Himalayan range, taking Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim within the Indian orbit.

After a short-lived euphoria of '*Hindi-Chini bhai bhai*' of the early 1950s, reality began to bite. From 1956 onwards, Indian and Chinese approaches to the border began to diverge; by late 1959, they had become well-nigh irreconcilable. The revolt in Tibet and the flight

of the Dalai Lama with its inevitable concomitant of China's military presence close to the McMahon Line magnified India's security concerns. The failure of the April 1960 Zhou-Nehru talks in New Delhi spelt the doom of a negotiated settlement; evolving a common approach receded far into the distance. In the aftermath of the summit's failure, Nehru's idea of raising the issue from the political to the legal level did not yield any dividends. His later strategy—revealed in India's so-called 'forward policy' in Ladakh—was premised on an unshaken conviction that while it could spark off sporadic border clashes, it would not lead to war. In the event, Beijing's use of *force majeure* to ensure possession of its self-determined frontiers/borders was to shock New Delhi beyond belief.

1962 helped to consolidate the territorial formation of the Chinese state. There was no possibility now of undoing Beijing's aggression, much less rolling back its newly acquired gains. While its military victory enhanced China's image and standing in the Third World, India's debacle on the battlefield lowered its prestige. More, New Delhi lost its sheen as an independent actor on the international stage. The fact that it sought US aid while China ordered a unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal, compromised the Indian position even further.

III

Among the issues that raised their ugly heads early on, was by no means the unimportant question of Beijing's maps showing large tracts of Indian territory as part of China. Maps, it is hardly necessary to underline, are important national symbols that can be used to establish emotionally laden pictures in the mind. It was all the more disturbing because India's northern borders had long existed in the collective historical imagination of its people who, after independence, were acutely concerned about maintaining a materially, and militarily, weak Indian position with the fullest freedom and autonomy in the domain of foreign policy.

India's northern frontier under the Raj had been mapped out as the end-product of cartography and imperial concerns; the objective, largely, to ward off potential threats from Imperial (and later Soviet) Russia. Thus in the western sector, the decision to

accept a modification of the Ardagh–Johnson line was, by no means, arbitrary. For there was an impressive array of cartographic and administrative evidence, of revenue collection data bequeathed by the British, and presented with great clarity at the Officials' meetings between the two countries in 1960–1. The same held true in drawing up the McMahon Line in the east on the tripartite Simla Convention (1914) map; this too had been done after the most careful of surveys all along the border.

Among Nehru's major failings, his critics aver, was his 'unrealistic' assessment of China's historical past and of the leadership of the PRC. The truth is that, as he saw it, India's—and indeed Asia's—supreme need was peace. And to ensure it, it seemed imperative to work with Mao and his men in Beijing. Nehru was strongly persuaded that once their irredentist claims had been satisfied, the Chinese would settle down to peaceful internal development. That his policies would merely antagonize China and make it ever more belligerent was something beyond Nehru's wildest imagination.

It should also bear mention that in the 1953–4 India–China negotiations, Nehru failed to secure Beijing's endorsement of India's border claims and the special rights it enjoyed in such neighbouring lands as Sikkim and Bhutan. In fact, in what must be reckoned an act of 'supreme self-delusion and wishful thinking', he assumed that his concessions to the Chinese added to the Panchsheel principles of peaceful co-existence—which to this day remain China's rhetorical stock-in-trade—amounted to a gentleman's agreement on the border issue. And that China would not go back on it. Later, during his visit to Beijing (1954) when he did raise the issue of Chinese maps and the incorrect boundaries they showed, Zhou Enlai fobbed him off with a vague reply. Nehru, sadly, did not press the issue.[3]

A couple of years later, in November 1956, Beijing negotiated a border agreement with Burma which broadly accepted the contours of the McMahon Line. On the morrow, as it were, Zhou told Nehru that mindful of Beijing's friendly relations with New Delhi, the border with India too would be settled taking into account the existing ground reality. It may be noted that not unlike Burma, India too was willing to make adjustments in specific locations along the McMahon Line. That settlement however was to remain a pipe dream. For presently, Mao's 'leftward swing' altered Chinese

perceptions; Beijing now saw all around it an imperialist, and later, revisionist conspiracy to do it down.

In the next few years, to Nehru's utter disbelief and embarrassment, the border issue hotted up: in 1955, there were intrusions at Bara Hoti in the middle sector; in 1958, Beijing indicated that the Aksai Chin road in Ladakh had been built, in what it claimed to be its territory; in 1959, there were bloody clashes at Longju and the Kongka Pass in the eastern and western sectors respectively.

Meanwhile, diplomatic exchanges between New Delhi and Beijing became increasingly unfriendly, if not bitter, in their tone and temper. This worsening of ties notwithstanding, Nehru refused to raise India's defence budget, much less take adequate measures to fend off a possible assault from without. To cap it all, the April 1960 visit of the Chinese Prime Minister to New Delhi proved a major political disaster. No compromise solution was in sight and Zhou's alleged offer to swap Aksai Chin for the North East Frontier Agency, if ever made, was not accepted. Both S. Gopal, Nehru's biographer, and Jagat Mehta, his principal aide on the border dispute, stoutly deny that any such proposal was ever placed on the negotiating table. Not long after, the establishment of penny packets in Ladakh (May–June 1962), in what Beijing regarded as disputed territory did not yield the desired results. Called 'a strategy of compellence', the posts had neither teeth nor tail; the troops lacked firepower and had little logistical support.

The border war, 20 October–21 November 1962, dispelled all lingering doubts, and illusions about China having any inhibitions whatever in employing its superior armed might against India. In retrospect though, apart from humiliating India, there was little the Chinese gained; on the other hand, the impact on New Delhi's defence planning, strategy and military organization in the years to come was profound.[4]

A word on the situation in Tibet, and the Dalai and Panchen Lamas' visit to India in 1956–7 may be of relevance. As it drew to a close, it was clear that the Tibetan ruler was less than keen to return home, while Zhou, who paid two visits to India in the course of a month, did his best to persuade him to go back. So did Nehru. The Prime Minister's overall policy on Tibet was circumspect if not exactly timorous; his critics, as noticed in a preceding paragraph,

have rated it as a policy of kowtowing to China. More, India's historical boundaries, in Nehru's considered judgment, were both 'legal and therefore sacrosanct'. China's approach, on the other hand, with the 'historical grievance' it had long nursed as a backdrop, rested squarely on its armed might to right the old wrongs.

As to the March 1959 rebellion in Lhasa which embarrassed them no end, the Chinese blamed India in a big way. Not only was New Delhi 'complicit' in fomenting it but in collusion with the US, it orchestrated the flight of the Dalai Lama. Beijing blamed the revolt on outside instigation and viewed India's reaction to it—which gave comfort to the imperialists—as tantamount to interference in its internal affairs. In the perspective that we now have, it would appear that while India did provide 'limited assistance' to the rebels in concert with the Central Intelligence Agency of the US, it had 'no role whatever' in the flight of the Dalai Lama.[5]

IV

In the context both of India's military limitations and its political culture of leading by example rather than by force, New Delhi had fashioned a friendly approach towards China. Dubbed as appeasement by his critics, the connotation fails however to capture adequately Nehru's deeply ingrained large-heartedness, his sense of magnanimity towards China. Little did he realize that in his neighbouring land, in sharp contrast to his own, there had been the tradition of a territorial heartland protected from the periphery, with the boundaries of the heartland repeatedly pushed forward to incorporate large parts of the periphery. And the cycle repeated to create a territorial state.

From the closing decades of the nineteenth to the first half of the twentieth century, it was the British desire to maintain Chinese suzerainty over Tibet as a means of excluding the Russian threat that preserved a modest Chinese administrative and military presence in the Dalai Lama's kingdom. While introducing a high level of autonomy for the country—the Raj maintained a perceptible British Indian influence too. In the 1930s and 1940s, prior to British departure from India, Tibetan ineptitude and a fractured polity coupled with Whitehall's determination to protect its vast

commercial interests in China were largely responsible for the country staying the way it did. In sharp contrast, the USSR–supported by the US—exerted strong pressure on Chi'ang's Guomindang regime to recognize the full independence of Mongolia (1945). Later, Mao who had by no means forgotten China's claims raised the issue (1964) with the post-Stalin leadership in Moscow. The Russians suggested that he talk it over direct with Ulan Bator. Failing to make any headway, the Chinese leader squarely blamed the Yalta agreement (1945) which had placed Mongolia under Soviet domination on the pretext of assuring its independence.

Adapting China's traditional formulation of strategic security—of protecting the heartland by controlling the periphery—to the contemporary period, Beijing is concerned about great power influence in Central Asia, including that of Russia and the US, no less than India's claims to dominance in South Asia. More, New Delhi's 'Look East' policy—which compares broadly to West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, for opening up a window of opportunity towards the Soviets in the early 1970s—makes Beijing uncomfortable. And it is worried no end with US presence in South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan.[6]

Thanks to the cold war that raged at white heat between the PRC and the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s, what soured Beijing–New Delhi relations was India's alliance with the USSR. It should follow that if the US, in the present, were to adopt a policy of containment of China while embracing India as its 'natural ally', the result may well be a hostile relationship between China and India as well as between China and the US. In the event, if the US and India do not work for close collaboration against China, the so-called Sino–Indian rivalry is likely to be a one-sided affair.

By 1949, both India and China had, except for their anti-imperialist sentiments and rhetoric, developed virtually mirror-opposite 'nationalist narratives' of their rightful place in Asia. China's traditional sphere of influence included both Inner and Outer Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet, parts of Central Asia, the entire Himalayan–Karakoram region including Hunza and Gilgit, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim in the central Himalayan region, some of the north-eastern Indian states, Burma, Bengal, Vietnam, Thailand, and the Sulu islands. New Delhi, for its part, inherited a very clear view

of South Asia and the Indian Ocean as a single strategic region, stretching from the passes of Afghanistan through the Tibetan buffer to northern Burma, and from the Red Sea to the Strait of Malacca, with India at the centre. It should be obvious that there was an overlap with both countries perceiving same areas as rightfully falling under their influence, and viewing the influence of the other country as a challenge to their own. To wit, the status of Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim—wedged between the two and on the fringes of the Tibetan plateau, have been a chronic source of conflict between the two.

The Chinese point of view, now revealed in authoritative and classified studies (1993, 1994) of the 1962 war, traced the conflict to Nehru's assimilation of the British imperialist credo. His 'core ambition', they underline, was to establish a 'greater Indian Empire'—even as the British did—all the way from South East Asia to West Asia, embracing Afghanistan, Burma, and Tibet. Not only did he imbibe the whole gamut of British imperialist thinking, Nehru also derived sustenance from India's nationalist discourse which reinforced the creed of expansion, and domination, of neighbouring lands. This, the Beijing studies underline, was the 'root cause' of trouble between the two countries. As China views it, India is a regional hegemon that presumes to block the natural and rightful expansion of Beijing's relations with its neighbours.[7]

New Delhi sees it differently. With its mounting clout as an emerging super power, Beijing is engaged in assiduously fostering a string of anti-Indian influence through military and economic assistance programme, to such neighbouring lands as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. In sharp contrast to East Asia (viz. Korea, Japan), China's ties in South Asia have primarily been political-cum-military. In a lucid exposition, a Harvard-based Chinese academic has suggested that all Chinese rulers—and Mao was no exception—had 'always' felt an 'overpowering obligation' to preserve the unity of their civilization and could therefore make 'no compromise' in their cultural attitudes about 'power and authority'. Professor Tu, cites with approval, a well-known Western author on China to the effect that the country is not just another nation state in the family of nations; rather it is 'a civilization pretending to be a state'.[8]

Nehru's actions towards China in the 1950s—when it was most isolated in international fora by US refusal to accord recognition to the newly proclaimed People's Republic of China as its lawful representative—were motivated by feelings of moral righteousness. More, he was convinced that by virtue of the example set by New Delhi's behaviour, Chinese cooperation could be won for India's goal of constructing an Asian balance that would limit the influence of all Western powers, especially that of the US. India's concessions on Tibet which eliminated the western buffer between itself and China, its advocacy of the latter's admission to the UN, and its sympathetic attitude towards Beijing in negotiations after the Korean War (1953–4)—all have to be viewed within this larger context.

True to the tradition of its political culture, India led by example; China, from the military perspective of realist, and Chinese premises. Understandably, Nehru's allegedly implicit assumption of superiority at Bandung (1955) was viewed by Zhou as an assertion of India's hegemony; the deeply resented role of an elder brother. In actual fact, what was at stake was India's idealist tradition which emphasizes the natural harmony of democratic societies, in sharp contrast to China's realist tradition that underscores the primacy of differences in relative power. No wonder a bare seven years after Bandung, Beijing's armed assault in October 1962 was viewed in New Delhi as an act of Chinese 'betrayal'. Beijing, on the other hand, viewed the (1962) war as one unleashed by New Delhi, challenging the former's completely defensive strategic tradition. As a recent study on China's use of military force concludes, Beijing is able to rationalize 'virtually any military operation as a defensive action'. And that its use of the term 'self-defense counterattack' was 'merely a rhetorical fig-leaf to cover a case of blatant aggression'. Sadly, Beijing has been 'incapable' of realizing that this 'purely defensive' action may be construed as 'offensive' and 'threatening' by others. The fact is that combining realpolitik with Confucian pacifism, the Chinese have always convinced themselves that they use force only as a last resort, and commit to warfare with abandon only when they deem it necessary. Under Mao, it should perhaps be underlined, the 'gun served the Party' even though later—after the Cultural Revolution—the PLA was to increasingly assert its own views on national security.[9]

The way negotiations have proceeded over the past quarter of a century and more, the border problem may remain unresolved and consigned to a low-priority position in India–China diplomacy. The mainstream Chinese perspective underlines the 'possibility' of China and India resolving their future problems through diplomacy and related action. On India's part, it has been suggested that while diplomacy, cooperation, and a certain warmth towards China may be cultivated, it would be well-advised to keep its proverbial guard, up. Needless to add, India's security policy rests on a continued commitment to maintaining its defensive capabilities through domesticating the best military techniques available. In the event, both emerging powers growing at historically rapid rates, India and China abut one another along the Asian landmass, and remain natural competitors.

A word on Pakistan, whose creation robbed India of its own geo-strategic position. For, overnight as it were, New Delhi lost its location on the southern border of Afghanistan with its western flanks adjacent to the Persian Gulf, and its eastern boundaries abutting South-east Asia. Pakistan, both in the west and the east (Bangladesh after 1971), now occupied these positions. As of date, Islamabad is likely to remain not only an important factor in Sino–Indian relations, but one that compels India to pursue indirect approaches. While China's support does not translate into an endorsement of Islamic revivalism, its subtle relationship amounts to do the minimum necessary to preserve Pakistan's security from a distance. And yet avoid all 'overt entanglements'.[10]

It has been suggested that New Delhi has, to date, refrained from repudiating the 1954 border agreement over Tibet so that the latter remain 'an enduring irritant' in its relationship with China. India's support to Tibetan exiles bothers Beijing no end. So does India's nuclear programme. What worries New Delhi on the other hand is China's growing military presence in Myanmar, and the conviction that the nuclear threat from Pakistan has indirectly been fostered by the transfer of nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems from China. It is also fair to suggest that the competition between the two powers in the sub-regions of Central Asia, South Asia, the Persian Gulf, and South-east Asia will not abate in the foreseeable future. So also the potential for

conflict born of events beyond Beijing's, or for that matter, New Delhi's control.

In retrospect, while Nehru's domestic critics rigorously confined his negotiating space, his power-conscious interlocutors in Beijing were ruthless in their public vilification of the man who genuinely desired and earnestly hoped for a peaceful settlement of differences with China. Beijing's oft-repeated, if tiresome mantra about 'mutual understanding and mutual accommodation', as earnest of its desire for a fair border settlement proved, in practice, to be an exercise in self-deception.

NOTES

1. For a detailed survey of India–China relationship in the early 1950s see Parshotam Mehra, 'India, China and Tibet, 1950–4', *India Quarterly*, New Delhi, vol. 12, no. 1, January–March 1956, pp. 3–22.
2. An excellent discussion of circumstances leading to the formal incorporation of Tibet into China is to be found in Tsering Sakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows* (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 523–71.

   Also see Dawa Norbu, 'Tibet in Sino–Indian Relations: The Centrality of Marginality', *Asian Survey* (Berkeley), vol. 37, no. 11, November 1997, pp. 1078–95
3. For a comprehensive treatment of India's relations with China relying inter alia on Nehru's private papers, see Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 3 vols (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1976–84), vol. II (1979).

   In a letter to a friend (G.L. Mehta, 29 June 1954) Nehru confided that in concluding the April 1954 Agreement with China on its 'Tibet Region': 'We have given up certain rights... in Tibet.... We have gained... a friendly frontier and an implicit acceptance of that frontier.' ibid., p. 181.

   Gopal also reveals that Chou was to comment later that during the 1954 talks in Beijing, he intended to discuss the frontier question but did not 'in view of Nehru's strong attitude'. The author expresses the view that 'it was a pity' Nehru rejected Chou's offer of a final joint communiqué on the talks; if he had not, 'much later trouble on this question of maps could have perhaps been avoided.' Ibid., pp. 228–9.

   Responding to an intervention in a debate on foreign policy on 20 November 1950, Nehru said: 'Our maps show that the McMahon Line is our boundary and that is our boundary—map or no map.' *Constiuent Assembly (Legislative) Debates*, vol. 3, 1948, p. 1757, cited in Nancy Jetley.
4. The 1962 war and the border conflict have spawned some excellent research. An earlier work, Allan S. Whiting's, *Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indo-China* (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 1975) makes for useful reading. A recent study, John W. Garver's *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004) should be deemed compulsory reading. In the present context, its third chapter, 'The Territorial Dispute', pp. 79–109 offers a useful update on the issue.

   Other studies that merit attention are two chapters, 'Mao's India War' and 'The Road to the Border Conflict' in C.V. Ranganathan and Vinod C. Khanna in

India and China: The way ahead after Mao's India War (New Delhi: Har Anand, 2000), pp. 1–24 and 25–55 respectively. Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea's '1962 Revisited', in G.P. Deshpande and Alka Acharya (eds), *50 Years of India China: Crossing a Bridge of Dreams* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2000), pp. 427–45 and John Lall, 'The Sino–Indian Border Problem as a Leftover of History', in Surjit Mansingh (ed.), *Indian and Chinese Foreign Policies in Comparative Perspective* (New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 1998), pp. 442–56.

For a listing of periodical literature the best bet is *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Bibliography* (New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Vikas Publishing House, 1989) under the rubric 'China', C3180–C3303, pp. 531–52.

5. Sumit Ganguly has called India's policy on Tibet as 'circumspect if not timorous'. Nehru, 'acutely cognisant' of India's military weakness, he avers, was 'endeavouring to appease' China. Sumit Ganguly, 'India and China: Border Issues, Domestic Integration and International Security', in Francine R. Frankel and Harry Harding (eds), *The India–China Relationship: Rivalry and Engagement* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 103–33.
6. For a detailed discussion on China's formulation of strategic security—of protecting the heartland by controlling the periphery—see Ashley Tellis, 'China and India in Asia', in Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis (eds), *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present and Future* (Sainta Monica, CA:RAND, 2000), chapter 3, pp. 121–95.
7. Francine R. Frankel, 'Introduction' in Francine R. Frankel and Harry Harding (eds), op. cit., pp. 1–32.
8. Tu Wei-ming, 'Cultural China: the Periphery as the Center', *Daedalus*, Cambridge, MA, Spring 1991, pp. 1–32.

   Well-known China scholar, Lucian W. Pye as cited in ibid.
9. For a detailed, and critical analysis of China's use of military force and a singular capacity for self-justification for employing it in the case of Korea (1951–2), very briefly India (1962), and exhaustively Vietnam (1979)—and Beijing (1989)—see Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). The citations are from pages 10 and 198.
10. For a perceptive analysis of Pakistan's policies on India and China see Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 62–4, 319–23.

10

India's Political Institutions at Work During the 1962 Conflict*

For a start, it may be useful to go back to September–October 1962 and to be specific, 8 September (1962). On this fateful day, the Chinese crossed the Thag La ridge in the Kameng division of what is known as the North East Frontier Agency, NEFA in short. This was the first large-scale crossing of India's frontier in the east, better known as the McMahon Line. Beijing's action was followed, in the later part of the month, by the Indian armed forces trying to push the Chinese out, while the latter, better situated logistically, mounted a growing pressure in men and material. The post at Dhola, referred to as Chedong by the Chinese, and the Thag La ridge dominated the newspaper headlines all through September.[1]

On 12 October, the then Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, made a statement which, torn out of context, and invested with a connotation it did not bear, has been blown out of all proportion of its true import.

It may be recalled that while boarding a plane at Palam airport, in New Delhi, on his way to Colombo, the prime minister is reported to have said: 'Our instructions (to the Army) are to free our territory in NEFA from the Chinese.' The oft-quoted words though refer to his statement as, 'I have ordered the Army to throw the Chinese out.' Actually, Nehru's remarks were made in the context of the Chinese aggression constituting 'a menace to us' and his underlining the fact that: 'So long as this particular aggression in NEFA is continuing,

* First published in *Foreign Policy Making in India and China*, Brussels, 1963, pp. 1–26.

there does not appear to be any chance of talks with the Chinese taking place.'[2] I propose to revert to this point later in the course of discussion but would here confine myself to the remark that a lot of unnecessary fuss has been made, a molehill magnified into a mountain.

Eight days after Nehru's impromptu remarks at Palam, the Chinese launched a major armed assault all along the northern frontier from Ladakh, through the Middle Sector, to NEFA. The fighting which started on 20 October continued down to 20 November, almost for a whole month. During this period, however, there were two major attacks, or thrusts. In the first, 20–4 October, Dhola and Khinzemane fell while the Chinese mounted a two-pronged assault on Tawang; Kibitoo, in the Lohit division, was abandoned, while in Ladakh nearly all the forward Indian posts fell. In their second offensive, 16–19 November, Sela and Bomdi-la, in the Kameng division, fell—Tawang had fallen on 9 November—as did Walong. Chusul, in Ladakh, however, bade resolute defiance. On 21 November, Peking announced a unilateral ceasefire, to be effective the following day. The invasion had been unilateral too, in the sense that they had just thrust themselves in; the ceasefire in much the same way, conformed to type—it was one-sided. It was followed by the withdrawal of the 'frontier guards' which started as of 1 December. On 10 December, there was a meeting of what later came to be known as the six Colombo Powers (Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia, and the United Arab Republic) in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.[3] Pared to the bone, that broadly is the framework of reference in which the subject-matter of my paper is elaborated.

Another brief interpolation: the political institutions and the impact on them of the Chinese invasion, demand a slight acquaintance with two essential points. One, that India is governed by what is called a parliamentary Cabinet form of government which, in plain language, means that the supreme executive authority of the state vests in a Cabinet of Ministers, responsible to an elected Parliament. A necessary, albeit extra-constitutional, concomitant of a parliamentary system is the existence of political parties. For a more practical, if also healthy parliamentary system it is ideal to have two major parties, one constituting the government in

power and the other that is in prospect. This corresponds broadly to the British pattern where the Leader of the Opposition is the prospective Prime Minister. It is now customary to refer to him as the Leader of Her (His) Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Additionally, he is the recipient of a regular salary from the state exchequer.

Axiomatically, one cannot have political institutions made to order, much less legislate them into being. Thus in India, as in France, there are not two major political parties, but quite a few of them. There is one distinctive feature however, namely that one of these dominates the political stage to the near-exclusion of others. In the course of this presentation, I will refer to the membership of the various political parties in Parliament and the percentage of the popular vote that each commands, which should bring out this aspect of the question more vividly.

Briefly, to recapitulate the point made above: India has a parliamentary system of government in which the executive authority devolves on a Cabinet answerable to an elected Parliament with a number of political parties, of which one bestrides the stage, almost like a colossus. A line, as though in parenthesis, may be added and it is this that the Chinese aggression of 1962, the mighty upheaval that it was, shook the entire system to its foundations and administered one of its greatest shocks. What is significant in retrospect, however, is not the fact of the shock, but that the system did not go under, indeed it survived and outlived it. From the crisis, it emerged stronger, more full of life and vitality.

With these preliminary observations out of the way, one may briefly catalogue the reactions of the three principal adjuncts of the parliamentary system in India to the powerful impact of the traumatic events of September–October 1962. I have dealt with the Cabinet, the Parliament and the political parties, in that order.

One might start with the fairly commonplace remark that the Indian Cabinet which faced these events had been constituted earlier in April. It may be recalled that Parliament in India has a 5-year term, and that elections to what was the third Parliament—the first was elected in 1952—had been held in February. The Cabinet itself was constituted on 8 April 1962. The Prime Minister was the late Jawaharlal Nehru.

As the news of the Chinese invasion, and the initial reverses suffered by Indian forces poured in, the Cabinet convened to consider what appeared to be a mounting demand for the resignation of V.K. Krishna Menon, the then Minister for Defence. This demand, by no means new, was significant for a variety of reasons. For in the popular mind, Mr Menon had always been regarded as a crypto-Communist, notoriously soft on China, who, as Professor Brecher has pointed out in a recent study, bends over backwards as it were 'to find a rationale for Chinese behaviour and thinking.'[4]

Even as the clamour grew into a well-nigh universal chorus, Nehru refused to budge, a behaviour that was typical of his well-known penchant for sticking to friends through thick and thin. Much in the same way, he stuck to Krishna Menon and tried his best to retain him. It may be noted that everyone blamed Menon for the reverses which the Army suffered, and his stewardship of the Ministry of Defence—he had taken over in April 1957—came in for severe criticism. Events, unfriendly critics averred, had proved him to be an incompetent man who had never visualised the hostile intent of the Chinese, nor prepared the armed forces for this eventuality. And the proof of the pudding lay in the eating thereof. His head, therefore, must roll.

All through life, Menon has been an extremely controversial political figure. Professor Van Eekelen, who was in New Delhi would probably know him, and most of us here today must have heard about him. Controversy apart, he is credited with a remark-able capacity for making enemies. I could personally vouch for the fact that in the Ministry of Defence, which I had the privilege of serving for some years, the joke was that if ten persons called on the Defence Minister in the course of a morning, nine emerged from the room as his sworn enemies! Being controversial, Krishna Menon had some ardent friends (among the extreme left groups) as also sworn enemies, though, unfortunately for him, the latter far out-numbered the former.

Thanks to the Prime Minister's stalling tactics, and his remarkable defence mechanism, Menon's resignation came in two stages. Thus, at first, Nehru accepted the resignation, but only to swap Menon's place and to a limited extent, his portfolio. To be precise, on 31 October, and by then, the first Chinese thrust had

already taken place, Menon became Minister for Defence Production, the (Defence) portfolio having been taken over by Nehru himself. In his new post, Krishna Menon continued to have a seat in the Cabinet. It would seem, that the Prime Minister had hoped, that with this change, the sharp edge of criticism against him would be blunted, that as the controversy died down, he might be able to save Menon. Barely a week later however, the pressure rose to a new pitch and on 7 November, on the eve of Parliament's emergency session, the Prime Minister 'very regretfully' accepted Mr Menon's resignation, and the latter ceased to be a member of the government.[5]

In a recent study, referred to earlier, Menon has given his own version of his resignation and of the events that precipitated it. 'My resignation,' he told Professor Brecher, 'was of my own volition, initiative and insistence.... The Prime Minister never asked for my resignation.... Except for the Prime Minister, I never told anybody I was resigning.'[6] In his analysis of the concept and formulation of Indian foreign policy, the author has set forth Menon's reaction to events in the latter's own words. In these discussions, the traumatic experience of October–November 1962 provides an interesting, if revealing background, and led to the Professor's conclusion that Krishna Menon's image of China, is dominated by 'a feeling of hurt, a sense of dismay, even of surprise, a mood of disenchantment.'[7]

Menon apart, the Cabinet underwent certain other changes. One of these related to T.T. Krishnamachari, who had been Minister without Portfolio since April, and now took over as Minister for Economic and Defence Coordination, a new department that emerged as a direct result of the Chinese attack.

It may perhaps be superfluous to mention that it was the Cabinet that took most of the important steps in regard to how the country was to face the situation arising out of the crisis. An important one was the declaration of a state of national emergency, under Article 352 of the Constitution. The decision to do so was taken by the Cabinet, followed by a proclamation by the President, the country's titular executive head. This was on 26 October, when the cabinet had met in the morning and approved the measure.

Another significant step, though somewhat peripheral to the functioning of the Cabinet, was the birth of the National Defence

Council. The latter was constituted on 5 November. The prime minister was to be its chairman, while five–six ministers of the Central cabinet, the chief ministers of Assam, Kashmir, the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, besides Madras and Maharashtra (the first five states being directly involved in the defence of the northern frontier); chiefs of the Army, Navy, and Air Force; some leaders of political parties; a retired Army General; and a few others were to be its members. It was a high-powered body and its chief aim was to take stock of the situation created by the threat posed by the Chinese to the country's integrity, discuss the arrangements for national defence, and build up and guide the national will to fight. Part of its function was to advise the Government generally on such matters as may be helpful in prosecuting the fight against the aggressor.[8] Later, the Council set up a Military Affairs Committee with the three Service Chiefs, and some retired Army generals as its members.

The Cabinet also constituted a Citizens Central Committee, with the President himself as its patron and Indira Gandhi, the present prime minister, as its chairperson. In 1962, Mrs Gandhi did not hold any Cabinet rank—in fact, Mr Nehru had been very particular that as long as he was Prime Minister, his daughter would hold no official post in government. She was, of course important, not only because Nehru, being a widower, she was his official hostess, but also because she was his only child, and constant companion.

The chief function of the Citizens Committee was to organize and give a sense of direction to the civilian effort all over the country, and generous and overwhelming as the peoples' response had been, such organization seemed all the more necessary.

From the Cabinet to Parliament is but a logical step. The Indian Parliament, as is well-known, is bi-cameral, with two chambers or houses. The upper House is called the Rajya Sabha, although it is the Lok Sabha, literally the House of the People, to which the Cabinet is responsible. As was mentioned a little earlier, the third Parliament was constituted as a result of the general elections in February 1962. A tabulated breakdown of how important each party was at the time, in terms of its numerical strength and the percentage of votes polled, would put, in proper focus, the broad pattern of political affiliations:

Lok Sabha[9]

	1962		1957	
	Seats	% of popular vote	Seats	% of popular vote
Congress	356	45.02	371	47.78
Communists	29	9.96	27	8.92
Praja Socialist Party	12	6.84	19	10.41
Swatantra	22	6.80	–	–
Jan Sangha	14	6.44	4	5.93
Socialists	6	2.49	7	2.00
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	7	2.01	2	0.62
Republicans	3	0.92	7	2.02
Akalis	3	0.72	–	–
Muslim League	2	0.37	1	0.33

It will be noticed that in the Third Lok Sabha, to which I am referring here, out of a total membership of 494, the Indian National Congress held 361 seats (5 seats, 4 from Himachal and 1 from the Panjab being added later). Next, in numerical strength, was the Communist Party of India, with 29 seats. The third was the Swatantra, 22; the fourth, the Jan Sangha, 14; followed by the Praja Socialist Party, 12; and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, which at the time advocated a separate southern state, 7. The Socialists who were very vocal, for their numbers (6) were led by a colourful personality, now unfortunately no more, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia. It is necessary to place these figures against the backdrop of the popular vote that each party received and—as has been attempted in the table above—compare the results with those of 1957.

Before the Chinese attack came, Parliament was not scheduled to meet until 18 November. Normally it meets three–four times a year, the most important being its budget or winter session, which commencing sometime in November, continues until about April—the budget itself being presented on the last day of February. There is also the Monsoon session, roughly from July to September. It would be obvious that the Monsoon session was over and the Winter session that follows was not to commence until 18 November. The first reaction of the Prime Minister, after the events of 21 October, was that it was not necessary for Parliament to convene because of the invasion. Actually, this was how he reacted when some members

met him on 23 October.[10] Later, as the full impact of the crisis began to be felt around 26–7 October, the Cabinet decided that Parliament must convene immediately, and convene it did for its emergency session on 8 November. It would be recalled that by that date, the first thrust of the Chinese into Indian territory, across the northern frontier, had already taken place. Understandably, members were in a highly critical, and agitated state of mind.

Parliament's emergency session fell conveniently into two parts. The first, 8–14 November when the Lok Sabha met each day (barring a Sunday), and in a marathon debate, discussed the two resolutions that had been tabled by the government. The first sought to approve the state of emergency that had earlier been proclaimed by the President. The second 'noted with deep regret' that despite the gestures of goodwill and friendship shown by India towards the People's Republic of China, the latter had betrayed and violated the principles of Panchsheel, committed aggression and now mounted a massive invasion of India by her armed forces. It was a long-winded resolution which ended up thus:

> With hope and faith, this House affirms the firm resolve of the Indian people to drive off the aggressor from the sacred soil of India however long and hard this struggle may be.[11]

On this resolution debate continued in the Lok Sabha for six days, ninety-eight members took part in it, the resolution being finally adopted by a unanimous vote, with not a single dissent, and with all members standing up and pledging their all to implement it.[12]

As originally planned, the emergency session was to continue until 23 November. Later however, it was decided that on that day Parliament would go temporarily into recess and meet again on 20 December, if deemed necessary. As it was, before that day was reached, a major event had intervened.

The second Chinese thrust was in full swing on 16 November, and continued until 19 November. Momentous as it was, in its varied ramifications, it was soon decided that the House would not be prorogued[13] and as it turned out, the parliamentary session continued until 11 December.[14] It may be recalled that by that date the situation had cleared to a considerable extent—in terms of a Chinese ceasefire, followed by a withdrawal beyond what was

termed the line of actual control. Meanwhile a meeting of the six non-aligned powers had convened in Colombo.

In the verbatim proceedings of the Lok Sabha debates, one is forcefully struck, among other things, by the fact that during all the twenty-two days that the house actually met, there were hardly two—27 and 29 November—when in one form or another, the question of Chinese invasion, and of government's handling of the resultant situation, was not raised. It would thus seem that, as a mouthpiece of public opinion, Parliament did all it could to reflect the popular mood and mirror the national will.

From Parliament to the political parties composing it.[15] The chief among these is the Indian National Congress. Then, as now, it constitutes a sizeable majority in Parliament, runs the government of the country with the Prime Minister being the leader of the Congress Party in Parliament. Odd as it may sound, in proportion to its numbers and importance, the Congress, during the crisis of October–November, did not function as effectively as some of the smaller parties: it has long acquired the reputation of being a flabby organization. Part of the answer may also lie in the fact that, as the ruling party, it had to bear much of the blame for what had happened—and should not have.

A major development regarding the Congress has been referred to earlier and may only be briefly alluded to here. On 23 October, three days after the Chinese attack, 30 Congress MPs, including the then Congress President U.N. Dhebar and the Deputy Leader of the Party in Parliament, Harekrishna Mahtab, met the Prime Minister and are reported to have told him that he had been completely misled about the country's defence and security arrangements in NEFA and therefore, it was now incumbent on him to punish those responsible.[16] The allusion to Mr Menon was unmistakable, coming from the party of which he was an erstwhile member.

On 26 October, the day a state of national emergency was declared, the Congress Working Committee, or the High Command as it is invariably called, met. A long-winded resolution that it adopted, declared that a situation of grave crisis existed which endangered not only the territorial integrity of the country but its freedom as well, and that Chinese action in NEFA and Ladakh was in flagrant violation of all standards of international behaviour.[17]

On 27 October, the Central Office of the All India Congress Committee in New Delhi issued a statement outlining an eight-point plan of action for the country's defence, including inter alia, an appeal to every able-bodied young man to join the National Volunteer Rifles and an exhortation to contribute generously to the National Defence Fund.[18] On 29 October, the Congress Parliamentary Party met, and more than one newspaper was at pains to underline the fact that at this meeting, no demand was made for Krishna Menon's resignation.[19] The fact that this was emphasized makes one wonder if the contrary was not, in fact, the truth. However that may be, on 6 November, 21 out of 38 members of the Executive Committee of the CPP, adopted a resolution asking the Prime Minister to take over the Defence portfolio.[20] It will be recalled that on 30 October, Menon had actually tendered his resignation, that the following day the Prime Minister took over the Defence portfolio and that exactly a week later, Krishna Menon ceased to be a member of the Government. It is also significant that Menon's resignation was accepted on the eve of Parliament's emergency session, a clever, tactical move that took the sharp edge out of the opposition's criticism.

Battered and bruised, the Congress survived the Chinese onslaught without any serious mishap. The Party that was to undergo a complete metamorphosis was not the Congress, but the Communist Party of India, CPI for short. Facing as it did, a crisis of conscience, with divided loyalties between Moscow and Peking, the party was on the tenterhooks of a dilemma and ended up by splitting right down the middle.

From the very outset, its leadership was in a serious quandary. Thus, on 20 October, the then Party Chairman, S.A. Dange had asserted that 'it was the intrusion of the Chinese forces' to the south of the McMahon line, 'thus violating Indian territory', which had spoiled 'the hopeful situation'. He did however, add that the fact that he had pointed out that China denied reports of crossing to the south of the line, 'does not mean that we put India and China on the same level'.[21] On 24 October, Jyoti Basu, an important leader of the Communist Party in West Bengal, who was later to spearhead an open revolt against the party leadership, asserted that the Party 'will do its duty for the defence and integrity of India and safeguard the interests of our people.'[22]

To start with however, the leadership presented a reasonably united front. The Party's National Council met on 1 November, and adopted a resolution which condemned Chinese aggression and supported the Government's position that negotiations could take place only after the Chinese withdrew to positions which they occupied before 8 September 1962. It repudiated Chinese allegations that the McMahon line was 'illegal' and that the Indian Government were 'agents of US imperialism'. Inter alia, it rejected the charge Peking Radio had levelled against the Prime Minister of being 'a leader of reactionaries and an expansionist'. The Party furthermore pledged itself to participate fully in all activities for the promotion of national unity and defence, and for strengthening the morale of the people.[23]

In Parliament, the Party's Deputy Leader, Professor Hiren Mukerji, offered his 'unqualified support' to government, but made it clear that while India would not tolerate aggression, she should stick to the goal of a peaceful settlement.[24]

The adoption of the resolution, and the Party pronouncements in Parliament, resulted in a complete parting of ways. Earlier, press reports had hinted that the resolution had been adopted by 'an overwhelming majority' although 'a minority group' had opposed condemnation of China: in Marxian dialectics, a Socialist country was incapable of committing aggression. According to a report in the 'Hindu', of which I have made copious use in the references, of 5 November, three members of the CPI, Jyoti Basu of West Bengal, Harikrishan Surjit from my own province of the Punjab, and P. Sundarayya of Kerala had expressed their 'inability to function' in the Secretariat in view of the latest decision of the National Council on the question of the Chinese aggression.[25] Three days later they were said to have resigned from the Party Secretariat.[26] The Party Secretary, E.M.S. Namboodaripad, now Chief Minister of Kerala, it was further reported, had also begged to be relieved. In the next few weeks, the split widened further, and two clear-cut factions emerged, the CPI (Right) and the CPI (Left). Later, the Leftists split further—the Left Constitutionalists, and the Left Naxalbari.

To move from the Communists to the Swatantra is to move from one extreme to another. The Party stands to the extreme right of the

political spectrum in India. Reputedly, it is the party of princes, rich men in business, and the landed aristocracy. The General Secretary, Masani, had been a trenchant critic of the Prime Minister, though still more so was N.G. Ranga, the party's leader in Parliament. Besides Nehru, Ranga has been an unforgiving, unsparing critic of the Congress. Actually, more than once during the 1962 crisis, the Swatantra warned the Congress government against persistence in its errors and its policy of 'deliberately helping our enemies and turning our back on our friends'.[27] Inside Parliament, Mr Ranga made his distrust of governmental policies clear, by insinuating that it had treated China's aggression 'merely as incursions and thought it could negotiate with the tiger and try to make it behave'.[28] Krishna Menon's resignation, he pleaded, was not enough; what the country needed was a war-time leader who had to be different from its peacetime leader, a clear enough hint that the Prime Minister himself must go.[29] Here were the hazy beginnings of a move that soon snowballed for, as the months rolled by, the attacks on Nehru were the sharper in tone, and grew more virulent.

Today the Jan Sangha is a fairly substantial group in Parliament. In 1962 however, it made up in call attention notices, interpellation; and motions for adjournment, what it had lacked in numbers. Incidentally, Balraj Madhok and the speaker were class-fellows in college, which does not mean more than it says: he has no political leanings towards Madhok's Party. During the 1962 crisis, the Jan Sangha, as a demonstration of political solidarity, called off its agitation against the Uttar Pradesh Land Tax Bill, while its leader in Parliament, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, assured government of his party's full support in any steps it may take for the vacation of Chinese aggression.[30] The Party had also repeatedly affirmed its view that the Prime Minister must take over the Defence portfolio, that he must get rid of people who had both misled him, and the country, and that there could be no compromise with the Chinese who must be thrown out lock, stock and barrel.[31]

In 1962, the Praja-Socialist Party was led by Asoka Mehta. His Party's reaction to the crisis was, in no whit materially different from that of other political parties. Thus on 27 October, he had told a meeting in Bombay that there could be no negotiations with the Chinese 'till the sacred soil of the Motherland was rid of invaders'.[32]

Two small details, however, are worth mention. One, that on 21 October, three of its members met the Prime Minister and requested him to convene a special session of Parliament. Nehru's reaction: 'No, that is not necessary.'[33] Not that it shut up the Party, and as we know, Parliament was convened. Among the Party's powerful members in Parliament at the time were Kamath from Madhya Pradesh and Hem Barua from Assam, both of whom took a significant part in the debate. Asoka Mehta, as is well known, no longer belongs to the PSP. He had been in the Central Cabinet for sometime and resigned in the autumn of 1968 over the question of India's attitude towards the armed Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in August that year.

The Socialist Party, then as now is a small, albeit colourful group which, out of all proportion to its numbers, has wielded a powerful influence. This was partly because of the unpredictable, if also erratic leadership of the late Ram Manohar Lohia. Significantly, of all the parties in Parliament, the Socialists in the special session in Parliament, alone and single-handed, tabled a motion of no confidence in the Council of Ministers. Beside its own six members, the Party was able to muster the support of a solitary Independent, thereby collecting seven votes for its no confidence move. The latter, how-ever, fell through at a preliminary stage because the rules of procedure demand a minimum of 50 members to support such a motion. Inter alia, the motion had expressed 'its want of confidence in the light of Government's inactive and unprincipled foreign and defence policy'. As would be clear, the motion was not taken up for consideration.[34]

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) was, in 1962, a party of separatists who, in revolt against northern domination, demanded a separate Dravidasthan. Its leader in the Upper House of Parliament, was C.N. Annadurai, the Chief Minister of Madras. Despite his Party's quarrels with New Delhi, he affirmed that his Party extended its fullest support to government in fighting Chinese aggression.[35] He also declared that in the face of the national emergency, a moratorium was to be placed on all agitations led or supported by his Party.

Among other groups, one may mention the Akali Dal which comes from the Punjab. Both the leaders of the Dal at the time,

Master Tara Singh, and Sant Fateh Singh, pledged their full support to the Government and this, despite their own, and at the time unsatisfied, demand for a Sikh majority state.

Another small party in Parliament—it had then only two members—was the Muslim League. Its leader, Mohammad Ismail, reiterated his faith in the course of the marathon debate in Parliament:

> The Motherland is the motherland of everyone, there is no difference whatever when the question of the honour of the motherland is concerned. It will be sinful and criminal on such an occasion as this to doubt any people or their assertions.[36]

Another Muslim leader who owed no allegiance to the Muslim League, Ansar Harvani, also lent his full support to the Government and in so doing, drew pointed attention to the insinuations of the Pakistani Ambassador in Cairo about the loyalty of India's 50 million Muslims. While sternly repudiating the Pakistani charge, he maintained: 'We are Indians first, we are Indians second, and we are Indians last. Neither China can purchase us nor can Pakistan'.[37] His remarks were all the more significant in view of the oft-held, though erroneous impression that the loyalty of the Muslims in India to their country was suspect.

A lone member of the Hindu Mahasabha also identified himself with what was a universal chorus, his party pledging to drive the Chinese out but at the same time exhorting government 'to welcome aid from whichever quarter it comes so long as it is given without strings'.[38]

A few conclusions emerge from this mainly bare lone factual survey. At the outset, one is struck by the fact that the charisma of the Prime Minister's leadership was now, for the first time, losing its shine. Actually, in the years ahead—and less than two were now left to him—his personality, and his policies, came under increasing attack. A certain political maturity seemed to emerge too, and in popular parlance, the question asked was no longer, 'After Nehru, what?' as 'After Nehru, who?'. The fact that he had to part with Menon, despite his own known preferences to the contrary was, as one of his critics was quick to point out, a severe blow to the cult of personality. It was not a fatal one, but sufficiently deadly all the same.[39]

On the domestic political front, the Chinese invasion was the harbinger of a movement that was to give a great deal of stimulus to the rightist groups. As a corollary, every progressive force in the country received a setback that pushed it aside, if not to the background. Resultantly, a narrow, inward-looking militaristic outlook that Nehru had fought tooth and nail all these years, now raised its ugly head and threatened to take hold of the ship of state. A general outcry for compulsory military training for all able-bodied youth went up, but for the time being, this was confined to the young men in the universities in the shape of the National Cadet Corps.

Critics of government policies were quick to point out that there could be no satisfactory negotiations between two unequal powers, unless of course circumstances were such as to make it incumbent upon the more powerful to arrive at a reasonable settlement. It followed that India must expand its armed forces and all that came in the way must go under or be swept aside as unimportant, irrelevant.

Inevitably, India's defence budget grew, and in the years to come became a sizeable chunk of the national expenditure. Comparative figures since 1962 make an impressive study. Thus from Rs 313 crore in 1961–2, expenditure on defence rose to Rs 474 crore in 1962–3 going up sharply to Rs 876 crore in the year following. In 1965–6, the rise was marginal, but budget estimates for 1968–9 put it at Rs 1015 crore, out of a total estimated revenue of Rs 2728 crore.[40]

A necessary corollary was the considerable toning down, if not an abandonment of the country's forward-looking planning policies and the growth of its social services. The Third Plan was severely compromised—some critics demanded that the Planning Commission itself be scrapped—while expenditure on social security and education was considerably curtailed. From now on, the persistent battlecry was armed readiness.

The impact of the 1962 crisis on the Communist Party has been outlined at some length in the preceding paragraphs largely because, of all political parties, it affected them the most—and in a very direct manner.

Partly however, it was a necessary, almost inevitable repercussion of the Moscow–Peking wrangle which, hitherto dormant, and

discreetly papered over, had now broken out into the open. As months rolled by, the fissures became deeper, the gap widened, until unbridgeable, two clear-cut parties emerged.

Strictly speaking, foreign policy falls outside the limited purview of this analysis but to the extent its conduct, and alleged failure was a subject of keen debate in Parliament, and on the political platform, a brief mention of it may not be out of place here.

Thanks to the events of October 1962, the pressures to which the policy of neutrality, of non-alignment with blocs was exposed, were tremendous. Resultantly, some compromises were made. Requests to the Western powers for armed aid, highlighted by the conclusion of an agreement with Britain, for the supply of arms and military equipment, the supply of heavy US transport planes and of other military hardware besides the establishment of a US Military Aid Mission in New Delhi, may be cited as instances in point. There were also the beginnings of a dialogue with Pakistan over Kashmir, under overt pressure from London and Washington.

Despite these clear departures, in retrospect however, the much publicised western aid was not material to the extent of modifying the Indian posture, while talks with Pakistan were bogged down with unseemly controversy. Meanwhile, Khrushchev's 'friendly' attitude and the MIG deal to an extent neutralized pressure from the opposite direction. In the final analysis, while the Chinese invasion could be described as landmark and a watershed, it did not prove to be a turning point. With minor changes, and slight adjustments, the broad features of the pre-October (1962) policy continued.

DISCUSSION

MR ELLEGIERS: About the opposition of the CPI in Parliament, you meant that they did not oppose the Chinese invasion, but on the other hand they were split on the issue.... Would you mind repeating the position of the CPI?

MR MEHRA: The CPI's reaction was very simple. The Party met and adopted this resolution which, other things apart, said that they are opposed to the Chinese aggression, that the mention by the Chinese that the Prime Minister was an agent of US imperialism, a leader of the reactionaries, is misplaced and that they repudiated all that.

As a result of the adoption of that resolution, the CPI split. It split on the issue of condemning Chinese aggression. But then, these three members said how could a socialist country commit an aggression? It was a contradiction in terms. So on that doctrinal contradiction, these members, Messrs Jyoti Basu, Sundarayya, and Harikrishen Surjit split; they left the Party and the rift cut down the middle of the CPI. Today in Parliament the CPI functions in two groups, the CPI right and the CPI left. What has happened during the past six months is that the CPI left had a further split into CPI left constitutional and CPI left Naxalbari.

MR ELLEGIERS: Is the latter pro-Peking?

MR MEHRA: The CPI left is pro-Peking. The CPI left constitutionalists believe that revolution can be brought about, though with marked difficulty, through parliamentary institutions; the CPI left Naxalbari believes in organizing peasant revolts. Naxalbari is the area in West Bengal on the frontier where they organized these revolts. There was a lot of trouble there about a year ago and at present the CPI, because it is split, is not as it should be in Parliament, the third largest group. In the present Parliament, elected in 1967, the Congress has 282 and the CPI right 23, the CPI left 19 (the Swatantra Party has 44). Because they are split, they have fallen from the third to the fifth position; if they were united, they would command 42 votes, but it is very rare for the two parties, the CPI (Left) and the CPI (Right)—they are good friends and they never like each other, like all good friends—and therefore they are rarely united at all on any issue.

MR VAN EEKELEN: For a European observer, it is interesting how the Parliamentary system in India really took hold, and how firmly its roots are being established. If one enters in Parliament in New Delhi, it is almost as if one were in the House of Commons in London in the way the debates are being conducted, even the forms of address which are being used. But I think there is one difference, and that is the dominant position nevertheless of the Prime Minister, particularly in the time of Nehru. I think the Cabinet system is more comparable to the British system, where of course the Prime Minister also has a very important function. I have the impression that particularly Nehru was a fountain of wisdom really among his colleagues, and very often when one listens to the debates in

Parliament one also has the impression of a sort of an old father teaching his children not to get so excited. That was particularly the case, as Professor Mehra has already said that Nehru from the beginning, and I think it is from the beginning already in 1950, and 1954 again and then during the invasion of Tibet always wanted to calm down the situation.

I think that—and perhaps it is something that I may bring out in my own introduction—one of the main elements consisted in the fact that India was faced with the Pakistan problem. It had already been a crisis from independence, from 1947, and it is natural that a country in that position concentrates on the crisis which it considers most important and if another crisis appears there is a tendency to neglect the second crisis. In that respect, I think, Krishna Menon was able to have quite a bit of success also with regard to the PM's attitude. He concentrated on the Pakistan threat, he wanted all the troops deployed on the Pakistan side because he expected to be in danger from that side, and as India's resources were limited, he neglected the Northern frontier. Besides, I completely agree with Professor Mehra that he has been a most difficult individual. I remember that during my time in New Delhi, there was an article in one of the Western quarterlies which was entitled: 'Mr K. Menon; world's most hated diplomat'. So the impression you had in the Defence Ministry, as far as the Indian Civil Services are concerned, certainly was shared abroad by some of his diplomatic colleagues. Although on the other hand very brilliant, and no doubt about it, a great intellect. His speeches, although perhaps very idealistic, were masterpieces, except that they went on and on. I think that is really the only thing, the dominant position of the PM in which he tried to restrain both Cabinet, Parliament, and public opinion. He hoped that as the great intermediary in world affairs, he personally would be able to solve the dispute with China, and he wanted to keep all his options open to do so, and neglected in that way perhaps, proper preparations toward the clash which the Chinese aimed.

MR ELLEGIERS: How did he finally come out of this crisis? Did he not lose too much face in all this. Nehru, after all, was the one advocating peaceful coexistences etc. When I remember the statement you made about the parties, there does not seem to be that much opposition

against Nehru, but more against Menon, who seems to come out as the scapegoat in this whole affair and maybe it was Nehru too who tried to put the blame on Menon. What is your opinion about that?

MR MEHRA: I think Nehru came out of the whole thing, a completely battered man. The other day I read the latest book of Andre Malraux *Anti-memoires*. His preoccupation is with three men, Mao Tse-tung, General de Gaulle, and Nehru. His description of Nehru, I think, is very sympathetic and apart from that, I think it is very apt. He says Nehru was a mixture of two things, Hindu metaphysics and the western, typically English humanism, the humanism of the early part of the century when he was a student in England. André Malraux calls Nehru a great gentleman, an agnostic but not an atheist, and I think the distinction between these two words is very basic. There was something in him of the philosophy of a gentleman, even to his worst enemies. He was not a mean man, he was not a small man in any sense of the term. Nehru's entire concept of China—and in my writings often I have tried to underline this point. If the late PM had been a little better informed about China, had known more about China's history, China's background, how China fashioned itself through thousands of years of its ancient history, he would have been a different man.

But Nehru's concept of China was like his concept of many other things, romantic, and a romantic concept is never related to reality; he lived in a world of make-belief. Nehru's concept of China is perhaps best taken out of the broadcast he made in 1951 in London. He made frequent visits to London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference or stopped there on his way to and fro. (I think the Commonwealth Prime Ministers are due to meet again early in January). In that broadcast in 1951, he said among other things, that one could not visualize an Asia in which India and China were not friends; together, both of them, hand in hand, would try to solve the problems of Asia. Asia without the friendship of these two countries was inconceivable. Since he was not very well grounded in history except in its broad sweeps—Nehru's concept of history was in broad sweeps, he always harped on this theme of 2000 years of Sino-Indian friendship—the concept of 'Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai' persisted.

Because of this whole background, Nehru received the shock of his life in 1962. After October 1962, Nehru was never his own self at all, he was a completely shaken man, a man about whom all his dreams are shattered, a man whose world collapsed over his head. It would have been an ideal situation if the Indian Parliamentary system had reacted at that time to Nehru's Cabinet resigning and somebody else taking over the government because that was the logical thing. A Cabinet's policy if it comes to a complete failure, as it did in 1962 in India, that Cabinet has no business to go on.

I would like to avoid the term 'scapegoat'. How much of a scapegoat Mr Menon was, is debatable. But there is no question that by getting rid of Menon and—as I said in the course of my remarks—Menon's resignation was accepted on 7 November for Nehru stuck to him until the last. It was only because Parliament was scheduled to meet on the 8th—so that by getting rid of Menon on the 7th he would be able to meet Parliament by saying: 'you wanted me to get rid of the bad man and so I have'. When Nehru accepted the resignation of Menon he wrote to him a very fine letter in which he said: 'I am extremely grateful, you have been a very good Defence Minister.' It is amazing but that letter is beautifully worded and in Brecher's book, to which I referred in my remarks earlier, a very interesting point is brought out by Menon. Professor Brecher had about 20 hours of interview, with Krishna Menon, 20 hours of tape, and all that and this word recording was made in 1964 and again in 1965. Later Menon scrutinized the text so that nothing is written which does not have his clearance. Here Menon brings out an interesting point: 'My resignation was never demanded by the PM. I resigned on my own insistence. I resigned voluntarily, entirely on my own.' It is revealing that Menon's resignation was sent to the PM on 31 October. Nehru kept it in his pocket, he liked him very much. Professor Van Eekelen, I think, has made out a very good point: 'Menon is brilliant beyond words', but also, I think, extremely irascible. The 1962 Chinese crisis completely broke the Prime Minister's back and after October 1962, he was never his own self again. If the invasion by China had not taken place in October 1962, the PM may have lived some years longer, one does not know. For sure after October–December 1962, Nehru began to fail completely. It was a blow that was to prove fatal.

SUBHAN: The Chinese invasion represented a severe setback for Nehru; on the face of it because the policy towards China had been his own policy and the Chinese attack, and its aftermath, amounted to the collapse of that policy. I want to ask to what extent, in your view, Nehru elaborated his China policy himself, and to what extent Krishna Menon had a hand in it. Was Menon's resignation demanded because, as Defence Minister, he had failed to fortify the frontier adequately; or was he also being held responsible for his part in determining the China policy? One last question: had there been any criticisms of this policy before the 1962 conflict?

MEHRA: The relationship between Menon and Nehru was very close and intimate. I think Prof. Van Eekelen referred to a point which I would like to underline. Menon was a one-eyed man. He thought only of the threat from Pakistan and Prof. Brecher's book brings that out again and again. To one statesman he said that Pakistan's threat was entirely different from China's and he underlined the difference by saying that if Pakistan invaded, it will stay put and rule over us, but if the Chinese came they will go back, they could not say here. Menon was oriented entirely—up to a very large extent certainly—by imagining that the real threat to India was posed by Pakistan. This brings me to another point which I have probably skipped. A new man comes into the picture, General B.M. Kaul and I am sure you have seen his book *The Untold Story*. Mr Kaul says that the policy which finally brought us into conflict with China in 1962, was the forward policy. What exactly that policy was and to what extent was it responsible for the debacle. Forward policy was something like this. In Aksai Chin, the Chinese surreptitiously built a road, without the Government of India knowing about it. New Delhi came to know about it in 1958, and in 1959, we began to shout about it.

This road ran through what was claimed to be Indian territory, and the Chinese after building this road in 1956–7 began to come into an area which is called the Chip-Chap river valley area. Round about 1959, the government decided—who exactly was the author of this is unclear: Menon says he decided it, other people say that he did not, it was Kaul who decided it, and who outmanoeuve-red Menon. This is entirely debatable: who outmaneuvered whom? Menon was not very easy to outmanoeuvre. But when this road was

built and the Chinese penetration began into an area which the Indians claimed as their own, roundabout 1959, a policy was adopted which was to set up small posts in this area. This, one might call, flagshowing posts, they were not posts which could be defended. They were small posts, 43 of them by October 1962. There were Chinese posts in this area and there were Indian posts in this area and sometimes the Indian post was behind the Chinese post, and a Chinese post behind an Indian post, and then there was another Indian post behind another Chinese post. This has been called the forward policy. Menon made an excellent comment on it by saying: 'You call it forward or by any other term, but the idea of building posts in one's own territory is not forward'. Who is the author of that policy? Krishna Menon and Kaul, one of them, of course with the P.M.'s support, tacit if not overt. Please remember—as Prof. Van Eekelen has pointed out—that Nehru dominated the Government, the Cabinet, the Parliament, and therefore there could have been no question that this policy was adopted behind his back. He was very much a part of it.

It is said that this forward policy that drove the Chinese to the only conclusion to which they could be brought namely, that they must push the Indians back while they had time, and the only way to teach the Indian Army a lesson was to inflict a sound military defeat. Once they are pushed back, they will not come forward and then Peking's penetration, occupation, firm grip over this whole area will be strengthened. The policy, which was adopted in 1959 and continued up to October 1962, was based on the essential premise, on the fundamental fact—which was Nehru's firm faith—that there will be no invasion by the Chinese. It was that world which collapsed around his ears; he thought that there will be skirmishing, the Chinese come, we push in, a little clash here, and a little clash there. But that the Chinese will launch an all-out offensive, will push forward along the entire frontier, that was something which he could never believe in. The forward policy was based on this basic premise that there will be no attack by the Chinese. I do not know whether to call it forward or by some other name, but this was the policy which finally brought the clash and the conflict.

PALAT: You mentioned that it might be that it was PM Nehru and Minister Menon who were mostly responsible for drawing the

Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai policy, or were there some other forces behind? As a matter of fact, I remember the joke I read at that time; it ought to be the question of dropping the h's, so that the 'Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai was changed into Hindi-Chini Bye-Bye'. A second question: can you briefly differentiate between the reactions of different CPI parties toward the famous Lin Piao article.

MEHRA: Who are the authors of this Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai ? I happened to glance into the latest issue of your (Brussels) Journal of Southeast Asia and the Far East, n° 1968/1, which carries an article by Prof. Harold C. Hinton: 'The Foreign Policy of Communist China'. I think in analyzing how this policy collapsed and how it was framed, it is necessary, or perhaps vital to understand the working of Chinese foreign policy. Also, because it was not as if I said good-bye to you, it means that you also had made up your mind to say good-bye to us. In his article Prof. Hinton tries to outline different phases through which Chinese foreign policy evolved, and one of the phases, roundabout the year 1959–61, I think he calls 'reversion to militancy'. The earlier phase was the phase of the Panch Sheel, the phase in which China was prepared to play ball. In other words, Chinese policy towards India and Indian policy toward China, came to a sudden dead end largely—not because of one side, or one particular party which would say it was the end of the road.

It was a phase which came to an end because one side at any rate had decided otherwise, under the pressure of circumstances or its own tactical advantages as it conceived at that time. The birth of the Indian part of this policy was due largely to Nehru's romantic view of China. At Bandung it was Nehru who sort of 'introduced' Chou En-lai to the Asian scene, and it has been suggested by a recent writer, John King Fairbank, as to how China, or Chou En-lai reacted. China is a great country, the Middle Kingdom, the centre of the world. China is now freshened up, new, powerful. How could this China be 'introduced' on the world stage by India? That might have been one reason, or has been regarded as one reason. China was not very happy at this kind of approach and then, as has been pointed out, China could not tolerate India's strutting across the world stage, trying to bring about or mediate between the two great power blocs at that time: India's policy of friendship whereby one tries to bring the Russians and the Americans together.

At that time, and in that particular era, through which the world was passing, the bi-polarisation of power was very vital and it brought India into the limelight. In Korea, for instance, New Delhi played a very important role, so also in Vietnam. Today India is chairman of the International Control Commission. This policy pursued by India, which was the brain child of the late Prime Minister, of being non-aligned, of India playing a mediator's role in the world—was based on the premise that India must be friendly with China. This was the pillar of that policy. Nehru began to be disturbed by China roundabout 1958–9. You study the White Paper and you will probably realize how he was gradually being disillusioned, and those letters of 1959 written by the PM are extremely revealing. In one of these, Nehru said: you remember when you came here in 1954, and I talked about the McMahon line. In response Chon asked Nehru not to bother about the line, it is alright. Do you not remember that Nehru quipped? And although it was very unusual with Nehru, on this particular occasion, in 1954, after the meeting he asked his stenographer to take down what he thought was the gist of the discussions that took place between the two prime ministers. He said, this is what happened at that time, I mentioned that, and I mentioned that when I went to Peking in October 1954, I told you again about the Line and you said, forget about the Line, we do not like the name, call it by some other name. Do not bother about the maps, the maps are old. It will take a little while to produce new maps; until we do, forget about the maps. Those remarks were very significant. Chou retorted: Mr Prime Minister I think you have been slightly wrong in that. I did not think that that was the time to settle this particular thing, the time was not ripe.

When was the time ripe? The time began to be ripe in 1958–60, and the situation was complicated by Tibet, the revolt in Lhasa and the Dalai Lama's flight. Professor Brecher's book on Menon is extremely revealing on the Tibet business. If Menon had his way, he would have forgotten about the Dalai Lama, thrown him out somewhere so that he may disappear, because he felt at that time, and even today, very uncomfortable about the Dalai Lama. Both the Dalai Lama and Tibet, complicated the situation. What does one do with a refugee, with somebody coming to your door. The Tibetans

came, there was revolt in Tibet, one cannot throw them out, but nevertheless it is complicating the situation. Nehru's Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai was conceived by him as a necessary pillar of his entire foreign policy for India, which was a foreign policy of remaining away from the rival blocs. It collapsed because the time had ripened now for things to be straightened out. The CPI, until that time, was united—as united as the CPI can be. It has never been united, with its innumerable factions and groups, etc. But for the world outside, the CPI stood united and then it adopted this resolution. And then the Party split right down the middle: how could Communist China be accused of aggression, because no socialist country could be accused of aggression; this is the logic Communism taught them. After all the Russians moved into other parts of the world, in Europe, etc., because they were trying to relieve their comrades from certain difficulties, from certain things which had gone wrong temporarily. That was no aggression, so the Chinese could not be accused of aggression. They came to India, as the Peking radio said, fighting in self-defense and took 20,000 square miles of territory, all fighting in self-defense! There was no Chinese Army of course, these were Frontier Guards! The question was how do you define aggression and since a Communist country could not commit aggression, therefore China could not be accused of committing aggression and since the CPI condemned China therefore the CPI could not remain one party. They split into two and then of course in subsequent years they split further, but this was where the split started.

Could China be an aggressor? You will remember the cleavage between the USSR and Communist China itself: it became wider and wider after the 1962 events and the Chinese demanded the head of Khrushchev. A thing that is often forgotten, but which I think is relevant in this whole context is that at the same time as the India-China conflict, there was the Cuban crisis. I read extracts from a forthcoming book by Robert Kennedy and one thing which fascinated me was that throughout, he does not even mention the India-China conflict. That thing is very significant, it shows, other things apart, that the Americans and the Russians at that time were so completely preoccupied with what was going to happen, whether the world was going to blow up, the Russians had put their IBMs in

Cuba. And the Americans had made up their mind to call it a day. The whole thing actually synchronized completely, the Chinese aggression against India took place on 20 October, and the Cuban crisis was at its height around 19, 20, 21 to 24, of October. So the Communists split in the CPI, and the latter is a reflection in many respects of the world situation. The CPI split because there was a complete break between Moscow on the one side and Peking on the other and all that they had tried to paper over that crack would show up very soon. And as the crack showed up, the split widened, and as it widened, in the world Communist movement, instead of one Mecca, you now had two.

Similarly in the CPI reflecting as it did the global development, the split widened and the CPI—these gentlemen, Jyoti Basu and Namboodripad parted company with the parent body. Namboodripad is an extremely interesting man. He is now the Chief Minister of Kerala. And if you had studied the Indian newspapers over the past 5, 6, or 7 weeks, you would perhaps remember that he came into conflict with the Central Government very recently. The Central Government wanted to deal with some strikes, etc. and said he should ban the strike and try to take action against those who called it. But Namboodripad said: no, I am myself supposed to strike! Lately, however, Namboodripad himself has been phased out by developments as a reactionary. The Naxalbari group now in the CPI which represents the Peking view says no, these people are no good. And now we must have these peasant revolts organized in various pockets, near the border.

NOTES

1. There is no satisfactory, connected account of the October–November War apart from the piecing together from contemporary newspapers. Reference may be made, however, to General K. S. Thimaya, 'Chinese Aggression and After', *International Studies* (New Delhi) V, 1–2, pp. 50–3; John Rowland, *A History of Sino–Indian Relations: Hostile Co-existence* (Princeton, 1966), Chapter XIV, pp. 166–73; V.B. Karnik, (ed.), *China Invades India* (Bombay, 1963), Chapter V, pp. 222–90; N.J. Nanporia, The Sino–Indian Dispute (Bombay, 1963), pp. 9–24. Details in B.M. Kaul, *The Untold Story* (Bombay, 1967) must be accepted—with a goodly pinch of salt.
2. The *Hindu* (Madras) 13 October 1962. Here and in subsequent pages I have drawn heavily on the *Hindu* for the authenticity of its reporting is widely acknowledged.

3. These six powers met in Colombo for three days, 10–12 December 1962 and formulated certain proposals which were to be placed before India and China with a view 'to consolidate the ceasefire and settle the boundary dispute between them'. *Asian Recorder*, New Delhi, 1963, pp. 4979–80.
4. Michael Brecher, *India and World Politics: Krishna Menon's View of the World* (Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 324.
5. The *Hindu*, 8 November 1962.
6. Brecher, op. cit., p. 174.
7. Ibid., p. 322.
8. *Asian Recorder*, 1962, pp. 4943–4.
9. Ibid., 1962, p. 4552.
10. *The Hindu*, 25 October 1962.
11. For the full text of the resolution see *Lok Sabha Debates*, Third Session, Third Series, Vol. IX, no.1, (Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, 1962).
12. For verbatim reports of the proceedings, ibid., Nos 1–6 (8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14 November, respectively).
13. The decision not to adjourn Parliament was taken on 21 November, after the Chinese announcement of a unilateral ceasefire which Mr Ranga, of the Swatantra party, had described as 'Ravana's tricks that are being played now'. Ravana was Lanka's ruler who, in the Indian epic Ramayana, forcibly took away Sita in the penultimate stages of Rama's 14-year exile. *Lok Sabha Debates*, no. 12, Vol. X, No. 11.
14. Apart from those listed in n. 12, the proceedings of the Third Session may be seen in *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol. IX, Nos 7–13 and Vol. XI, Nos 11–26.
15. On 24 September (1962), the Indian Election Commission announced that 14 political parties would be eligible for reserved symbols at all futrue elections. These were: the Indian National Congress, the Communist Party of India, the Praja Socialist Party, the Socialist Party, the Jan Sangha, the Republican Party, the Muslim League, the DMK, the Peasants and Workers Party, the Akali Dal and the Forward Bloc, in that order. *Asian Recorder*, 1962, p. 4838.
16. The *Hindu*, 25 October 1962.
17. Ibid., 28 October 1962.
18. Ibid., 29 October 1962.
19. Ibid., 31 October 1962.
20. Ibid., 8 November 1962.
21. Ibid., 21 October 1962.
22. Ibid., 26 October 1962.
23. Ibid., 3 November 1962.
24. Ibid., 10 November 1962.
25. Ibid., 5 November 1962.
26. Ibid., 8 November 1962.
27. Ibid., 27 October 1962.
28. *Lok Sabha Debates*, no. 12, IX, 1.
29. Cited in K.P. Karunakaran, 'Impact of the Sino–Indian Conflict on the Indian Political Scene', *International Studies*, V, 1–2, July–October 1963, pp. 99–105.
30. The *Hindu*, 23 October 1962.
31. The *Hindu*, 5 October 1962. This was part of a resolution adopted by the Working Committee of the Jan Sangha which had met at Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh, from 29 September–1 October 1962.
32. Ibid., 29 October 1962.
33. Ibid., 22 October 1962.

34. The motion was sponsored by two Socialist members, Ram Sewak Yadhav and Mani Ram Bhagri. The Independent member who lent it support was Swami Rameshwaranand. For details the *Hindu*, 10 November 1962.
35. Ibid., 30 October 1962.
36. *Lok Sabha Debates*, no. 12, IX, 2.
37. Ibid., IX, 3.
38. The *Hindu*, 6 November 1968.
39. Speaking in the Lok Sabha on 8 November 1962, the Swatantra Party leader N.G. Ranga hailed Mr Menon's resignation as a 'triumph of democracy over the personality cult'. *Lok Sabha Dehates*, no. 12, IX, 1.
40. *Asian Recorder*, 1962, pp. 4502–3 and 4514–16 and ibid., 1968, pp. 8215–17.

11

China and South Asia
Some Reflections on the Past and the Future*

Axiomatically, any meaningful discussion of China's role in South Asia would imply an understanding of its relations with the Indian subcontinent as a whole. Equally, a projection of that role in the nineties would, of necessity demand an intimate acquaintance with how the Chinese have been involved in their dealings with this part of the world in the past. Above all, how that relationship has evolved over the centuries, to the present day. Understandably, only some broad contours could be sketched out within the constraints of this paper. In the event, a bare outline of China's historical past in terms of the evolution of its relationship with South Asia in general, and India in particular, has been drawn. Necessarily, more recent times loom larger than the hoary past, or a future that is yet in the limbo.

Early Contacts

Chinese contacts with India go as far back as the Kushan period, if not earlier. About 200 BC, the Yueh-chi, who may have been the easternmost extension of the Indo-European speaking peoples, were driven out of western Gansu by the Hsuingnu. Initially, they had moved westward to Ili, and later had displaced the Greek kingdoms of Bactria in northern Afghanistan. It were the Yueh-chi who later set up the Kushan dynasty.

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During the Han period (206 BC–AD 221), China's trade with the west was not exclusively by way of Central Asia. Contact with the Indian Ocean became frequent between the Roman Empire and India while a thin trickle of seaborne trade began to flow eastward along the Malaya peninsula to South China. The main port for this trade was the present Hanoi area of Vietnam. Subsequently, Canton emerged as the centre of this oceanic commerce with South and West Asia.

Han control of Central Asia permitted a much greater flow of overland trade with West Asia across the great steppes, deserts, and mountains. The two principal trade routes led from oasis to oasis, along the northern and southern edges of the Tarim River basin, skirting the Taklamakan desert before crossing the mighty Pamirs into West Asia. It stands to reason that control over Central Asia gave the Chinese greater knowledge than they earlier had of this area, and of the regions beyond. For even as the Romans were vaguely aware of China, so did the Han Chinese know something of Rome, or more correctly, its eastern provinces.

Buddhism is the main cultural link between the peoples of East and South Asia. Its contrasting histories in India and China however, highlight several differences between the experience of these two regions.

For Buddha (563–483 BC), attainment of truth came through the 'middle way', between the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. The essence of his ideas is enshrined in the Four Noble Truths: life is painful; the origin of pain is desire; the cessation of pain is to be sought by ending desire; the way to this goal is through the Noble Eightfold Path. The latter spells out rules for right living and enjoins vows against killing, stealing, falsehood, unchastity, and heavy drinking. The end result was to lead an extremely ascetic, world-denying life joyfully.

After a long oral tradition, Buddhism, around the first century BC, began to develop a tremendous body of sacred literature originally written in Pali (preserved in Sri Lanka) and Sanskrit (preserved largely through translations into Chinese and Tibetan). The Buddhist canon, known as the *Tripitakas* (three baskets) is traditionally divided into the *Vinayas* (or disciplines) for monastic life; the *Sutras* (or discourses) which constitute the major teachings,

and finally the *Abhidharmas* or scholastic elaborations of the teachings. It is a huge collection of writings; the Chinese *Tripitakas*, for instance, consist of more than 1600 works in over 5000 sections.

Buddhism, a universal religion like Islam and Christianity of the Mediterranean area, spread all over South, Central and East Asia. By the third century BC, it had already spread throughout India under the patronage of Emperor Asoka (274–237 BC) and had also spread to Sri Lanka. Subsequently, Indian traders and travellers carried it by sea to Southeast Asia and southern China.

A second phase saw the spread of Buddhism in the north to Gandhara (now Afghanistan). The great Emperor Kanishka (AD 73–103) of the Yueh-chi who ruled over north India and the Tarim Basin, was an ardent patron of Buddhism. He championed the faith in Central Asia from where it spread to north China.

In the third phase, several centuries later, Buddhism spread to Tibet and to Mongolia. This was a later and degenerate form of Buddhism which contained a large element of Hinduism and soon absorbed the popular demon worship of Tibet. The resultant lamaism and theocratic society it produced in Tibet and Mongolia bears little resemblance to the original teachings of the Buddha.

In its Mahayana form, Buddhism made a powerful appeal to a barbarian north China and a demoralized south. To the superstitious, it was a potent new magic; to the educated, it was an amazing but stimulating body of ideas. Buddhism was a great universal faith and except for the Taoist sects, it was the first organized religion the Chinese had ever known. It had behind it, the fruits of other great cultures—the metaphysics and early science of India and even elements of the Mediterranean civilization. Pitched on a high moral and intellectual plane, Buddhism had a noble literature, a beautiful religious art, and aesthetically satisfying ceremonials. Above all, there was the appeal of a powerful monastic life in a troubled age, and the promise of personal salvation. Was it any wonder then that the Chinese succumbed to its multiple appeal? The whole epoch from the mid-fourth to the end of the eighth century may be called the Buddhist age of Chinese history. In fact, it was the Buddhist age of Asian or perhaps world history, since more than half the world's population were at that time followers of the Indian religion. It spread over the whole of the Asian

continent except for Siberia and the Near East thereby giving this region a degree of cultural unity that has not been matched since.

Before long, the downhill trend was easily discernible. Buddhism had begun to decline in India even in the sixth century; by the fifteenth, it had virtually disappeared. It was wiped out in Central Asia by the middle of the ninth century with the arrival of Islam. All the while, the Hinayana of Southeast Asia and Mahayana of East Asia began to drift apart, while a serious decline commenced in the latter. By the ninth century, the Buddhist age was coming to an end in most of Asia. In China, its fading away was a reflection of the fact that a revived Chinese empire had long since met, and overcome the 'barbarian' challenge.

The incorporation of the 'barbarian' invaders into a new and greater empire ushered in a spectacular phase of Chinese history. An even more surprising part of it was the gradual absorption of Buddhism into the mainstream of Chinese culture, and the eventual neutralization of those features which were incompatible with basic Chinese ideas, or the prevailing social system. Buddhism had posed a frontal challenge to the Chinese civilization; yet, in the long run China changed Buddhism much more than Buddhism changed China.

The zenith of Buddhism was reached under the patronage of the northern Wei monarchs (AD 386–535) and during the brilliant first half of the Tang (AD 618–907). Tai Zung conferred extraordinary honours on the great pilgrim, Xuan Zang, when he returned from India. The peace and prosperity of the early Tang period allowed the Buddhist faith to thrive economically and intellectually as never before. It reached its peak around AD 700, under the zealous patronage of Empress Wu. From the fifth to the eighth centuries, Buddhism had been steadily reshaped into a set of ideas and institutions that bore little resemblance to early Buddhism, but fitted easily into the Chinese system.

A Tang envoy, Wang Xuance who travelled to northern India from Tibet was despoiled by a petty Indian hill ruler. He returned to India at the head of a small group of Tibetan and Nepalese soldiers, captured the offending ruler, and, in AD 648, brought him to Changan as prisoner. This incident was the only important encounter between Chinese and Indian military power in early times, illustrating by its

uniqueness and effectiveness, the tremendous natural barrier that lies between these two great centres of world population.

Expansion of Trade

Despite the political and economic disruptions that occurred during the Six Dynasties' period (AD 220–607), China made steady technological advances under the early Tang. Under Indian inspiration, astronomy and mathematics made great strides while Indian medical knowledge combined with Taoist alchemy made considerable headway through Buddhist monks. The earlier inventions of paper, porcellaneous ware, and the water-mill were greatly developed. Gunpowder also came to be used, *not* in warfare, but for making fireworks! By the third century, detailed sketch maps with a rectilinear grid pattern were in vogue, while the kite as well as the wheelbarrow came into use. Tea, introduced from Southeast Asia, was valued first for its medicinal use and as a stimulant for meditative séances. Coal—which was in use from the fourth century—fascinated Marco Polo in the thirteenth century.

In art, especially sculpture, Buddhist influence was strong. In fact, the Buddhist demand for religious images made this a great age of Chinese sculpture.

The growth in foreign trade during the late Tang and the Sung era is a clear indication of the commercial expansion of the time and was a major stimulant to the whole 'commercial revolution'. The land trade (through camel caravans) with Central Asia during the early Tang era implied a vast exchange of goods between the Chinese and their immediate nomadic neighbours. The Sung were constantly importing horses for their cavalry from the Tibetans, Turks, Mongols, and Tunguns which they paid for with Chinese silk and other manufactures.

Overseas trade provided an even greater stimulus. A sizeable maritime trade with India and the Near East had existed since the Han; but in the eighth century it grew exponentially, and ushered in an era of great oceanic commerce in the history of the world. The entry of Europeans into this lucrative trade along the southern littoral region of Asia in the early sixteenth century marked the beginnings of the oceanic phase of western history and became a primary case of the subsequent commercial revolution in Europe.

There was a multiplicity of causes for this commercial expansion. First, there had been a gradual improvement in navigation in the West as well as in South Asia. The ships engaged in this trade between China and the rest of Asia were large vessels relying both on sails as well as oars. By AD 1119 the magnetic compass was believed to have been in use in this southern trade several decades before it was introduced in Europe by the Arabs. Second, was the outburst of energy in West Asia following the rise of Islam. Initially, Chinese trade was in the hands of Persians and Arabs, both new converts to Islam. Great commercial activity was also associated with the surge of Islamic armies, all the way from Spain and France in the west to the Central Asian borders of China in the east.

China's unprecedented prosperity under the Tang and the Sung rulers attracted traders to its ports and created an instant demand for Chinese manufactures in all regions stretching from Japan to East Africa.

Above all, oceanic commerce changed the orientation of China to the outside world. In ancient times, the land frontiers of the northwest had been China's front door and the southeast coast, a rather remote and unimportant area. Now the eastern and southern coasts gradually became the chief areas of contact with the outside world, while the northwestern provinces were relegated to the background as a remote hinterland because of the economic and cultural dominance of the southern coastal areas.

Here it is necessary to underline the fact that in their long and ancient history, the Chinese have not exactly been a great seafaring nation. Apart from spurts of flourishing overseas trade under the Southern Song (1127–1279), which were mostly confined to a few official ports, and the early decades of the fifteenth century under the Ming (1368–1644), China's history has known no major naval adventures.

Under the Song, overseas trade was concentrated in a few large ports along the southern coast and the lower Yangtse. The system of limiting overseas trade to certain official ports where customs duties could be collected had been introduced in the eighth century. Under the Song, these ports became an important source of government revenue. The great bulk of overseas trade had flowed through Canton during the late Tang and the Northern Song periods.

Under the Southern Song, Ghuanzhou, situated near the tea and porcelain producing areas in Fujian, became the leading port.

Under Kublai Khan (1215–94), at least four land expeditions were launched against Vietnam while another five were mounted against Burma. The Khan's envoys travelled by sea to Ceylon and south India. In the 1280s, ten states of southern India were reported to have sent tribute to China by way of Ghuanzhou in Fujian. These included states on both the Coromandel and Malabar coasts of India and from Sumatra in Indonesia as well as the Malaya peninsula. In 1292, a Chinese merchant fleet attacked Java but without any lasting success. Neither Mongol diplomacy nor the lure of trade with China were adequate motivations to continuing tributary relations which were established later in the fifteenth century.

On ascending the throne, the Ming emperor Hung Wu (1368–98) dispatched envoys to China's peripheral states—Korea, Japan, Annam, Champa, Tibet—announcing his accession. In the event, tribute missions were received from the Coromandel coast among other places. These were, in general, from states to which Mongol expeditions had been sent almost a century earlier along the established routes of China's overseas trade, among other places.

A Muslim eunuch, Cheng He, who hailed originally from Yunnan, was the leader of an ambitious maritime venture that spearheaded seven great expeditions to the 'Southern Ocean'—*nan yang*, a term now used for areas of Southeast Asia in general. These expeditions commenced soon after Emperor Yung Le's accession (1405) and were continued by his successors until 1433. The motives underlying these expeditions have remained a matter of speculation. Of the seven, the second and third (1407–9 and 1409–11) headed towards India. It may be of interest to note that these formidable Chinese armadas repeatedly sailed into and all the way across the Indian Ocean almost a century-and-a-half before the Portuguese touched Calicut in 1498. And a century and a half before the Spanish Armada of 1558 made Western history by its short and unsuccessful voyage around England. These remarkable expeditions brought back to the Ming court, a gratifying collection of tribute envoys, folklore, and curiosities. They penetrated the sources of China's foreign trade not only along the Southeast Asian coasts, but also in Sri Lanka, the Middle East, and the coasts of south India.

The Colonial Era

From the Ming to the Qing was a logical progression, especially in the context of overseas commerce with South Asia. The 'country' trade with India proved to be the cutting edge of the commercial, financial, and industrial expansion of the Western states, with Great Britain in the lead. It represented the growing world order of the modern international economy. As distinguished from John Company's own trade and ships, the 'country' trade was conducted by private ships which had been granted charters to sail from India to China. Six out of every ten such ships sailed from Bombay; two each from Bengal and Madras. Those engaged in the country trade were mostly Englishmen, doing business in India but it also included some Indians and Parsees. The 'country' trade accounted for around 30 per cent of the total British trade at Canton between 1764 and 1800.

The Company also allowed some 'private' trade—permitting its ships' officers to carry a specified amount of gold and goods, supposedly to compensate for their meagre salaries. These private traders were a new element at Canton.

The private traders were the Far Eastern correspondents, friends, and often relatives of merchants in similar but bigger agency houses in India which had flourished after the Company lost its trade monopoly in 1823. After about 1817, three-fourths of British imports at Canton were provided by these agency houses who performed a multiplicity of functions: providing an outlet for Indian produce and remitting profits to India; financing the Company's purchase of China's tea which was profitably taxed by the British government in London; offering a channel through which the Company in India could remit surplus revenues from India, via Canton, to meet payments due in England.

By the late eighteenth century, a flourishing 'triangular' trade had developed between Canton, India, and England. Chinese exports to India comprised nankeen, cloth, alum, camphor, pepper, vermilion, sugar, sugar candy, drugs, and chinaware; China's imports from India included raw cotton, ivory, sandalwood, silver, and opium.

Private traders, the dominant element in this trade, exploited every commercial opportunity and increasingly concentrated on

opium. Opium smoking spread widely among Yamen underlings and soldiers—the two groups that represented the government at the level of the local populace.

Foreigners apart, a major role in opium smuggling was played by Chinese agents. Their smuggling boats would take delivery from the foreigners at the receiving ships. Distribution to the west and north of Canton towards central China was carried on along the routes of inland trade. This function was soon overtaken by foreign ships that distributed opium on the coast of China, northeast of Canton.

From 30,000 chests in the 1830s, the opium traffic reached a peak of 87,000 chests in 1858–60. This boost was, however, followed by a sharp decline.

The trade was a triangular operation with Indian opium for China, Chinese tea for Britain, and the British Raj for India. By involving China, India lessened the burden of its 'remorseless colonial tribute' to its masters in Whitehall while China's position as a sub-colony stood starkly exposed.

National Contacts

By the 1930s, the colonial era had long passed its high noon splendour and reached more or less, a dead-end. In the wake of the October 1911 revolution, and the emergence of the Kuomintang (KMT), the Chinese had been able to assert, however weakly, their national independence, while in South Asia in general, and in India in particular, the Raj did not appear to be at the pinnacle of its glory.

Symptomatic of close India–China ties was the growing friendliness Nehru and the Indian National Congress expressed towards China and its people in the 1930s when it was struggling against a ruthless Japanese onslaught. A typical example was the Kotnis medical mission which appears to have left an indelible imprint on the Chinese mind. During his visit to China in August 1939, Nehru talked eloquently of the 'imperishable links' which bound the two peoples together. He saw himself as one of a long line of scholars and statesmen bringing closer these 'two Ancients in history and civilization who had found rebirth and youthful vitality again'. He also dwelt upon an 'Eastern Federation of China and India' and of

other Eastern countries. The Indian leader was both 'astonished and grateful' for the desire of the Chinese people 'for a close and friendly union with the people of India'.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Dr S. Radhakrishnan in the course of his visit to wartime Chungking in May 1941. The scholar-statesman talked forcefully of 'our civilizations possessing a common cultural and spiritual background with an identity of ideals of happy life and friendship'. On the political plane, Dr Radhakrishnan referred to their relationship affording 'a unique example of good neighbourly behaviour'.

In retrospect, we may ask whether these paeans to the 'imperishable links' between India and China and their 'common cultural and spiritual background' were not far removed from reality on the ground and the call for an 'Eastern Federation' mere tub-thumping? Later in the mid-fifties there was the thundering chorus of '*Hindi-Chini bhai bhai*' with its euphoria about Panchsheel and the Bandung spirit. Was that too unreal, and divorced from reality?

It was in Bandung in 1955 that the Chinese Prime Minister forged what had proved in retrospect, to be an adversarial rather than a friendly relationship with India. Zhou Enlai assured Mohammad Ali Bogra, then Prime Minister of Pakistan, that there was 'no conceivable clash of interests which could imperil friendly relations between their two countries', implying that this was 'not true' of relations between India and China.

Nor need one recount the oft-repeated story of the tragic events leading to, and the aftermath of the 1962 armed conflict except perhaps to underline the immensity of the shock it administered and the damage it caused to ties between the two countries. Almost a quarter century elapsed before relations were restored to a modicum of normalcy.

In this process, the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in December 1988 was to mark a watershed of sorts. The initiative was no doubt New Delhi's but the Chinese had indicated their intentions as far back as 1981, when they extended an invitation to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It was renewed four years later to her successor by the Chinese Vice-Premier who attended ceremonies connected with her last rites. 1987 however witnessed renewed tensions in the wake of the Chinese intrusion

into the Sumdorong Chu valley in the eastern sector. There was a happy turnaround with the conclusion of a cultural exchange agreement in May 1988 which was followed by visits to China by leaders of India's ruling, as well as opposition parties for an exchange of views with their counterparts in the CPC (Communist Party of China) hierarchy. This process culminated in the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to China. During his three-day sojourn in Beijing, Rajiv Gandhi spent more than ten hours confabulating with Chinese leaders including Premier Li Peng, the elder statesman Deng Xiaoping, and the then Party General Secretary, Zhao Ziyang. Deng hailed the youthful Prime Minister as his 'young friend' and noted that 'starting with your visit we will restore our relations as friends'. A warm handshake was followed by a private meeting that lasted for an hour and a half. This was a record of sorts, for Deng's meetings did not normally last for more than half an hour. The Chinese leader's nostalgic, and one would imagine warm references to Nehru's visit in 1954, and loud protestations to his youthful grandson to 'forget' the past and 'look forward' to the future' were clearly pronounced. In turn, this may have inspired the Indian Prime Minister's remark about 'a new beginning' in relations between the two countries.

The intangibles of the political talks apart, more concretely, three agreements were concluded on civil aviation; cooperation in science and technology; and a three-year bilaterial cultural exchange programme. Nor was the crucial question of a boundary settlement left out of the reckoning. It was agreed to maintain peace and tranquility along the border largely by strengthening the existing, on the ground mechanisms. Two joint working groups were set up—one on the border, and another on economic relations, trade, and science and technology, with the Indian and Chinese foreign secretaries as co-chairmen. The group was entrusted with the task of making concrete recommendations for an overall solution of the boundary question within a definite timeframe.

In the five years that have elapsed since the Gandhi visit, literally not a day has passed without fresh evidence of keeping up the momentum of a high-level dialogue between the two neighbours. The Chinese Prime Minister, Li Peng, visited New Delhi in December 1991; the former Indian President, R. Venkataraman, visited China

in June 1992; and Prime Minister P.V. Narashimha Rao returned his Chinese counterpart's visit in September 1993. Apart from the top leaders, there has been a flurry of exchanges at the lower level including the commerce and defence Ministers, a host of other functionaries, party leaders embracing all shades of the political spectrum, agronomists, demographers, family planners, and scholars.

No serious student of India–China relationship would question the significance of fostering friendly, nay cordial and harmonious, relations between the two peoples. Moreover, China today is an important power, and not only for South Asia. With the eclipse of the erstwhile Soviet Union and mounting political uncertainty in its former domain, and in Eastern Europe, West Asia, and large parts of Africa, China is rapidly emerging as a powerful actor, in and outside the UN. Nearer home, its growing economic clout, burgeoning armed strength, and political stability despite the Tiananmen Square episode and the near eclipse of international communism, make it singularly important. Who would deny that a good, friendly relationship with such a country is a gain in itself?

To say all this is not to deny that all relationships, be they among individuals or nations, rest on the solid substratum of cool and objective appreciation of each other's needs and sensibilities. Again, all relationships evolve, and are in a constant state of flux and review in the light of new experience, and changing situations. It should follow that 'special' relationships or the 'bhai bhai' phenomenon is no more than an emotional euphoria which often leads to disillusionment.

In the context of India's expanding ties with Beijing, especially during the past five years or so, some of the lesser known, if disturbing trends that may help derail the process, need to be briefly highlighted. First, there is the strange spectacle of the ongoing, near-interminable negotiations between Bhutan and the PRC over their 570 km long border. The eighth round of their bilateral talks was held in the Chinese capital in June 1992 and there may be a few more rounds before a settlement is reached. Such inordinate delay, one hates to think, may be used to coax or cajole the small Himalayan kingdom, now facing severe ethnic problems on its southern frontier into conceding principles of delimitation that may later be invoked against New Delhi.

Another regime in neighbouring Myanmar has continuously received military and diplomatic support from China. Apart from being treated as a political pariah by the international community, a disturbing aspect of this relationship for New Delhi is that the country serves as a safe sanctuary, training ground and conduit for widespread armed insurgency in the entire northeast in general, and the bordering states of Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura, in particular. The Chinese are assisting Myanmar by building new naval facilities at the Haing Gyi island which may lead to acquiring fuelling rights for their ships. Conjointly with Beijing's sale of two modern missile boats to Bangladesh, and its close ties with Pakistan, Chinese presence, direct as well as by proxy, both on India's eastern as well as western flanks would loom large.

Nor do events in Tibet lend themselves to confidence building in which New Delhi and Beijing are now so feverishly engaged. For whatever gloss the Chinese may choose to put on it, the harsh truth is that over more than three decades there has been a violent, almost endemic rebellion in that land signifying alienation from the great motherland. The Chinese method of governance, it would appear, leaves a lot to be desired. According to some respectable international observers, torture and severe punishment interspersed with bouts of martial law and worse, are a common feature. Beijing's hypersensitivity on Tibet is too well-known to need reiteration while New Delhi, for its part, has been only too willing to respond to its sensitivities by promising time and again to eschew all 'anti-Chinese activities' by the near-helpless Tibetan refugees.

It is nobody's case that Tibet be declared independent. But a *genuine* measure of autonomy for Tibet within the broad parameters of the Dalai Lama's Strasbourg proposals may help reduce tensions. If it is followed by a gradual demilitarization of Tibet, it would facilitate the process of maintaining peace and tranquillity on the Himalayan frontier.

A modicum of optimism was generated by the contacts in 1993 between the Dalai Lama's representative, his elder brother and troubleshooter, Gyalpo Dhondup, and the Chinese authorities in Beijing. It was his eleventh visit, apart from half a dozen delegations that have been sent to China and Tibet. Procedures for the selection of the new incarnation of the Panchen Lama appear to have been

discussed and the Dalai Lama informed that he would be welcome to raise any issue, *barring* independence for discussion. It would indeed be sad if a settlement is not reached in the immediate future. For the incumbent Dalai Lama is an enlightened and charismatic leader of his people with no overt hostility towards China, who will be a tower of strength in sealing an agreement with Beijing which will enjoy greater credibility abroad, and almost total acceptability in Tibet itself. His passing away would create a vacuum that may be hard to fill.

China's ties with Islamabad present another hurdle. Here too, one hopes, there may be some let up in the anti-Indian stance of our western neighbour. Even as China wants India to be responsive to its concerns on Tibet and Tibetans, may be New Delhi should be bold enough to underline its mounting fears over Pakistan's intrusive role in its internal affairs. With Beijing exercising a modicum of restraint over its allies in Islamabad, New Delhi would feel reassured about its sensitivity to a reciprocal obligation.

Other Recent Trends

In any realistic discussion on recent trends in China's relations with South Asia, a noticeable fact is the manner in which Beijing has resolved its long-estranged relationship with Hanoi. Without going too far back, the two countries had a spell of border wars in 1979 which often reminds one of Deng's famous remarks about 'teaching (that country) a lesson'. This is not to underrate the importance of the dispute over the spratly group of islands in the South China Sea which, Vietnam apart, are claimed by Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. Beijing has expressed its willingness for joint development of the archipelago but gives no indication of compromising its sovereign claims. These could pose a serious threat to regional peace and security; as they did in 1989 when Beijing used *force majeure* to push Hanoi out of a Spratly reef.

In the wake of the 1979 border skirmishes with Hanoi, cross-border shelling had continued for almost a decade, until the reduction of tensions and the re-establishment of diplomatic ties in 1991. This was followed by Prime Minister Li Peng's visit in December 1992—the first by an incumbent Prime Minister of China in twenty-one

years. In August 1993, talks held in Beijing covered the conflicting border claims, apart from the dispute over waters in the Tonkin Gulf. Contentious issues, it would appear, have been cast aside and the emphasis shifted to 'a peaceful and steady boundary' which would help the two countries concentrate on economic development.

In September 1993, an agreement following the visit of the Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narashimha Rao to China marks another watershed and may help to break the logjam in relations between the two. Apart from the two sides reiterating their commitment to peacefully resolve the boundary question, there is a promise not to use, much less threaten to use, force in settling issues. Confidence building measures include the reduction of military forces along the border, and prior intimation of army exercises. Above all, adequate measures are envisaged to avoid air intrusions into each other's territory. In addition, a new outlet for border trade has been opened at Shipki La. The possibility of operating an air service between New Delhi and Beijing has been explored, as has been the organization of a festival of India in China which was inaugurated in May 1994.

Some aspects of the new agreement bear emphasis. Insofar as over the past quarter century, more precisely since 1967, the India–China border has in fact enjoyed a reasonable measure of peace and tranquillity, the new agreement would appear to be more in the nature of expressing rather than building confidence. Again, 'no first use' of conventional force commitment may, hopefully, work towards 'no first use' of nuclear weaponry. Still another facet is the stress on economic ties, and as these get strengthened, a direct spin-off could be an improvement in the overall climate of the SAARC region. It is important to underline here that for almost four decades now, Asia has been plagued by two Cold Wars, between the US and the erstwhile Soviet Union on the one hand and between China and the Soviets on the other. The India–China Cold War was an offshoot of the latter. With both the Cold Wars drawing to a close and the Asia–Pacific region gaining in importance in the global economy, Asian as well as global politics are in the process of radical transformation.

Regarding Pakistan, it appears that once India–China friendship strengthens, tensions with Islamabad would decline and be contained automatically. And the road to the future would appear to

lie in mutual trade and joint ventures for they provide the acid test of enhanced cooperation. A border settlement may enhance both India's as well as China's security and ease the burden of maintaining a sizeable military presence in the mountain areas.

Five major nations of the world—China, India, Russia, Japan, and Indonesia—are in Asia. Little wonder then that the centre of gravity of the international system is shifting slowly but surely to this continent. The Beijing agreement would thus appear to be a recognition, by the two Asian giants, of this new reality.

In South Asia, China's relations with Pakistan are excellent; with the smaller countries—Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives—these vary from good to very good. Projecting into the future, Beijing's improved ties with India, apart from those with Russia and Vietnam, are indicative of its emphasis on a peaceful environment so as to forge ahead with its cherished goals of rapid growth and a thorough modernization of its economy. However, the 1962 China–India War, wresting the Paracel islands from South Vietnam in 1974, and some of the Spratly reefs from Hanoi in 1988, do give cause for concern. It is little wonder that its detractors charge, not unfairly, that Beijing wants to keep its options open and leave its possible adversaries guessing.

From all indications, China's present strategy would appear to be to keep the substantive issues of dispute in abeyance, in a bid to promote cooperation in areas not in contention. This is a pragmatic and eminently sensible approach. The Japanese stance to bind China in an intimate web of economic cooperation is more than welcomed by the latter in the hope that a many-sided, long-lasting basis of economic cooperation will lead to a network of cooperative security.

The growing importance of the Asia–Pacific region hardly needs to be emphasized; it bids fair to be the fastest growth area in the world. Economic projections indicate that in the next thirty years, China's economy will be larger than that of the US, with India a close runner-up. Already Asia's five 'little dragons'—South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Thailand—with two others, Malaysia and Indonesia on the threshold, hold out the promise of a major economic boom. In the event, the crying need of the hour is for India and China to cooperate, pool resources and technologies, and reduce their dependence on the North.

A pragmatic approach is to face issues as they arise. Ad hoc reactive solutions to deep-seated, intractable problems, and for that matter romantic notions, either about harmony or hostility do not help. History is not a cookbook offering pre-tested remedies. The past becomes dynamic and vital, if properly restructured. It teaches by analogy, not by maxim. Again, no two situations bear an exact parallel, much less a comparison. Each generation must judge for itself what is comparable.

What one has to recognize is that the world is changing under the influence of forces which no single government can control; least of all the much harassed solitary superpower now left on the world scene. It is confronted with a political awakening on a scale that has no parallel in recorded history. All the while, there has been a significant redistribution of economic as well as political power. In the event, China's role in South Asia in the coming years presents challenges no less than opportunities that would be quite out of the ordinary.

SUMMARY

INDIA—CHINA BORDER: A REVIEW AND CRITIQUE

Three populist, if highly partisan views of the border dispute aired by Karunakar Gupta, Subramaniam Swamy, and Neville Maxwell need scrutiny. Gupta deplores the 'distortion' of records and the resultant ignorance of facts; more, he suggests the late Sir Olaf Caroe's acts of omission and commission were compounded by his compatriot, H.E. Richardson. Swamy charges that at Simla, McMahon was 'flouting' instructions from Whitehall, and strayed far beyond his brief. That was not all. For all the three plenipotentiaries were 'sent into disgrace' by their respective governments. Again in 1938, Caroe had, by 'a sleight of hand', unobtrusively replaced the original Volume 14 of Aitchison's Treaties by a reprinted 'fraudulent copy'. Maxwell has charged that at Simla, McMahon's 'secret negotiations' with the Tibetans were 'illicit' and that Caroe arranged the 'falsification' of the published record of the Simla conference.

While the author's *The McMahon Line and After* (1974) carefully examines every scrap of evidence, his two volumes of supplementary documents—*The North-Eastern Frontier* (1979, 1980)—reinforce it further. Briefly, *The McMahon Line* shown by the *red* line on the 1914 map was an integral part of a longer, more comprehensive line drawn on the Convention map to illustrate Article IX which showed the borders of Tibet. the boundary between Outer and Inner Tibet is shown by a *blue* line; the former under *de facto* Tibetan control, but nominal Chinese authority; the latter under nominal Tibetan control, but *de facto* Chinese sway.

A few facts need to be heavily underlined in order to counter these charges. To start with, the all-out Chinese effort at Simla, and later, did not relate to a demand for modifying the ML [McMahon Line] boundary but to the placement and contours of the Outer–Inner Tibet line. Again, McMahon did sign the Indian–Tibet joint declaration even though instructions to the contrary had been received from Whitehall a few hours earlier; his plea that these arrived 'too late' for him to effect the proceedings of the conference was upheld by his political masters.

There was no question that in the aftermath of the Simla Conference, the three plenipotentiaries were disgraced by their respective governments. Shatra, no diplomat by training, won fulsome praise from McMahon and if the Dalai Lama was not too favourably inclined, the reason was the Lama's own lack of understanding of the true import of what had transpired at Simla. The reason for Ivan Chen's lapse into relative anonymity after 1914 was the political chaos of a ramshackle Republican regime that succeeded the Manchus in 1912. As for McMahon himself, he was posted as High Commissioner in Egypt (1914) and later as British Commissioner on the Middle East International Commission. In both cases, these were marks of significant promotion.

The question as to why the Raj abstained from publishing the maps as well as the Indo–Tibetan joint declaration 'for 22 years' is easily answered. To start with, not until the early 1930s was the Republican regime in China in any position to take effective steps to look after its interests, while all along New Delhi had hoped that a mutually satisfactory settlement with China on the Tibetan question could be negotiated. And she waited 'so long as there remains any prospect' of a happy end to the stalemate.

As to Volume 14 of Aitchison's Treaties being re-issued in 1938 with a fuller version of what had transpired at Simla, Caroe attracted no personal blame for his alleged distortion, forgery, and concoction. The matter had been scrutinized at the highest levels of government in Whitehall which finally nodded its assent and that too only for a part of what New Delhi had initially proposed.

To condemn the Ardagh boundary alignment in the Western sector because of its author's all-too-brief a stint as Director of British Military Intelligence (1896–7) is little less than fair. Ardagh's

alignment was hard-nosed and well-grounded and designed to answer to the needs of a viable frontier and the compulsions of the situation that prevailed. In sharp contrast, the abortive Macartney–Macdonald Line was an effort at compromise by a known Sinophile, George (later Sir George) Macartney.

As for Aksai Chin, there is no dearth of evidence from official records, revenue data, and travellers' accounts that New Delhi's claims rest on firm ground and that Beijing's 'line of actual control' has over the years, steadily if surely, inched forward. Indian maps under the Raj may have had their lacunae and seeming inconsistencies but it may be worth noting that at Simla, the Chinese plenipotentiary had no map worth the name. In sheer desperation he used a sketch drawn by a British official to substantiate his claim to Chinese rule in East Tibet. Nor did China—Manchu, Republican, or Maoist—permit any maps to be published without an official imprimatur.

INDIA'S IMPERIAL LEGACY AND CHINA'S FRONTIER GAINS: THE WESTERN SECTOR—A CASE STUDY

Beijing has never tired of repeating its charge that New Delhi had inherited the legacy of the British Empire with its notorious policy of continuous, unabashed aggression on China's land frontiers. Inasmuch as Nehru's independent India had inherited the imperial gains, it had not only to live down this dubious inheritance but also disgorge large chunks of territory it now claimed, so as to come to terms with the People's Republic of China. Actually, the boot was on the other leg for the aggrandizement and expansion of the Chinese empire to its farthest known territorial limits under the Qing (1648–1912), its last reigning dynasty, had embraced more than suzerain rights over Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim, as well as Burma and the states of Indo-China. Contrary to some popular perceptions, imperialism does not always travel aboard ships across the High Seas!

As this paper demonstrates both in the case of the much-maligned McMahon Line in the east, and Ladakh and Kashmir's boundaries in the west, the British had, in fact, bent over backwards to be unusually generous—at India's expense! Thus as late as 1943, there was general agreement at the highest levels of government that 'it might be useful' to draw the boundary in the eastern sector, south of the Tawang area. In the event, almost till the very

eve of the transfer of power in 1947, the Raj's 'characteristic lack of decision, ambivalence, the absence of any sense of direction' had left Tawang and much else besides in an indeterminate state.

As to the western sector in Ladakh, Beijing had from the outset been singularly unwilling to reveal its hand and despite repeated reminders 'to ascertain these boundaries', and had refused to play ball. An additional complication had been that all through the nineteenth century, Tsarist Russia's advance across Central Asia's well nigh empty spaces had caused the British no end of anxiety. In the event, the Raj was more than willing to surrender the Kashmir ruler's well-established claims to Shahidulla and this, despite some vigorous opposition from knowledgeable quarters. This was in pursuance of its final determination of 'closing together the Afghan and Chinese boundaries' on the Pamirs and thereby 'shut out' Russia. The British were strongly persuaded that pushing Chinese claims 'would seem to be preferable' to any dealings with the Tsar and his ministers. As the then Governor-General recorded in an official minute, it was hard 'to overestimate' the importance of leading the Chinese to regard the British as having interests 'identical' with theirs in Central Asia, the two countries' common objective being to halt the Russian advance. Further, Ney Elias, a well-known surveyor of these parts, was of the firm view that what the Raj required was 'a one-sided assertion' of dominion by China which should affirm its control 'up to Afghan and Russian limits'. Translated on the ground, it meant the Kashmir ruler was to surrender his claims to Shahidulla; he protested vigorously, but to no avail.

LU HSING-CHI: THE SIMLA CONFERENCE AND AFTER

As a prelude to the tripartite Simla Conference negotiations, a Chinese national based in Calcutta played a significant, albeit behind-the-scene role. A tradesman in a Chinese outfit of furriers, Lu Hsing-chi would appear to have acquired a firm grasp of the Tibetan imbroglio and in close liaison with the authorities in Beijing sought to play an important, if sometimes critical, role. Thereby often placing the official Chinese plenipotentiary, Ivan Chen in a secondary, if slightly peripheral position.

To start with, Lu was strongly persuaded that the commander of the rebellious Chinese garrison in Lhasa, even when driven out of

the Tibetan capital, should not abandon his place *inside* of Tibet. For his complete withdrawal from Tibetan soil would signal the end of such clout as Beijing may wield. All the while, the Dalai Lama and his functionaries were to be kept in their place by an adroit mixture of threats and blandishments.

General Chung Ying, the commander of the Chinese forces in Lhasa had initially pushed Amban Lien Yu into the background and made him a virtual prisoner. His two principal assets, a body of well-trained and well-equipped troops and a cache of arms, did however soon melt away in the face of a very hostile Tibetan populace. In the event, he himself was soon driven into a corner, while Lu in Calcutta, and the general's principals in faraway Beijing continued to urge him to hold on to an increasingly untenable position. While brandishing veiled threats to the Dalai Lama that unless he held his hand, troops from the mainland would march in, Lu urged Beijing to adopt a conciliatory policy towards Lhasa so as to prevent the latter from falling into British hands.

For his part, the Dalai Lama did not succumb to this curious mixture of Chinese threats one day, and conciliatory gestures the next, including the suggestion that Lu convene a conference *inside* Tibet to sort out the Lama's differences with Beijing. Or, in the alternate dispatch a plenipotentiary of 'high rank' at the head of 'several yings (battalions)' to discuss 'all questions of reform and relief'. From such a meeting the British were to be scrupulously kept out for fear this may 'prejudice our plans'. A conference *outside* of Tibet (viz. in Darjeeling) was completely ruled out. Instead Lu was to be deputed 'to restore' inter alia 'our status' in Tibet, check the influence of the British, and draw Tibetan officials into 'closer communication'.

For obvious reasons, Beijing was averse to the Dalai Lama's claims to territory wrested earlier by Chao Erhfeng (1907–9), and the British choice of Darjeeling 'as the venue' for a conference. This, it ruled, should be preceded by a discussion *inside* Tibet with 'the said Administrator (Lu)' who was to communicate with Beijing. Lhasa was warned that any attempt at the 'restoration' of its ancient boundaries would lead to the 'gravest of consequences'.

Seeing things falling apart, Lu thought of another stratagem. He 'secretly' dispatched a messenger to Shatra (who had meanwhile

been designated Tibetan plenipotentiary to the tripartite Simla Conference) to discuss matters with him (Lu) before proceeding ahead. The prospect of his travelling to Beijing as a delegate to the proposed national assembly scheduled to convene in the Chinese capital, was also dangled before him. Sadly though, disquieting news about the Dalai Lama spurning all efforts to wean him from the British filled Lu with dismay, especially the knowledge that Tibet was to be treated as an equal at the proposed tripartite conference in India. Among his other worries was paucity of funds, the British refusal to countenance his recognition as self-proclaimed 'administrator' of Tibet and the Dalai Lama's 'disloyal designs'.

Another strategy Lu mapped out was to drive a deeper wedge between Lhasa and Shigatse. The new Republican regime in China had dispatched the Panchen some presents and a fresh title, and the Lama interceded with Lu to have 'his' representative sent to the conference in India—a course of action Beijing ruled out of court. Spurned, the Panchen now suggested that he undertake a journey to the Chinese capital. Lu however was not easily persuaded that this could work. The Panchen, he was convinced, had 'the greatest dread' of the British and protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, would 'in the end do nothing'.

By this time round (March 1914), the 'intercepted telegrams' draw to an abrupt end. Lu by then was by no means unaware that 'some arrangement' with Tibet in which China had no part may be concluded, and that this would be an 'alarming' development. Before long, Whitehall for its part had come to the sad conclusion that at the tripartite conference in Simla, Lu was 'one of the principal forces operating against a settlement of the Tibetan question'.

INDIA'S LAND FRONTIERS: THE ROLE OF THE BUFFER

As land frontiers go, India's long and sprawling northern frontier marked by the Himalayas dates back to a long, hoary past. For most of its length, it is conterminous with Tibet. Not to go farther back in time, under the Raj at any rate, if not earlier, a major strategy for India's defence was the evolution of a buffer state. Essentially a mechanical contrivance for breaking or graduating the impact of force between two bodies, the buffer state was designed to check the violence of political collisions.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the British adopted a conscious policy of interposing the border of a protected country between the actual possessions they administered and the possessions of formidable neighbours whom they desired to keep at arm's length. Curzon called it a 'glacis', literally a smooth, sloping bank, to the Indian fortress: 'We do not want to occupy it,' he declared, 'but we also cannot afford to see it occupied by our foes.' He was content to let it remain 'in the hands of our allies and friends', but if rival and unfriendly influences crept up to it, a danger would raise its ugly head which might 'one day menace our security'. It followed that 'outside trespassers, needed to be warded off'.

As Whitehall viewed it, British India in the nineteenth century was surrounded by three concentric zones or rings. In the outermost lay, on one side, the maritime route from the eastern Mediterranean through the Middle East to the Indian Ocean. The intermediate circle or shell constituted a ring of states such as Afghanistan in the west, Sinkiang in the north, and Tibet on the north north-east. And finally, the soft underbelly comprising Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier tribes, Gilgit and Leh, Sikkim and Bhutan, and the tribal areas sundering Assam from its neighbours in the north and south.

Until 1921, Afghanistan was rated as the classic example of a buffer state. Charles Bell, however, was to view Tibet as the 'ideal' buffer which with its scanty population—who dreaded the heat of the Indian plains—never constituted any 'serious menace' to India. It followed that the buffer should exclude 'other extraneous influences', while in the conduct of foreign relations, it should be 'guided' by the British government. Neither in Afghanistan nor yet in Tibet, it may be recalled, did the British mount an expedition to incorporate either of them, individually or collectively, into their Indian empire. Neither was a British satellite, much less a protectorate.

An interesting variant of the buffer was the related concept of the proxy buffer. There were serious efforts to enlist the power of China, and later of Afghanistan, in contriving a defence against Russia's advance towards the northern frontier on the Pamirs. And a large measure of defence in this area devolved on the 'native' state of Kashmir as a proxy defender. While anxious to demarcate formally or at any rate delimit India's boundaries with Afghanistan and

Russia, the Raj viewed the frontiers of the client state of Kashmir with a moribund China as of little importance in themselves.

With British withdrawal from India and Pakistan (1947), Soviet Russia and the People's Republic of China held under their sway, the entire stretch of land between the Black and the Yellow Seas. Since their borders were more or less conterminous, tensions between the two communist giants were not unexpected. A sea change had however come over the political landscape, for, the nineteenth century drainage economies of these lands implied that their opening up for extraction of raw materials had yielded place to opening up the hinterland for development on the spot.

Meantime, India's border conflict with China called into question the entire land frontier, all the way from Ladakh to Burma, and more specifically disputed the validity of the Indian portion of the McMahon Line (having accepted and ratified its Burmese segment)—especially in the Tawang and Longju districts. New Delhi's own claim to the McMahon Line rested on the premise of recognizing Tibet as a state which, by virtue of its *de facto* independence was in a position to enter into international commitments of a binding nature.

With the departure of the British and the breakdown of the buffer state (1947), the absorption of Tibet has led to an open confrontation with China on the Himalayas. In the meantime, the close linkages between China and Pakistan have been unnerving for New Delhi. The Soviets have however moved in a big way to bring India and Pakistan closer—especially in the wake of their 1965 hostilities. This is a position that also serves the selfish interests of both nations.

Professor Toynbee's emphasis on the 'present consecration' of these British-made lines, the Durand Line in the north-west, and the McMahon Line in the north-east, as 'heirlooms in the successor-states' national heritages' makes for an interesting, if intriguing observation. Beijing's contention that while it cannot take Taiwan 'for the time being', it would at the same time refuse to accept the illegality of the arbitrary position of the US, thereby places the latter in a guilty, reproachful position. It should follow that New Delhi likewise, unable to wrest its territory from Beijing's control, would refuse to legalize the latter's forcible occupation thereof so that Beijing too must remain 'for a long time to come in a blameworthy position'.

THE ELUSIVE TRIANGLE: TIBET IN INDIA—CHINA RELATIONS

India's relations with Tibet revolved largely around the fact that its so-called 'lamaism' is an offshoot of the Mahayana school of Buddhism and the Dalai Lama is a Bodhisattva. Also the Tibetan script was derived from Sanskrit. As may be evident, the bonds were predominantly of a cultural/spiritual nature with a dash of commerce thrown in with a trickle of overland trade. Happily under the Raj too—barring the Younghusband expedition—there was no intent to incorporate Tibet into the Indian dominion, much less make it into a protectorate. The only assurance the British sought was that neither Russia nor China make it into a base for mounting hostile operations across the Himalayas.

Chinese links with its western neighbour travel back in time to the mid-seventh century when a Tibetan ruler married a Han princess; their impact though was largely in material things, namely the manner of dress and modes of living of the people. Later, in the fourteenth century, the Mongols who were for a time rulers of mainland China itself accepted the lamaist faith. And, in Tibet, evolved what may best be described as the *guru–chela* relationship, the lay prince buttressing the authority of the high priest who in turn extended him spiritual/moral support. Under the Manchus (1644–1912), the relationship expanded further but, in essence, Tibet's Dalai Lamas treated it as a purely personal, almost familial tie with the Manchu emperor—*not* the Han people.

Tibet, which boasts a rich and varied landscape of snow-clad mountains, glaciers, green forests, grasslands and salt lakes, is an elevated and wind-swept plateau largely uninhabited because it is uninhabitable. What Beijing calls the TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region) has an area of 1.2 million sq km and a population of a little less than 2 million. Tibetan claims however extend to an area nearly thrice as much (3.8 mn sq km) and a population of 10 million. Both in its language, literature, and history, Tibet has a distinct identity. Indian savants such as Mahaguru Padmasambhava, Atisha, and his disciple Dromton helped establish well-known centres of learning, among them Sakya, Tashilhunpo, and Derge. It follows that India's major linkages were in the domain of cultural ties with an uninterrupted traffic in what has been called 'pundit-hunting' and sacred religious texts.

Chinese linkages were no less hoary with tradition and go back to the time of Tibet's first great ruler and unifier, Songtsen Gampo, who married a Han princess of the ruling Tang dynasty. Later, when Godan, a grandson of Chingiz Khan, marched into Tibet, it was to mark the beginnings of the priest–patron relationship briefly referred to earlier, which China's Manchu rulers (1644–1912) also emulated. Invited to visit Beijing twice over, the fifth Dalai Lama did finally make it in 1652. Tibet maintains that the much-sought-after Lama was treated as an equal, his land an independent political entity. More, the Manchu rulers craved his good offices to mollify the ever-turbulent Mongols. Later, in the eighteenth century when the Mongols invaded Tibet on more than one occasion, the Manchus imposed an institutional framework which sought a modicum of control. The office of the Amban—who acted as a Viceroy of sorts buttressed by a small garrison—was instituted and a golden urn, which was to be used in the selection of the Dalai Lama, gifted.

Until the opening decades of the twentieth century, Chinese control over Tibet was notional at best; in fact, for all practical purposes, the Dalai Lama's regime functioned more or less independently of any extraneous influences, much less active interference. Beijing contests this; both sides cite an impressive array of arguments to buttress their respective claims. The sum and substance of this unending debate would appear to be that while Tibet did not enjoy 'independence', as the term is commonly understood, it never was an integral part of the mainland where the latter's writ ran. Under the stern rule of Mao and his successors, however, a determined effort has been made by the PRC to impose its rule over Tibet in a ruthless, if far from imaginative manner. In the event, while the fourteenth Dalai Lama is a fugitive from his land, the boy Panchen Lama, the Chinese protégé who is the new incarnation, is being brought up under Beijing's strict surveillance outside of his traditional home at Tashilhunpo.

A FORGOTTEN CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE NORTHEAST FRONTIER 1914–36

Soon after it was concluded, a number of factors intervened to make the Simla Conference 'all but forgotten'. Three Chinese initiatives—in 1915, 1916, and 1919—to revive the Tripartite Convention of July

1914 came to naught. For one, the regimes in Beijing/Nanjing were far from stable and their efforts half-hearted, at best. As if that were not bad enough, Whitehall was far too preoccupied with a host of other problems and Tibet rated low priority. Early 1932 however, was witness to a resurgence of fighting in Kham and the breach of an uneasy truce between the Chinese and Tibetan levies that had lasted for well-nigh fifteen long years. In the renewed fighting that now erupted (1932), the Guomindang regime in China soon gained an upper hand. A year later, however, a settlement of sorts at the local level seems to have been knocked into shape.

The death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama (December 1933) appeared to offer the Nanjing regime its long-sought opportunity to stage a comeback in Lhasa which it did, in the guise of a visiting high-profile official, ostensibly to mourn the death of the deceased Lama. The Huang Musang mission (1934) did not, sadly enough for Chi'ang and his regime, notch any major successes. The best Lhasa conceded was that while it was subordinate to China, both its external relations as well as internal administration were entirely its own responsibility.

Mainland China's possible comeback, as the Raj viewed it, did not pose 'an actual military danger' and yet was a 'source of constant irritation and annoyance' along the entire north-eastern frontier. And here a major snag was that the Simla Convention, the Tibet Trade Regulations, and the maps showing the India–Tibet and the Inner–Outer Tibet boundaries had, for a variety of reasons, been kept under wraps. McMahon had left India almost immediately after July 1914, and World War I (1914–8) had expectedly claimed all the attention in the years immediately thereafter. The British were also playing with the idea of placating the Russians on the issue of the Dardanelles, in return for their agreeing to a revision of the 1907 Convention, especially in regard to a modification of the self-denying clauses in Tibet's affairs.

Post-October 1917, Bolshevik Russia was not easy to negotiate with either. As for Whitehall, 'so long as there remains any prospect' of a final settlement on Tibet, it was most reluctant to give 'unnecessary publicity' to the 'provisional' arrangements of July 1914. In the event, when time came round for a reprint of Aitchison's Treaties (1928), His Majesty's Government (HMG) ruled that publication of the July 1914 Anglo–Tibetan declaration—about

which the far-from-friendly Guomindang regime, now in the saddle in China, 'may not be unaware'—may force it to take 'overt notice' and afford it 'a fresh handle' for anti-British propaganda.

Six years later, the question presented itself in another guise. A 'Declaration in Council' was deemed necessary in regard to the British Trade Agents' entitlement to their exercise of foreign jurisdiction in Tibet, necessitating a mention of the Trade Regulations of 1908 and later of 1914. After a good deal of debate and discussion, an Order in Council was finally knocked into shape wherein 'a general recital of treaty rights' was deemed adequate in place of any specific mention of the trade regulations. In sum, for almost two decades after the Simla Conference, the dubious risk of attracting Russian, and later Chinese attention continued to be the principal reason for non-publication of the full texts of the Convention and its adjuncts.

1935 was witness to a fresh development. And it related to the travels of the botanist Kingdon-Ward who had traversed Monyul in Balipara and revealed that the McMahon Line notwithstanding, the Tibetan government held sway in the Tawang area. And through Tsona Dzong, Tawang was 'actually' administering the whole of Monyul; more, the influence of Lhasa extended almost to the edge of the Assam plains. In the event, the botanist urged 'direct administration' or effective occupation of the area by 1939–40. Or else, with Monyul under Tibetan occupation, 'the enemy would already be within her (India's) gates.' A dozen years earlier, the then British Political Officer in Balipara, a Captain Neville had sounded a similar note of warning: 'should China gain control of Tibet', he had warned his superiors, 'the Tawang country is particularly adapted for a secret and early entrance into India.'

Another interesting fact was soon to emerge—and it was that the government of Assam was singularly innocent of where exactly the frontier lay. In the event, it was now New Delhi's turn to inform the government in Shillong that the territory up to the 1914 McMahon Line was 'within the frontier of India'. In April 1936, when informed by New Delhi of its 'findings' and with the further suggestion that copies of the Convention and exchange of notes on the boundary be inserted 'in their published record', Whitehall was far from enthusiastic. After a great deal of debate and discussion, it finally ruled that 'we might perhaps decide to publish'—but this should not

attract unnecessary publicity. All the same, pending publication, the Government of India could show the frontier correctly.

The reason for this development was that in Outer Mongolia, christened the Mongolian People's Republic after 1924, the Soviets had concluded a 'Protocol of Mutual Assistance' (March 1936). New Delhi was not unshaken and decided to take 'immediate steps' for showing the international frontier with Tibet in the north. At the same time, a revised edition of Volume 14 of Aitchison's Treaties was to be published with the text of the tripartite convention and the joint Anglo–Tibetan Declaration attached to it.

TAWANG: A BRIEF SUM-UP

Beijing has oft-repeated its claim that Tawang, in Arunachal Pradesh, was Tibetan territory which the Raj had shamelessly purloined and in the process, bullied Lhasa into acquiescence. In scrutinizing this charge, three aspects of the problem need to be explained. To start with, the fact that the McMahon Line was drawn after the most careful of surveys by British surveyors Bailey and Morshead, and put on the Survey of India map sheets as late as January 1914. It was confirmed that Tawang was indeed Monba land—*not* Tibetan territory. In fact, Ivan Chen's sketch map presented at the Simla Conference in October 1913 showed it as a part of India.

A little over twenty years intervene between the Simla Conference and the travels of the botanist Kingdon-Ward, during which the frontier had been nearly completely neglected. As a result, the contours of the 1914 Convention map had been blatantly violated, if largely because New Delhi and its functionaries on the spot had forgotten all about what had transpired at Simla. Kingdon-Ward however sounded a note of warning: with Monyul in Tibetan hands, he told his political bosses, New Delhi will 'sooner or later' face a potential enemy unless it keeps the intruder out of the Tsangpo valley.

Five years later, in 1939, the then governor of Assam argued that if the frontier were to be moved south of Sela, it would cost New Delhi nearly a quarter of the expense likely to be incurred in keeping Tawang. He even suggested that the British representative visiting Lhasa for the installation of the boy fourteenth Dalai Lama (1940) make a present of it to the Tibetan authorities. Whitehall was not

unreceptive to the idea and argued that Tawang would serve as a bargaining counter to make Lhasa accept the rest of the McMahon frontier. Later, at the time of the transfer of power, the Raj had played with the idea of carving out a separate dominion in the north-east tribal belt which was to be kept out of the purview of independent India.

The man who brought Tawang under New Delhi's control was a Tangkhul Naga, Bob Khating, who had marched in with a small posse of troops in early 1951. There was little local resistance; only a volley of verbal abuse from Lhasa's tax gatherers who had, over the years, behaved no better than rack-renters.

INDIA, CHINA, AND TIBET, 1950–4

Composed on the morrow of the April 1954 agreement between New Delhi and Beijing, this piece recaptures the atmospherics in the aftermath of Tibet's 'liberation'. The heated exchanges in October–November 1950, articulated with stark emphasis, the two countries' respective positions. To start with, there was an expression of India's 'deep regret' over the employment of superior force in place of the 'sober and more enduring' methods of a peaceful approach. Beijing's rejoinder was blunt. Tibet, it stated, was 'an integral part' of Chinese territory and its problem was, at best, a 'domestic' issue. In the event, 'no foreign interference' was to be tolerated—clearly insinuating thereby that New Delhi's viewpoint smacked of such interference, 'hostile' to China. A further exchange helped only to underline the stiffness of Beijing's stance, with New Delhi being roundly accused of 'blockading a peaceful settlement' and coming in the way of China exercising 'its sovereign rights' in Tibet.

At the UN in New York, Tibet's efforts to secure international intervention proved still-born. Lip service apart, there was little hard support for Lhasa's cause especially because of New Delhi, and Whitehall's lukewarm championship, if not indeed supine submission. Both expressed the hope that left to their own devices, China and Tibet would reach 'a peaceful settlement' of the dispute. It was a pious hope; they knew or indeed should have known better. For the harsh ground reality was soon more than evident in the manner in which 'negotiations' between Lhasa and Beijing for the May 1951 agreement were conducted. The objective, as Beijing viewed it, was

'to fit Tibet into the family' of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the 'establishment and development' of 'fair' commercial and trading relations was offered as a sop for New Delhi's outrage. Tibet, Beijing was emphatic, was not to be converted into a socialist paradise overnight but was to retain its distinct identity.

Meantime, as a prelude to the more formal negotiations between New Delhi and Beijing, the Indian Mission in Lhasa, which under the Raj enjoyed a quasi-diplomatic status, was to be converted into a consulate-general with the existing trade agencies in Gyantse, Yatung, and Gartok being placed under its overall supervision (September 1952). Not long thereafter, formal India–China talks commenced in Beijing in December 1953 and the 'Agreement on Trade and Intercourse' between India and the Tibet Region of China came to be concluded in April 1954. Later in October, a trade protocol between the two countries was also signed.

The April 1954 agreement aroused a lot of controversy with trenchant criticism of the remarkable abandon with which New Delhi 'threw away' all the rights and privileges it had enjoyed in Tibet for the past half a century and more. Two of these 'give-aways' were the withdrawal of its military escorts from the three trade agencies mentioned above which had been stationed in the wake of the Younghusband expedition (1904). To what avail, many a critic exclaimed, would an escort of 120 odd men be in the face of 25,000 to 30,000 men that Beijing had now deployed?

As to the give-away of telegraph and telephone services and guest houses, there were clear stipulations as far back as the Trade Regulations of 1908 that these were to revert to China 'at original cost', and later rented to the Government of India for 'occupation by British, Chinese and Tibetan officers who may proceed to and from' the trade marts. In the altered circumstances of 1954, it should be obvious, these could not have been retained. Or, could they? The fact is that with Mao's China in full control of Tibet, a new power equilibrium had emerged and there was no ignoring it.

NEHRU AND THE BORDER DISPUTE WITH CHINA

Long before he took over as India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru envisioned a resurgent Asia under the leadership of an old yet new India and a China re-born. Nor were the beginnings

unpromising, for despite some hiccups on Beijing's 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet, New Delhi did its best to help Mao's China regain its rightful place in the comity of nations, and the mid-1950s resounded to the calls of '*Hindi–Chini bhai bhai*' and Panchsheel.

Like all euphoria, this too was short-lived. Tibet apart, India's northern frontiers became a matter of unseemly controversy with Beijing insisting that the Raj had purloined large areas to which Indian claims were dubious at best. By 1958–9 diplomatic exchanges between the two prime ministers became increasingly acrimonious while both on the western frontier in Ladakh, and the eastern in NEFA hot blood spilled over in armed clashes. Beijing's October–November 1962 armed assault was an eye-opener with India's humiliating reverses on the battle-front, making matters worse. In another couple of years of growing disillusionment, with his health shattered and his policies in total disarray, Nehru's day was done.

Beijing insists that the conflict was not of its making; that Nehru had imbibed the British imperialist credo and was determined to establish a 'greater Indian empire' even as the Raj had done. India under Nehru was a regional hegemon that presumed to block China's natural, and rightful relations with its neighbours. New Delhi for its part has been equally clear that China's political culture admits of no compromise on the use of military power to regain, what it deemed its domain, however thin and shadowy the claims. Is it any wonder then that the border issue has, to-date remained unresolved?

By a strange quirk of fortune, almost half a century after Nehru raised the slogan, Wen Jiabao, Zhou Enlai's youthful successor, has raised it afresh; this time round though (2005), it is 'Chini–Hindi' bhai bhai. The odds are that once bitten, New Delhi may be a little more than twice shy!

INDIA'S POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AT WORK DURING THE 1962 CONFLICT

Prime Minister Nehru's oft-quoted remarks that allegedly annoyed the Chinese and made them mount the 1962 onslaught—that he had asked the Indian armed forces 'to throw the Chinese out'—were torn completely out of context. The truth is that at the airport in Delhi on his way to Colombo, he had responded to a journalist's query

suggesting that Chinese aggression on the eastern frontier constituted 'a menace' and as long as it continued, there was hardly 'any chance' for talks with them. In the event, he had asked the army 'to free our territory' in what was then called NEFA (the North-East Frontier Agency), later Arunachal Pradesh.

That these remarks at an impromptu news conference on 12 October (1962) caused such offence as to provoke a full-scale Chinese armed assault eight days later, and all along the entire, almost 2000-mile long land frontier—has always remained a mystery. The fighting, as we know, continued down to 20 November with two major thrusts, 20–4 October and, almost a month later, 16–19 November. On 21 November, Beijing announced a unilateral cease-fire. On 10 December, there was a meeting of the six Colombo powers (Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia, and the United Arab Republic) to help sort out the New Delhi–Beijing differences.

India was badly worsted in the fighting for which blame was laid squarely on the Defence Minister, Krishna Menon's alleged sins of omission and commission. Understandably, the army's lack of readiness to face the Chinese onslaught was attributed to his incompetence. Very reluctantly, the prime minister allowed him to leave office. On his own, Nehru reacted by declaring a state of emergency and constituting a National Defence Council; at the non-official level, there was to be a Citizens Central Committee to help organize and give a sense of direction to the popular effort.

The 494-member third Parliament constituted as a result of the general elections in February 1962 had an overwhelming Congress majority (356) against the measly numbers of the Communist Party (29), the pronouncedly rightist Swatantra Party (22), the Hindu nationalist Jan Sangha (14), and the Socialists (6). Its six-day marathon debate (8–14 November) ended with the adoption of a unanimous resolution which 'noted with deep regret' China's aggression and affirmed the country's 'firm resolve' to drive off the enemy 'however long and hard' the struggle may be. It was noticed that during all the twenty-two days the House convened, there were hardly two days, when in one form or another, the government's handling of the situation arising out of the Chinese assault was not raised.

Among the political parties, the Congress—despite the shocks it received, the resultant battering in terms of its government's handling of the situation, and the furore over its defence minister, Krishna Menon's incompetence—managed to survive without any 'serious mishap'. The opposition Communists were however in a quandary. While mouthing criticism of Beijing's contention that the McMahon Line was 'illegal' and the Indian government 'agents of US imperialism', the party was singularly uncomfortable about Beijing's aggression. In the event, they split right down the middle into the CPI (Right) and the CPI (Left); before long the latter split further into Left Constitutionalists and the Left Naxalbari.

The Swatantra Party pleaded that the Defence Minister's resignation was not enough, that the peacetime leader of the ruling party must give way to a wartime leader. In the event, attacks on Prime Minister Nehru grew sharper in tone with an open demand for his resignation.

A major outcome of the war was the emergence of a narrow, inward-looking, militaristic outlook resulting, among other things, in a sharp rise in defence expenditure from a little over Rs 300 crore (1961–2) to around Rs 1000 crore (1968–9). There were mounting pressures too for an about-turn in foreign policy, from one of neutrality and non-alignment to closer linkages with the Western block. Meantime, both Washington and London pressed New Delhi hard for a settlement with Pakistan over Kashmir. Oddly, their (the Western powers') protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, the much-hyped aid they gave New Delhi proved to be marginal at best while talks with Pakistan were soon bogged down in an unseemly controversy. Moscow's friendly attitude and the MIG deal 'to an extent' neutralized pressures from the opposite side. In the event, New Delhi's pre-1962 policies remained largely in place.

The Chinese aggression brought into sharp focus both Nehru's role as an Asian leader of stature, as well as his personality. A deft mixture of Hindu mysticism and Western humanism, Andre Malraux, the celebrated French writer, had called him a great gentleman. Sadly though, his romantic view of a resurgent India and a revolutionary China coming together to give a lead to Asia—and the world—received a rude shock. It lay in tatters, if not indeed well-nigh dead.

CHINA AND SOUTH ASIA: SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

China's ties with India go as far back as the Kushan period when the Yueh-chi tribe, driven out of western Gansu (c. 200 BC), moved far west towards Ili and later displaced the Greek kingdoms of Bactria in northern Afghanistan. It were the Yueh-chi who later set up the Kushan dynasty. Later still, the Han dynasty (AD 206–221 BC) of Central Asia permitted a much greater flow of overland trade with West Asia. While the Romans were vaguely aware of China, the latter too knew something of Rome, especially its eastern provinces.

Before long, Buddhism, an universal religion like Christianity, and Islam, spread over much of south, central, and east Asia. By the third century BC, it had already extended over India and later spread to Sri Lanka; before long traders and travellers carried it to South-East Asia and southern China. A later phase took Buddhism to Gandhara (now Afghanistan), while Emperor Kanishka (AD 73–103) who ruled over northern India and the Tarim basin carried it to central Asia and southern China. Later still, the Buddha's faith spread to Tibet and Mongolia.

In its Mahayana form, Buddhism had a powerful appeal for a barbarian northern China and a demoralized south. The whole epoch, from the mid-fourth to the end of the eighth century may be called the Buddhist age of Chinese history; in fact, it was the Buddhist age of Asian or perhaps world history, for barring Siberia and the Near East, it held the whole of Asia in its embrace. In China, the zenith of Buddhism was reached during the first half of the Tang dynasty (618–907) when its cultural impact was at its height. The growing Buddhist demand for religious images made this a great age of Chinese sculpture.

In the latter half of the Tang and the Sung eras when China witnessed phenomenal prosperity, there was great commercial expansion both in overland as well as maritime trade. The ships engaged in this traffic used both sails as well as oars, while by the early twelfth century, the discovery of the magnetic compass lent it a further boost. It must however be noted that all through the ages, the Chinese have not been exactly a seafaring nation and that trade was conducted at a few large ports along their southern coast. More,

the role of Chang He, a Muslim eunuch who originally hailed from Yunnan, was conspicuous in this era of maritime expansion. He spearheaded seven great expeditions to the 'Southern Ocean', a euphemism for South-East Asia.

From the Ming (1368–1644) to the Qing (1644–1912) was but a logical progression. And here the 'country' trade with India proved to be the cutting edge of the commercial, financial and industrial expansion of the Western world, especially Great Britain. As distinguished from John Company's own trade and ships, the 'country' trade was conducted by private ships which had been granted charters to sail from India to China. The Company also allowed some 'private' trade permitting its ships' officers to indulge in it, if largely to compensate them for their meagre salaries. By the late eighteenth century, a flourishing 'triangular' trade had developed between Canton, India, and England in which trade on private account played a significant role. And the dominant component of this trade was opium. Foreigners apart, a major role in opium smuggling was played by Chinese agents. And the traffic grew from roughly 30,000 chests (1830) to a phenomenal 87,000 chests (1858–60). Soon however, it was to register a sharp fall.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, both Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr S. Radhakrishnan had visited Cuomindang China and underlined the 'imperishable links' that bound the two countries. This was followed in the mid-1950s by the deafening chorus of 'Hindi–Chini bhai bhai'. Sadly, this phase was short-lived and ground to a sudden halt with the 1962 conflict on the border. It was to take almost three decades before a modicum of normalcy in this relationship was restored. A major benchmark in this process was the December 1988 visit of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, followed a few years later by the return visit of Chinese Prime Minister, Li Peng. And then followed a flurry of exchanges at the highest levels of government on both sides. Major hurdles in the normalization process continue to be Beijing's relations with Bhutan, Burma (now Myanmar), and above all, Tibet. And last but by no means the least, with Islamabad. A pragmatic approach to the resolution of deep-seated, if intractable problems is the need of the hour, not romantic notions about harmony or ingrained fears of hostility. In sum, China's role in South Asia in the foreseeable future presents challenges as well as opportunities.

Bibliographical Survey*

Not unlike the Kashmir dispute—and the not quite far away, Israeli-Palestine imbroglio—the India–China border has been the subject of an impressive array of studies. Barring some which take a tendentious view and are, by definition, partisan in their approach, there is no dearth of reasonably objective assessments which try to strike a balance of sorts between the two protagonists and present a factual analysis of the genesis of the dispute, and how it came to evolve over the succeeding half a century or thereabouts since its inception.

The 'Bibliographic Survey' offers a rich mix of experts from a variety of fields and the way they viewed the 'dispute' and its ramifications, especially Nehru's approach to the problem. To start with, there is the army top brass, such as Generals B.M. Kaul and D.K. Palit, not to forget Brigadier Dalvi. High-level government officials who handled negotiations at the very top are represented by Jagat Mehta and A.K. Damodaran. Those with rich foreign policy backgrounds include C.V. Ranganathan and Vinod Khanna. Academics of distinction embrace John Garver, Francine Frankel, Y. Vertzberger and K. Subramaniam. Among Nehru's biographers, mention may be made of Judith Brown, Sunil Khilnani, Shashi Tharoor, and Benjamin Zachariah. The Chinese viewpoint is well articulated by Xuecheng Liu, and the Tibetan, by Dawa Norbu—both academics with a rich background. Editorial interjection has been at its minimal, and an effort made to ensure that each of them has his/her say and, for most of the time in their own words.

* Figures in brackets refer to the relevant pages in the text of the book/article cited.

A word on the importance of 'domestic' sources of foreign policy analysis compared with the 'realist' school of foreign policy analysis would help in a better appreciation of the pages that follow. Briefly, the latter tends to conceive national states as unitary and rational actors, pursuing their individual interests of foreign policy behaviour; in sharp if refreshing contrast, the domestic sources school has come to view the evolution of foreign policy as the end-product of various domestic factors acting autonomously, and in conjunction with external stimuli.

A note of caution may not be out of place. A number of works cited below do not deal centrally with the border dispute and Nehru's role therein; but since the border dispute was so central to the period under discussion, they have a strong bearing on an understanding of Nehru and the Nehruvian approach to the problem. The latter's importance cannot be gainsaid, much less over-emphasized; *without* him, it may not be unlike playing Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark! Needless to add, the views expressed by the authors do not necessarily accord with those which find expression in this compendium of essays, but merely a representative sample drawn from a complex and extremely voluminous literature that, in many of its aspects, needs a thorough re-examination.

JOHN GARVER[1]

John Garver's the *Protracted Contest* offers a detailed and fairly exhaustive analysis of the varied facets of the India–China relationship; uncharitable critics hold that it is 'overly tilted' towards a competitive and conflictual balance-of-power understanding and analysis of relations between the two countries. The author's one great advantage lies in his access to, and analysis of such Chinese studies on the subject as may be at hand, while his own use of all available literature on the subject in English is impressive. It follows that his views deserve close and serious scrutiny and should command respect.

To start with, the Chinese maintain that the boundary between the two states had 'never' been formally delineated; New Delhi on the other hand has always contended that 'a well-defined boundary did in fact exist' and ran along the crest-line of the eastern Himalayas. And was, in fact, agreed to in 1914 by the Tibetan authorities. As is

well known, the then Chinese government having initialled the draft convention did not proceed to full signature. In 1962, Chinese armies advanced to the limits of Beijing's claim line, unilaterally halted and pulled back northward, behind what they claimed was the line of control, prior to the beginning of India's policy of 'pushing into contested forward areas'. (80)

Garver suggests that the boundary dispute soon got 'entangled with the stability of China's control over Tibet' (82), and suggests that the westerly route through the much-contested Aksai Chin (AC) was Beijing's best bet to keep open its supply line into western Tibet—and even to the rest of the country. For the eastern routes through Chinghai and Sichuan were, apart from their physical hazards and the awesome weather *en route,* infested with insurgency, especially in the early mid-1950s. In sharp contrast, the western route was open all the year round.

The AC western route which was operative by 1957 was a subject of considerable contention with New Delhi insisting that it had been built in what was indisputably Indian territory. Indian persistence hurt Beijing even more insofar as during this period, Chinese control over Tibet revolved around the AC route. Later, by the 1980–90s, the route became far less important; as a matter of fact, by 1992, the Qinghai road through eastern Tibet carried almost 80 per cent of all goods traffic to and from Tibet.

To be sure New Delhi's own policy on AC had not been worked out until 1953 when, rejecting the earlier (1898) British formulation, the boundary was placed along the northern edge of AC, instead of the northern edge of the Karakoram range. Nehru firmly believed that long before the British arrived, India's traditional boundaries had been 'well-defined' by customary administration; this was closely linked to his conception of India as 'a great and ancient' nation. The Raj had often compromised those boundaries for 'strategic expediency', especially so in Ladakh. Garver cites Hoffman to the effect that Indian policy was dominated by 'nationalist ideology and legalistic considerations'. And while in public Nehru 'may have stressed morality and principle', in private 'in still unclassified meetings' he 'may have concluded' that the greater the Peoples Liberation Army's (PLA) 'logistic-political difficulties' in Tibet, the larger the measure of autonomy the country would enjoy. (89–90)

Beijing however saw it differently, arguing that New Delhi was seeking to cut the AC road as part of an effort to force the Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) out of Tibet. Also, it encouraged and supported Tibetan 'splittist' opposition to Beijing's authority and colluded with the US to supply arms to Tibetan rebels thereby supporting an 'uncompromising' demand 'that China turn Aksai Chin over to India.' (91)

The eastern sector offered no major mineral/petroleum reserves but could, by harnessing its innumerable rivers, offer great potential for hydel power. India's major difficulty here lay in the fact that there were as many as 200 tribes inhabiting the area, who with Beijing's help and encouragement could sustain a state of insurgency for long. As a matter of fact, they did so till Deng withdrew his country's support to these tribal groups in the 1980s or thereabouts. It may be noted that Chinese abetment of tribal insurgency in these parts was designed to counter what Beijing believed was Indian backing for Tibetan 'splittist' activities. Presently, 'a sort of deterrence' developed, whereby both countries decided 'to abstain' from support for insurgencies in each other's domain. (95)

The 'cautious and elliptical' way in which China proposed an east (McMahon Line)–west (Aksai Chin) swap in 1960, and again twenty years later, suggested that it was 'unofficial' and might therefore be 'withdrawn'. (101) On either occasion, New Delhi seemed uninterested and did not explore the question of Chinese sincerity—much less the modalities of the exchange. The Indian line of reasoning seemed to be that if they yielded ground, it may imply that the land they were surrendering 'rightfully' belonged to them and had, in fact, been 'stolen' by China. Beijing on the other hand viewed the Indian approach as born of 'arrogance', so characteristic of their dealings with other neighbours, namely Nepal/Sri Lanka/Bangladesh. (103)

In the course of the four rounds of talks from 1980–8, China's sudden interest in NEFA was disquieting for New Delhi. By 1985, it would appear Beijing had withdrawn its earlier 'swap' proposal which had been 'on the table' for almost two decades. This was partly designed to disabuse New Delhi that Beijing's claim in the eastern sector was 'not serious'. The hard-line view in China now appeared to be that, unlike 1960, the country was no longer 'weak, poor, isolated'. (108)

In the final count, Garver would appear to suggest that the top leaders in New Delhi and Beijing should reach an agreement and 'impose' it on their respective countries. Also, when they agree to do that, and draw a line on the map, they should keep their specialists out—as also 'their soldiers and strategists too'. (109)

A.K. DAMODARAN[2]

Concepts such as 'suzerainty' and 'sovereignty' were interchangeable when control was 'episodic'. The limiting factor was not legal, but geographical. The 1954 agreement had demonstrated New Delhi's refusal to take advantage of imperial servitudes, while Bandung (1955) was witness to the 'centrality' of China in India's anti-colonial and Afro–Asian policies. (38–9)

It should be obvious that the construction of the AC road showed that New Delhi was not in effective control of territory it claimed as its own on the maps. Zhou's 1960 visit proved to be a diplomatic disaster, nor did the Officials' Report help to solve anything; both sides demonstrated that they were self-righteous and keen on finding fault with each other's claims. (40)

At no stage was there in New Delhi, the vaguest of notions that the Chinese would launch an all-out attack. As a matter of fact, their considerations to launch one were 'extra-regional and global', apart from the urge for one-upmanship within the Politburo. India was for Beijing 'a soft target' to express 'a deep-felt strategic need'. (41)

JAGAT MEHTA[3]

1959 was to mark 'a downturn' in Sino–Indian relations in the wake of the revolt in Tibet and the border incidents. (460) The Chinese charge of New Delhi's involvement in the revolt may have 'flattered the Indian intelligence agencies by implying their capability to ignite and sustain' one, deep inside Tibet. (462)

Those criticizing New Delhi's failure to settle the dispute in 1960 'overlook the transformation' that had taken place in the political climate in April/May 1959, in the wake of the Tibetan revolt and the Dalai Lama's flight. (463) The 1962 attack was to demonstrate Chinese military superiority against India; thirty years later—the Sumdrong Chu incident, 1992—any apprehension of such an attack was minimal. (464)

In 1960, there were seven one-to-one meetings between the two prime ministers with only a solitary interpreter from each side present. It was not possible to reach 'tactical accommodation' unless Nehru obtained a prior national consensus, both inside and outside of Parliament. For, the border question 'hinges not so much on diplomacy but on the domestic politics' of India. (466–7) In the 1961 Officials' Report, the two teams were acting as 'diplomatic advocates' of their respective governments. Here the Chinese were in a dilemma insofar as they had no records of their own and 'used' Tibetan archives to make good their case.

The comparative strength of the Indian case contrasted with the 'paucity' of positive evidence the Chinese could muster. The latter's reliance on Tibetan records 'substantiated' Lhasa's claims to 'attributes of sovereignty' in international contacts. In sharp contrast, Whitehall's 'greater sensitivity' to good relations with the central government of China weakened the Tibetan case no end. Efforts to keep Tibet out of China failed if only because the US remained 'firmly committed' to the Kuomintang (KMT) and never entertained the idea of a *de facto* independence for Tibet. (469–70)

It was plain as plain could be that any positive evidence to sustain Chinese claims was 'virtually non-existent'. Consistent with its goal of friendship with China, and rejection of British imperial strategic considerations, New Delhi was to accept Tibet as 'a region of China'. (471) There was a sharp, if striking contrast between a one-man Communist dictatorship and a 'noisy parliamentary' democratic set-up. Vertzberger has underlined the 'subjective perception factor' in India–China relations prior to 1962, while Hoffman has stressed the 'psychological setting' of the Indian decision-making process. (473)

It should be evident though, that a possible boundary settlement would only be a 'variant' of the existing line of control since 1962. Around a *de facto* position, the *de jure* settlement essentially 'is a problem of political management'. The climate of good relations between the two countries is 'especially vulnerable' to divergence of interests and policies between India and China in the countries of South Asia. (476–7)

JOHN LALL[4]

Under the Raj, the frontiers remained indeterminate though 'not for want of trying'; in actual fact, the responsibility for 'inconclusiveness' of British efforts 'rested almost entirely' on the Chinese. Here it is necessary to underline the fact that in sharp contrast to the 'myth' of age-old India–China relations, the fact was that there had in fact been 'no contact at all' between the two countries apart from an occasional exchange of teachers in the first millennium. (442)

It is significant that Henry Lawrence's instructions to the surveyors (1846) charged with defining the territorial limits of Ladakh, in consultation with Tibet and its suzerain, the Manchu rulers of China underlined the proposition that the Raj was not interested 'in a strip more or less of barren or even productive' territory but 'a clear and well-defined boundary'. (445) Not long after, while the 1904 Younghusband expedition to Tibet may be rated a 'characteristic Curzonian high horse' (447), its triumphs on the 'battlefield' notwithstanding, the Raj surrendered all the political gains it had won. Later at the Simla Conference of 1913–14, the British had not left the boundary issue unresolved; the real rub was the Chinese 'habit to make themselves scarce when the time came to agree or sign formal documents. (449)

Girjashankar Bajpai, the Secretary General in the foreign office in New Delhi suggested to Nehru that Sardar K.M. Panikkar, India's ambassador in Beijing, 'seemed more anxious' to protect the interests of China than of the country he represented. (449) Later, in negotiating the April 1954 treaty on Tibet, New Delhi showed 'a readiness to sacrifice' its advantages in the expectation of an 'illusory goodwill'. For, Zhou had taken full advantage of Nehru's 'trusting simplicity', more appropriately, his naiveté. It is interesting to recall that in 1956, R.K. Nehru, the Indian Foreign Secretary, refrained from showing the boundary map to Zhou, then on a visit to New Delhi, for 'it would have seemed impolite'! (451)

A chief of British Defence Staff rated Indian forward posts in Ladakh as 'militarily nonsensical'. (453) S. Gopal, Nehru's biographer, has expressed the view that Zhou had 'a clearer idea', than Nehru did, as to where power and interest lay. And it had been

patent that China was driven by 'historical chauvinism and hegemonistic designs'. (454)

D.K. PALIT[5]

According to Lall, Palit's searching analysis led him to conclude that China 'did not win' the (1962) war; all the same India lost it, thanks to New Delhi's 'unparalleled errors of policy, preparation (and) command in the field'. (Lall, 455) Palit insists that 'to this day' there is no authoritative account of the manner in which the crisis was handled by the government and Army Headquarters, or of the reasons for waging 'an unwinnable war' in high Himalaya. (Preface, viii) He has expressed the view that while the British-Indian imperial system had 'neither the need nor the facility' for an interface between politicians in Whitehall and the military headquarters in Delhi, independent India did. And yet successive governments since independence have 'mindlessly' continued to follow the British procedure. Neither service chiefs nor yet ministerial bureaucrats have demanded an overhaul of the system if largely because such reform may pose 'a threat to their self-interest'. (434)

AMITABH MATTOO[6]

India has always had a 'normative idealized' view of India–China relationship rooted in its anti-colonial, if also anti-Western discourse. It is an image that seems to believe that this so-called glorious past will continue to shape contemporary relations. (16, 18)

India does not figure in China's 'threat cosmology' in any serious fashion 'unlike the Russian Expansionist, the American Imperialist, and the Japanese Upstart'. (19) China's own strategic behaviour 'exhibits a preference for offensive use of force' mediated by the keen 'sensitivity to relative capabilities'. In sharp, if striking contrast, India has no strategic doctrine and is prone to 'panic reactions and ad hoc responses'. (21–2) It is also evident that China is far more likely to use force in a dispute over military security questions such as territory, and has built Pakistan as a vital counterweight to India's growing military capabilities. New Delhi views China as an old friend 'a model to be copied—if also a potential adversary' to be guarded against. (25)

SAHDEV VOHRA[7]

The 1954 Agreement did not state that India's trading and other rights in Tibet since 1904 had been terminated. It was so worded as to suggest that these rights in their modified form were being agreed to for the first time, and granted on a reciprocal basis in return for similar rights conceded to the Chinese in Kalimpong, Siliguri, and Calcutta. All the same, what was played up was India's recognition of Tibet as an integral part of China (the 'Tibet region of China' as the Agreement called it) and the doctrine of Panchsheel. Sadly, New Delhi gave up its special relationship with the land of the lama and 'did not stand up' for the latter's status as an independent country since 1913. (29–30)

DAWA NORBU[8]

As 'capitalist imperialist', the British were 'most concerned with the economics of imperial defence' and the 'buffer theory' was the 'most economical means' of securing imperial security along the 2000 mile Himalayan boundary. In that sense, an independent Tibet was vital not only to Indian national interest but also to the Central Asian republics, Mongolia, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Burma. (276–7) China viewed Tibet as a backdoor which must remain shut for the former's own national security. It should follow that the main reason for China's takeover of Tibet was strategic rather than realizing a historical claim or an ideological motivation. In the event, the chief development in Tibet until 1976, and ever since, has been strategic or military oriented and this, above all overshadows all other aspects. Understandably, the first task of 'liberation' was *not* social reform or economic development but strategic development. Even the tottering Manchus at the turn of the century were planning roads in Kham! (279–81) Norbu cites with approval Ginsburg and Mathos' (*Communist China and Tibet*, the Hague, 1964, p. 210) conclusion that

> He who holds Tibet dominates the Himalayan piedmont; he who dominates the Himalayan piedmont threatens the Indian subcontinent and he who dominates the Indian subcontinent may have all of South Asia within his reach and with that all of Asia.

With Tibet in its grasp, China views Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim as its new buffers. Beijing, Norbu avers, has been persuading these

states 'and Nepal in particular' that real 'danger to their independence' comes from India while the Himalayan kingdom falls within the Chinese sphere of influence in the cis-Himalayan region. It should follow that with a hostile if not resentful Tibet at its back, Beijing would fight shy of engaging in a protracted conflict with India. (284)

The Raj had two layers of defence—Tibet in the outer rampart and the Himalayan states in the inner. The concept or idea of the buffer was 'not culture bound' but dictated by 'geopolitics and the near-symmetry' of great powers which seek to create structures of peace for mutual security. Since 1951, Tibet has, for all practical purposes become China's inner rampart where no external intervention is tolerated, while over these many years, Beijing has been busy constructing an outer rampart out of the Himalayan states. What needs to be ensured is the neutralization and denuclearization of Outer Tibet; this will increase the buffer/strategic space between the two nuclear states. (292) For the record, the occupation does not come easy, for the Chinese burn 3–4 litres of oil to ferry one into Tibet, while feeding and clothing a soldier there costs almost four times as much as it does in China! (297)

NANCY JETLEY[9]

A large number of members of Parliament described Nehru's policy on Tibet as one of 'appeasement' of China, while with the 'destruction' of the former as a buffer state, the 'vulnerability' of India's land frontiers was clearly exposed. For his part, Nehru was convinced that nationalism 'played a far more important part' in China than did Communism, ideological differences notwithstanding. The Indian leader was not unhappy with a strong China; it was a harbinger of Asian resurgence and an assurance of the new Asia occupying its rightful place in world politics. (295) Nearer home, he was particularly sensitive to currents of public opinion and created the healthy tradition of treating the opposition with respect while allowing considerable latitude to his own party members, making sure that New Delhi's Parliament reflected India's public opinion. (8)

Thanks to strong public reactions, especially after the 1958 border clashes with China, the opposition in Parliament succeeded in calling Nehru's policy of settling the border dispute as one of

'appeasement' and urged the adoption of effective measures including the use of force to eject the Chinese from Indian territory. 'Perhaps' it was with a view to showing that its keenness for a peaceful settlement did not mean that it was totally incapable of taking effective action that New Delhi devised the so-called 'forward policy' of establishing as many checkposts on the border as possible. (297) It is significant that before long, Nehru's assessment of the Tibetan rebellion (March 1959) had changed as demonstrative of 'a clash of wills' to 'a national uprising'. (296)

RAMESH SINGHVI[10]

In the course of the first informal discussions to stabilize the Indian frontier (27 April 1951), Zhou told the Indian ambassador that there was 'no territorial dispute or controversy' between India and China. Three years later, on the morrow of the April 1954 Agreement, when the Indian plenipotentiary stated that the two sides 'have gone through fully, questions that existed between our two countries in this (Tibet) region', neither Zhou nor yet his delegation demurred. (65) 'By all cannons of international law and practice', even if Ivan Chen expressed his disagreement with the McMahon Line, it was 'binding on Tibet in 1914 and became equally binding on China from 1954 onward' when its status as a successor power in Tibet was recognized by India, in accordance with the provisions of the Panchsheel Treaty of 1954. (67)

C.V. RANGANATHAN AND VINOD C. KHANNA[11]

The clash at Dhola (8 September 1962) convinced the Chinese leadership that a military engagement was inevitable. Beijing's directive to the border forces (6 October) was categorical: 'If the Indian army attacks, hit back ruthlessly...so that it hurts.' As Beijing sought to put it, its retaliation was 'counter-attacks in self-defence'. If Mao had been in retirement and Zhou and Liu Shaoqi in power, the story may have been different. (24 in chapter 1, 'Mao's India War', pp. 13-24) The fact is that at the September (1962) plenum of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao had emerged as the paramount leader. It should thus be obvious that all decisions on India, from 1959–62, were taken by Mao—including the proposal for the 20-km withdrawal from the line of control. 'Evidence now

available of the decision-making process in Beijing in the years leading up to the 1962 conflict' would appear to suggest that Mao himself 'played a critical role in determining his mode of handling problems with India'. (13–14)

Nehru, as the US ambassador in New Delhi put it, had reconciled himself to a 'philosophic acquiescence' in China's 'liberation' of Tibet. For India, Tibet's distinct culture and Buddhism entitled it to 'something close to independence'. Beijing on the other hand argued that New Delhi's insistence on such a status for the Dalai Lama's kingdom was tantamount to its taking on the mantle of British imperialism. (27–8)

The prime minister had talked of India's 'historic borders', China insisted on its 'strategic borders'. While China was prepared to accept the 'unequal' treaties with the Tsarist government inasmuch as these had been agreed to by the Manchus, the 1914 Convention, it argued, had not been accepted by the then Chinese government. In the event, the McMahon Line was viewed in Beijing as 'an illegal imposition on a weak China'. (32) For the Convention to be revised, Beijing had outlined the modalities while negotiating earlier with Burma: (i) agreement that there was need for revising an undemarcated boundary; (ii) pending the new alignment, the status quo was to be maintained on the existing borders; (iii) negotiations were to be conducted in the presence of the surveyors; and (iv) the final agreement was to be concluded 'on the basis of political understandings'. (37)

With the Chinese army marching into Lhasa (October 1950), New Delhi realized that there should be no ambiguity about the depiction of its borders. Hence steps were taken, in 1953–4 to publish official maps showing clearly delimited boundaries between India and China in all sectors. The essence of the Indian approach was that there had always existed 'a well-defined customary and traditional boundary' with China, marked by impressive geographical features, delimited for most part by agreements or treaties and controlled on its side by administrative jurisdiction both in pre-British as well as British India. (29)

Beijing's view was that the new regime needs to negotiate new borders with all its neighbours. These would reflect national acts of the People's Republic of China rather than the inherited positions

of past 'imperialist' regimes. Territorial adjustments, wherever called for by China's strategic and defence needs, would be made. It followed that areas determined to be of strategic value would be defended by force if challenged while such as were not needed for permanent defensive use could be employed as bargaining chips with the concerned neighbouring state/states.

It should follow that the boundary conflict arose primarily because of two differing concepts—the Chinese one of strategic borders, the Indian of historic borders. While Beijing was prepared to use diplomatic and, 'if necessary' military methods, New Delhi's approach was primarily 'declaratory and ineffectively military'.

The then Indian ambassador Panikkar's refusal to force the issue of Beijing's recognition of the 1914 Simla Agreement in the early 1950s rested on the plea, that in the event of the Chinese refusal to oblige, New Delhi would be placed 'in a disadvantageous position.' If China however raised the issue off its own bat, New Delhi should refuse to reopen the question and take the position that the McMahon Line was not a subject for discussion. (29–30)

The precise extent of territorial concessions which needed to be made by the two sides to reach an accommodation was never explicitly spelt out in the course of all the negotiations in 1954, 1956–7, or even in the correspondence between the two prime ministers from 1958 onwards. In September 1950, Zhou had affirmed that the boundary shown on Chinese maps was correct. Ten years later, in April 1960, there was genuine fear in Delhi that in return for its concession on NEFA, the Chinese may demand a 'high price.' At the same time there were mounting pressures on Nehru, both inside and outside of Parliament as well as in his Cabinet, which prevented New Delhi from taking 'a more rational view' of Zhou's informal proposals (April 1960) for a swap of Aksai Chin in the western sector for the McMahon Line in the eastern. (44–5)

It was not until November 1961 that Indian intelligence realized that most Chinese posts in Ladakh, were deep inside what India claimed to be its territory. Militarily, the Indian posts were 'symbolic' and confined largely to widely separated areas just to the east of the Chinese claim line. Between the two, it was 'a tale of mutual misperceptions compounded by errors of judgment'. One has also to bear in mind the fact that early stages of differences between the PRC

and the Soviet Union coincided with the souring of Sino–Indian relations. Moreover, 'the vehemence and extremism' of Mao's rejection of the post-Stalinist worldview propounded by Khrushchev had 'a malevolent fallout on India'. (51) Was it any wonder then that the Chinese assessment of domestic developments in India proved to be grievously wrong, especially in the context of the widely-held belief that India was 'ripe for a revolution'. An article in the *People's Daily*, 'A Single Spark can light a Prairie Fire' extolled the Naxalbari Movement (started in 1967), sought to give it an ideological underpinning and promised support to 'violent secessionist movements' in North-east India. (55) On the other hand, Nehru's grievous leap in faith in transposing his ideals on to a China under Mao which had its own domestic and external priorities was hasty and ill-considered at best. At the same time, it must be conceded that the Indian Prime Minister 'could not have anticipated the depth' of Sino-Soviet differences. (53)

JOHN ROWLAND[12]

In 1910, Chao Erhfeng had evolved a new administrative blueprint carving out an enlarged province of Suikiang embracing much of what was East Tibet, and at the same time pressed hard for old Chinese claims on Nepal, Bhutan, and the Assam Himalayas. (42) About much the same time, Williamson's death (1911) brought the tribal areas north of the Outer Line within the British sphere of influence. Developments in Tibet in the wake of the Dalai Lama's flight from Lhasa (early 1910) convinced the Chinese that they would find it hard to rule there without the God-king unless they had 'a tremendously large army of occupation' at their disposal. (45) For, China's suzerainty over Tibet, while it deprived Beijing of effective control, gave it some legal primacy; at the same time it provided a vacuum which the British filled while keeping the Russians out.

Contrary to Chinese claims, they were 'not forced' to attend the Simla Conference nor did Chen's performance suggest in any way that he was negotiating 'under duress'. Inner Tibet was designed to serve as a buffer between the Dalai Lama's Tibet and Russian-dominated Outer Mongolia; Outer Tibet as a buffer between India and China. (47) At the same time Lhasa was not in control of all ethnic Tibet. When McMahon suggested that they discuss the

territorial limits of Tibet, Chen demurred suggesting that he lacked instructions; until these arrived, McMahon averred, he would discuss the matter with Shatra—a proposition to which Chen raised no objections. This would explain the holding of bilateral discussions and the exchange of letters between Shatra and McMahon and the Anglo–Tibetan boundary agreement. On 17 February (1914), McMahon had tabled a statement with an explanatory map drawing Tibet's boundaries; the same map was later attached to the Simla Convention. It should follow that 'to a significant extent' Chen was concerned with the India–Tibet boundary question at Simla. (49) In the event, later Chinese allegations that they were not consulted on the boundary question do not hold water. Again, 'initialling' a document connotes informal acceptance of all that it holds. The fact is, it was China's 'basic and traditional unwillingness' to relinquish rights to territory which it considers to be 'eternally' part of the 'celestial' realm which led to the imbroglio. At the same time, the idea of negotiating on equal terms with a country it considered to be a vassal 'prejudiced' China against any 'reasonable' solution; it would not sign away what it assumed it could regain at a later date. (49)

Doctrine as well as propaganda is an important weapon for communism. Propaganda must serve the doctrine and the latter must justify the act. It is interesting that New Delhi's first communication to Beijing in the wake of its violation of Tibet's territory (October 1950) appealed more to Chinese self-interest than to concern for its own well-established rights in Tibet, or for that matter to the principle of self-determination. Only much later did New Delhi take up the issue that its own interests were at stake. It is revealing that in translating the Indian protest notes the term 'suzerainty' was rendered as 'sovereignty'; Beijing would not compromise on the terminology! (53, 56–7)

In 1950, Tibet attracted no end of sympathy from the non-communist world, yet tangible acts of assistance were 'very limited'; world attention was focused on the war in Korea and India's role therein as a mediator. Beijing's rejoinder to India's protest underwrote the latter's links with imperialist aggressors who, it alleged, were interfering in China's domestic affairs and coming in the way of exercising its sovereign rights in Tibet. In his statement

in Parliament (6 December 1950), Nehru indicated that New Delhi lay 'considerable stress' on the autonomy of Tibet; this expression was dropped when 'Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches 1949–53' were published early in 1954, a few months before the April 1954 Agreement. Does it follow that by then India did not want to lay any stress on the 'autonomy of Tibet'? (61)

Again, it is interesting that the Dalai Lama's investiture (17 November 1950) in Lhasa was not accepted by Beijing since he had not attained majority; in the event, in Beijing's eyes the left-behind Regent's government alone enjoyed legitimacy. It was only after the Dalai Lama returned from Yatung and a Chinese representative had been reinstalled in Lhasa, did the Tibetan ruler become his country's legitimate ruler. (65) Again, the text of three clauses of the May 1951 Agreement concerning the Panchen Lama were not revealed for several months! Early in 1952, when the Dalai Lama's two Prime Ministers were summarily dismissed under Chinese pressure, the Tibetan ruler did not make any new appointments—convinced that the new incumbents too would become scapegoats for his country's new masters. While it is true that the Chinese did not take a needle or thread from Tibet, it did rob the country and its people of their whole way of life. The 1950–1 events demonstrated China's 'historical approach' to its borderlands and its minorities: an obsession with the security of the Middle Kingdom and an urge for territorial aggrandizement. Militarily, 'nothing short of total control'. (73)

Curzon's concept of the buffer state was placed in the context of 'geopolitical realism', it would provide a belt of land or a frontier in depth which could not be crossed without sounding the alarm of intervention. The Raj saw the Himalayan regions—Kashmir, Afghanistan, Sikkim, Bhutan, and the Assam Himalaya—as India's *inner line* of defence protected by the Tibetan buffer. Red China for its part views the Himalayan states as its *outer line* of defence necessary for the protection of Tibet. Moreover, Beijing views the Himalayan states as an irredentist region to be regained; as 'future bases for the subversion' of India. But to achieve this, India and the rest of Asia have to be lulled into accepting Beijing's 'peaceful pretensions' while Tibet was still licking its wounds. (74–5)

S.P. SETH[13]

India and China's mutual distrust on Tibet complicated the problem which was 'largely political'. While the claims of neither side in the western sector were 'sacrosanct', in the eastern sector the position was 'reasonably well-defined' by the McMahon Line. The activation of a non-existing dispute in the eastern sector only tended to reinforce the Indian sense of betrayal and made difficult a political settlement of the dispute on Chinese terms. (2–3)

In the wake of the Tibetan revolt (March 1959), Beijing had charged that India was being used as a base for US operations in support of the Tibetan rebels by way of training and provision of arms and supplies. There was China's long-cherished 'siege mentality' in which India, because of its supposed interference in Tibet, was visualized as part of an international conspiracy. (4) New Delhi's efforts at de-linking India–China relationship from Sino–USSR hostility did not register much headway.

The border conflict only 'precipitated' a crisis that was already building up. The basic issue was the faulty assessment of each other's strategic interests and intentions, in which China visualized India as part of a hostile international environment while the latter was a prisoner of its own righteous propaganda as a 'sincere benefactor and champion' of its neighbour's causes. (7) Here it is necessary to underline that the so-called forward posts in Ladakh were more symbolic than a serious security alternative.

In the post-1962 decades, China's relations with the Soviet Union deteriorated while Beijing came to view India, with its pronounced pro-Moscow leanings, as hostile. In the event, it lent considerable aid to the Naxalite insurgency in India's north-east and at the same time, drew closer to Pakistan. The 1971 Indo–Soviet Treaty was an important political and security prop for India—'the kind of option which Nehru had not cultivated'. (13) Edgar Snow, so close to Mao and his men reasoned that India was 'maneuvering' to get both the US and the Soviet Union (SU) on its side and was doing all it could to oppose the unification of the People's Republic of China (PRC). (Edgar Snow, *The Other Side of the River: Red China Today*, London, 1963, p. 591, cited as n. 4 in *Seth*, p. 28)

Y.Y.I. VERTZBERGER[14]

The final action of the Chinese in Tibet, Patel had told Nehru was, 'in my judgment', 'a little short of perfidy'. (64) In the Korean War, Nehru had objected to China being labelled an 'aggressor', condemned the induction of the US 7th Fleet in the Taiwan Strait, and protested against a separate peace treaty with Tokyo. Also, he criticized the US on the Indo–China issue and expressed his support for the Vietminh. At Bandung (1955), the Indian Prime Minister, sort of took Zhou under his wing, and 'introduced' him to the assembled Third World leaders. 'But within a short while' Zhou 'actually' became the focus of the Conference and 'stole the show from Nehru'. (65) The remarkable fact is the centrality of the Chinese issue in Indian foreign policy. Nehru had hoped that without having to change India's basic position—and any risk of a war—he would be able to stick to his unrelenting posture.

In sharp contrast, emotional reasons did not play a major role in Beijing's calculations, nor did it view the border dispute as a major strategic threat. The removal of the dispute from its local context, and its placement in a broader political and ideological medium should help view it objectively. The sad part was the somewhat reckless behaviour of the two sides which led to a hardening of positions, and reinforced processes that aggravated the situation. Before long, the 1954 agreement expired and was not renewed. The 'forward policy' became increasingly provocative to the Chinese. A series of declarations and 'unfortunate slips of the tongue' by Nehru, continuing attacks in Parliament and in the press demanding a tougher Indian reaction, the exchange of letters between the two Prime Ministers—the language of which became increasingly harsh and aggressive—created an atmosphere of impending crisis. (66)

Territory and territorial sovereignty constitute the most tangible evidence of independence and boundaries of nationalist self-determination. The Chinese threat was also seen as jeopardizing India's standing as the leader of Asia—an issue that involved a question of national pride. The fact is that by the end of the 1950s the Chinese problem was 'so pervasive as to have influenced the entire range' of foreign and domestic policies. The intensified emotionalism of the issues and the increasing polarization of public

opinion gave minor events a greater significance than they deserved or should have had. It made attitudes rigid and concessions much less likely. The complexity and wide range of the implications of decisions made matters worse. Nor was the problem of China 'just another issue' in India's foreign policy. As Maxwell has put it, 'all of India's policy' was an extension of Nehru's political personality, but 'no part of it was more markedly associated with him personally than India's friendship with China'. One of Nehru's biographers (Frank Moraes) has pointed out that so central was China to his very being that the Indian Prime Minister 'died the day the Chinese crossed our border'. (68)

K. SUBRAMANIAM[15]

Unlike China, in India, the state was not as important as the society; for the common man, it did not matter who ruled as long as he did not upset the societal framework. The British understood this; which is why the Queen's proclamation in 1857 underscored her commitment that there would be no interference in the observance of faiths or social practices. Importantly, no Indian ruler, not even among the Muslims ever thought of expansion of his/her territorial jurisdiction 'beyond traditional Indian civilizational area'. (xv)

In the 1950s, rapid promotions in the army because of Indianization meant that earlier limitations in terms of knowledge, experience, and competence were being taken care of. Again, the Indian bureaucracy which had had little exposure, and even less clue to international relations and national security management was now acquiring greater skills. For the record, there was no intelligence failure in 1962; intelligence reports of Chinese build-up in Tibet had come in, but these had not been put together and assessed. As to Chinese leadership, as early as the 1930s, John Gunther (*Inside Asia*) had described Mao and Zhou as 'Red Napoleons in Blue'; in sharp, if refreshing contrast, India never practised an aggressive and expansionist foreign policy nor did it cultivate a paranoid sense of insecurity. (xx–xxi)

The absence of a sense of geographical territory persisted from ancient times down the ages to the medieval period, and even later. Of none of these periods does there exist even the vaguest suggestion

of a reliable map. It is evident that the Indian 'State or Nation-State was the creation of the British during the two hundred years of their rule: they first gave it a territorial, pan-Indian jurisprudential, political, economic, and administrative identity superimposed on the several plural identities of the subjects of an imperial conquest of an area of sub-continental proportions. The sovereign republic of India that inherited this entity...is still grappling with the ambiguities of this legacy...despite the Mauryan, Gupta and Moghul empires...of pre-British Indian history, there was no pan-Indian state, certainly not on the scale of the British empire in India or with the same reach of authority of the Central power. And since enforceable power is the basic attribute of a State, there indeed was no political fact called India before the British established their rule in India.' (Subramaniam 1999)

In July 1962, General Thimaya who had been the Army chief (May 1957–May 1961) wrote in an article:

> Whereas in the case of Pakistan I have considered the possibility of a total war, I am afraid I cannot do so in regard to China. I cannot even as a soldier envisage India taking on China in an open conflict on its own.
>
> China's present strength in manpower, equipment and aircraft exceeds our resources a hundred-fold with the full support of the USSR, and we could never hope to match China in the foreseeable future. It must be left to the politicians and diplomats to ensure our security.

Also, in his opinion,

> the present strength of the army and air forces of India, organized as well as modern armies are, are even below the 'minimum insurance' that we can give to our people...(as far as) 'the equipment required for a modern force; in fact, we are below our minimum requirements.... ('Adequate insurance', the *Seminar*, New Delhi, July 1962, 13–15, pp. 14, 15).

Subramaniam is emphatic that the 'possibility of the Chinese launching a very carefully controlled limited operation, with very limited political objectives, appears to have been overlooked altogether, both in the services and political circles, and by the prime minister'. What is quite evident today is that Nehru's reference to the possibility of a war with China for over three years—from the autumn of 1959 to the autumn of 1962—notwithstanding, hardly any professional thought had been given to the problem of war in the Himalayas. (Subramaniam, 'Evolution of Indian Defence Policy', n. 15)

FRANCINE FRANKEL[16]

The harsh truth is that India did not become a political fact until independence in 1947. By contrast, the idea of India as a civilizational entity had its origins in the Vedic Sanskrit religious and literary texts, composed over long periods, going as far back as 1500–500 BCE. The British Raj did not lead to the downfall of any dynastic system but it was as destructive of Brahmanism in India as the century of humiliations (*ca.* 1839–1937) had been of the Confucian belief system in China. Control over a defined territory was of only secondary importance in the Hindu conception of kingship. (18–9) With the British however, the definition of India's territorial boundaries—never before considered important—became a first priority as they sought to protect the country from foreign invasion as the cornerstone of their vast empire stretching all the way from the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean. Their major preoccupation though, focused almost entirely on Russia's advances in Central Asia, especially towards Afghanistan and the sea-routes from Iran. (24)

Even before the British had departed, Nehru saw India as 'potentially a Great Power', destined to play 'a very great part' in security problems of Asia and the Indian Ocean, 'more especially of the Middle East and South-East Asia'. (26) Yet it was China that had historically carried on a lively trade with India along the silk routes, established protectorates in Central Asia, asserted control in Kabul and in the Khyber Pass, and shared the longest border of more than 2500 miles with India. None of this was considered relevant in an imperial era when Beijing could no longer assert its power. (24) There has been a sea change with the emergence of the People's Republic of China, for the strong dictatorship of the CCP has to date contained any serious threat to central control from the annexed 'periphery'—Manchuria, Outer Mongolia, Sinkiang, Tibet, Taiwan—acquired by the last reigning dynasty, the Qing, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and becoming part of the mainland under the Republic, however shadowy its control. All through, China's great advantage has been the historical and political consciousness of the majority Han population; and the first concern of any ruling elite remains the preservation of internal social order. (16)

SUMIT GANGULY[17]

The discord between India and China is so deep-seated, and the memory of the 1962 war so searing on the Indian side, that improvement of relations between the two would at best be incremental. As early as 1950, there was Nehru's clear perception that the inherited boundaries of the British Empire were legal and therefore sacrosanct. This legalistic view was in marked contrast to the Chinese position—largely shaped by considerations of power as well as notions of historical grievance. At the April 1960 meeting between the two Prime Ministers, Zhou 'informally' offered the West (Aksai Chin)–East (McMahon Line) swap. Sadly for him, Nehru's room for maneuver was 'significantly smaller' and his position more unyielding. Zhou, unfamiliar with parliamentary democracy, perceived Nehru's stance as one of extreme rigidity. New Delhi's foreign policy—as Zhou conceived it—amounted to one of 'compellence' defined as 'an effort to force an adversary to undo the consequences of a hostile act'. (112, 114)

Longstanding differences over several issues ensure that relations between the two countries, despite their temporary improvements, will remain competitive over the long term. Progress over the border dispute has been slow; it took Beijing almost thirty long years to accept New Delhi's annexation of Sikkim! India's support for Tibetan exiles and its nuclear programme have rattled the Chinese no end, for despite their more than half a century of occupation, they have still not succeeded in completely suppressing Tibetan resistance, much less in legitimizing their rule. Meantime, India's concern over Chinese activities in Myanmar has been palpable. It has been argued that as their power and political capabilities grow, China–India interactions with South Asia, Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia will become sharper. In actual fact, India's demonstration of its nuclear capability signalled China, even as it did the US and Russia, that it would not be subject to nuclear blackmail. (124, 126)

SUNIL KHILNANI[18]

While Judith Brown and Shashi Tharoor elegize the slow tragedy of Nehru's final years in power, Zachariah is more summary: 'there is a good case for arguing that he betrayed China rather than the

other way round'. As Nehru became entrapped in an Indian nationalism that he refused to disown even in its nastiest and most illogical form, he was forced away from his principles into a disastrous war, and saw his political policies collapse around him. (Benjamin Zachariah, *Nehru,* p. 264)

1962 'crushed' Nehru and 'blighted' all subsequent assessments of his career. The Indian Prime Minister's lifelong belief that India and China were destined to a 'partnered future' was steadily eroded through the late 1950s. It finally crumbled on 19 November (1962) when the Indian state came 'as near as it has ever done to collapse'. That evening Nehru dispatched two telegrams to President Kennedy—and they said it all. The Prime Minister intimated *inter alia* that the Indian situation was 'really desperate' and that the Chinese had advanced 'in massive strength'. In the event, he asked for 'comprehensive assistance' and more specifically for '12 squadrons of supersonic all-weather fighters'. No more 'humiliating' revocation of Nehru's policy of non-alignment could be imagined, Khilnani concludes, for a man of his pride who had staked his worldview on principled criticism of the world powers, especially the US. It was a 'piercing acknowledgment of failure'. (8)

SUBIMAL DUTT[19]

Nehru was concerned that if India 'gave in' to China on Ladakh, other demands would 'not be long in coming'. (131) For himself, Nehru 'may have been willing' to accept the Chinese 'barter deal' on territory, but Pant, his home minister, was 'opposed'. 'As one closely associated with discussions' within the government, he could say that 'such a proposal (viz. the barter deal)' was 'not discussed' at any time. Moreover, the 'entire cabinet' was 'united' in its opposition to any settlement on the basis of barter. (132)

XUECHENG LIU[20]

The argument that India was the 'victim' of Chinese territorial expansion and that China, devoid of 'gratitude', had 'betrayed' India's friendship, 'lacked' historical analysis and 'reflected sympathy' for the underdog. The protagonists of this point of view, including the author (Parshotam Mehra), were Margaret Fisher, Leo Rose, Robert Huttenback, Dorothy Woodman, and P.C. Chakravarty.[21] In the

mid-1960s, Alastair Lamb's 'academic efforts' changed the general scene of leaning towards one side. His 'historical picture of the games of power politics' enabled him to balance writings that reflected 'an emotional sense' of sympathy for India.[22] Later in the 1970s, Neville Maxwell and Karunakar Gupta were to focus on 'careful examination and analysis' and attributed New Delhi's debacle to Nehru's 'rigid attitudes' towards the border issue and his 'wrong policies'.[23]

In sum, these and later 'researches, analyses and assessments' attribute India's defeat in 1962 to the 'blindness' of its information system, the 'tardiness' of its logistical system, the 'malfunction' of its commanding system and the 'insensitivity' of its decision-making authorities. And pinpoint Nehru's 'rigidity', and the 'provocative nature' of his forward policy on the border issue. These recent analyses and assessments have only 'strengthened' the 'academic argument' advanced by Neville Maxwell and Karunakar Gupta.[24]

Liu underscores the view that India's border policy of 'non-recognition' and 'non-negotiation' was compounded by its forward policy while the Chinese tit-for-tat counter-measures pushed the situation to the inevitability of war, whose primary direct cause was the border dispute while the Tibetan revolt proved to be its catalyst. Earlier (April 1960), the Indian leadership had 'bluntly' refused Zhou's 'package' approach by which China would accept Indian claims in the eastern sector in return for the latter's recognition of Chinese claims in the western sector—'essentially (an) acknowledgment of the status quo in terms of actual control'. (30–1)

The Indians denounced Beijing's massive armed assault (October 1962) as an invasion of their territory; the Chinese, however, viewed it as no more than a 'self-defence counter-attack'. The month-long hostilities did not change the status quo; the Chinese side 'only demonstrably' asserted its territorial claims by this operation. The alleged winners gained none of the territories they had so 'strongly' claimed while the so-called losers regained their lost land 'without shooting or shelling'. It should be evident that the Chinese objective was not so much to occupy the disputed area as 'to punish' India with a decisive strike; their principle of war—to fight a quick battle so as to force a quick decision. The war itself solved nothing; it would lead, at best, to the 'icy freeze' of Sino–Indian relations for nearly twenty years!

In retrospect, as New Delhi viewed it, acquiescence in the status quo would lead to an unacceptable settlement of the boundary. The new 'forward policy' was aimed at breaking the status quo and improving New Delhi's legal claims by the fact of possession. It was a logical extension of Nehru's policy of non-recognition and non-negotiation. The reasoning behind this whole approach was that whoever succeeded in establishing a check-post would establish a legal claim to that territory. It 'seemed to be curious' that while New Delhi threatened to vacate Chinese 'aggression' by superior force or by war, it hugged the belief that Beijing would not launch armed attacks to defend its territorial claims! This was the 'fundamental and illogical' premise and the 'tragic crux' of India's philosophy of forward policy. (32) China's war objective was 'not to occupy' the disputed area but 'to punish' India with 'a decisive strike'; its principle of war, to fight a quick battle, to force a quick decision. (40)

Later in his 'Memoirs', the Soviet leader Khrushchev expressed the view that 'Mao himself' had 'stirred up the trouble' with India because of some 'sick fantasy'. Also, he 'created' the conflict precisely to draw the Soviet Union into it, leaving the latter 'no choice' but to support him. (cited in Strobe Talbot (ed.), *Khrushchev Remembers: the Last Testament* (Boston, 1974), pp. 308–11, Liu, op. cit., p. 45, n. 78)

SHASHI THAROOR[25]

China had been one of Nehru's 'greatest passions', a source of intense fascination since his youth. And yet it was his failure to manage India's relationship with China that more than anything else 'blighted' his last years of office and contributed to his final decline. (209) Nehru's China policy was an 'uneasy amalgam' of idealist rhetoric about Sino–Indian relations on the one hand and firm assurances to Parliament that India's borders were secure, on the other. He set much store by Chou's 1952 statement that China had no border dispute with India. Two years later while concluding a negotiated settlement with China (April 1954), he failed to seize the opportunity to obtain an agreement on the boundary. Through the mid-1950s, and especially after Bandung (1955), Nehru saw himself as virtually a patron of China, a position hardly likely to be

well-received in Beijing. As he viewed it, it was 'India's duty to sponsor China's arrival on the world stage' and to lead the demand for Beijing's rightful place in the UN. Oddly, he seemed 'impervious' to China's increasing irritation with what its leaders saw as Indian pretensions to great power standing globally, and specifically in Asia, a position which both by their 'size and strength', the Chinese viewed to be naturally, and rightfully, theirs. (210)

The Prime Minister refused to believe that China would 'ever embark on war' with India; moreover, he did little to prepare his defence forces for one. As late as August 1961 he told Parliament that India did not believe in war and would not act 'in a huff' but behave with 'wisdom and strength'. In retrospect, these were to prove no more than 'complacent banalities' which revealed neither wisdom nor strength. His directions to the troops that they 'patrol as far forward as possible without getting involved in a clash with the Chinese' made little sense. The war was to cut down Nehru's 'grand international pretensions' to size while Liu Shao-chi noted that it had taught India 'a lesson'. (211–12)

JUDITH BROWN[26]

By the late 1950s, Nehru's policies could not be 'insulated' from a roused educated public opinion with its 'noisy insistence' of no negotiations with the Chinese while the latter presumed to be aggressors on Indian territory. The 'forward policy' did not emerge until after the April 1960 Nehru-Zhou talks. The Chinese Prime Minister's New Delhi visit itself was both 'chilly and unproductive' and the talks held in a 'frosty atmosphere' against the background of a pronounced 'hostility' in Indian political circles to any deal with Beijing. With Munich (1938) in mind—where Chamberlain had knuckled down to Hitler's unreasonable demands—any compromise settlement with China would have been branded as 'appeasement'. Nehru himself was now strongly persuaded that China was driven more by nationalism than Marxism and was displaying 'aggressive and expansionist nationalist tendencies' exacerbated by its international isolation. (321)

After the April (1960) imbroglio, it was obvious that New Delhi had to take some new policy direction, placed as it was in a position of diplomatic stalemate with public opinion both inflamed as well

as vocal. On the presumption that China would not attack, the policy was both 'a legitimate and sensible' form of limited defence. Oddly, there was a singular lack of any serious intelligence about China. This was further compounded by the fact that Krishna Menon, the Defence Minister, viewed the Chinese problem as 'not a military one'. (322) In the event, the army had been neglected while development, and a policy of non-alignment were in the ascendant. Precious foreign exchange would not be spent on buying much-needed equipment for the armed forces, while both civilian officials as well as politicians distrusted the army top brass. The net result was that the Indian army, for complex reasons beyond its control, proved to be inadequate for the task it was asked to perform. For his part, Nehru was 'totally convinced' that the army was capable of dealing with any Chinese threat. The neglect of the army, in pursuit of other goals and the political calculations of the government were presently to come home to roost. (322–3)

There were several strands to Chinese thinking including a complex and unpredictable one in which 'force was deemed a legitimate and at times necessary' *modus operandi*. There was also a deep-seated and persistent sense of historical humiliation feeding a xenophobic nationalism. The Indian Prime Minister's world repute and his claims for Indian leadership of post-colonial Asia were perceived as 'threatening and presumptuous'. Both, ideology and theory convinced the Chinese leadership that Nehru's government was increasingly bourgeois and aligned with the Western powers. What was more, New Delhi's stance on Tibet in 1959 only seemed to confirm this. In China the 'great leap forward' (1958–9) and its disastrous economic consequence, compounded by ill-concealed domestic squabbles in the Party hierarchy, added to a grim scenario. Finally, 'and most dangerously', China's increasingly sensitive relations with India got entangled in the Sino-Soviet rift which by 1962, was there for all to see. Relations with India became the ideological divide between the policies of the two Communist powers towards non-Communist post-colonial regimes and the 'attempt to humiliate India with a show of limited but effective violence became part of China's policy towards India as well as the USSR'. The juxtaposition of the invasion with the Cuban missile crisis made the danger even more dire for India. (325)

BENJAMIN ZACHARIAH[27]

The problem was that there was a strong Indian tendency to claim that its borders were not negotiable; this left no room for compromise and turned the entire dispute into quibbling over obsolete treaties or agreements of doubtful legality. The Chinese distaste for independent India basing its claims so strongly on an era of imperial treaties was strongly expressed. More specifically they could not concede the legality of the McMahon Line without implying that Tibet had been sovereign in 1914, and therefore possibly so now. As Beijing conceived it, New Delhi's 1954 fiat about the maps showing concrete and delimited international boundaries was intended to present it with a *fait accompli.* (240)

From late 1959, China dominated parliamentary proceedings and inflamed passions. The China issue led to a progressive erosion of Nehru's dominating authority in Parliament. In the wake of S. Gopal's visit to London (1959) and his broad conclusion that India had a better claim to Aksai Chin than China did, Nehru's openness regarding the possibility of negotiations appears to have vanished. (p. 242) In Zhou's letter of 8 September (1959), Beijing for the first time, laid claim to the no-man's land between the McMahon Line and the foothills. This was a tendentious claim but 'possibly' designed to raise the stakes since the Indian side was 'so intransigent'. All the time it is obvious that New Delhi kept missing clues in the Chinese correspondence that not all the territory they might *theoretically* have a claim to, would *actually* be claimed by them. Moreover, further clues that they might be flexible in the North-East in return for Indian flexibility in the North-West were 'also ignored'. (243)

The Chinese view up to 1960—'largely correct'—that Nehru was a captive of reactionary forces he could not control, had yielded place to their 1962 denunciation of him as a representative of the big bourgeoisie and landlords. The 1960 summit was destroyed largely by Indian intransigence; on the same trip Zhou had arrived at suitable boundary alignments with Nepal as well as Burma!

The 'forward policy', which was tantamount to a 'provocative sending of adventurous border patrols' into disputed territory, could even be seen as a satyagraha of the Gandhian kind, with the satyagrahis' role being played by armed troops. 'We thought it was

a sort of game', an Indian army officer recalled in November 1962; Defence Minister Krishna Menon had called it 'a game of chess'. (244) In plain language, an ill-equipped and poorly funded army—in Parliament and outside, raising the military budget was opposed among others by those who hysterically advocated the use of force against China—was courting disaster. (245)

Given the increasingly acrimonious exchanges between the two Prime Ministers and armed clashes both in the eastern as well as the western sectors, it was 'surprising' that open armed conflict took so long to begin. From the day the Chinese assault began (October 20), it was abundantly clear that they could go anywhere they wished, and across any line they cared to cross. Later, at talks in Colombo (December 1962), India avoided an explicit settlement, refusing to accept that on the ground, the Chinese victory had settled the issue. It was obvious that the China crisis had 'undermined' the very basis of the Nehruvian system for its central plank, non-alignment, had come under attack, and Nehru himself had, 'though clandestinely', completely surrendered the principle. (249)

In the end, the greatest betrayal of Nehru's policies came from Nehru himself—in compromising non-alignment, the central plank of his foreign policy, and becoming at once the 'American stooge' of his own rhetoric as well as his Chinese interlocutors' acid pronouncements. To Nehru, the rationalization was simple: the Chinese had 'betrayed' him. He had been their friend—recognizing the People's Republic, pushing for its international recognition, providing it with its first international forum at Bandung, and continuously backing its right to a place in the United Nations. Yet, for all his acuteness in understanding Cold War pressures and politics, he appears to have been quite unable to appreciate the pressures and imperatives of Chinese foreign policy. That it was impossible for China to accept the Indian refusal to negotiate on the borders without the Chinese themselves appearing as if they had given in to 'unequal treaties'-style blackmail; there was no point in negotiating where one side had already declared that there was nothing on which to negotiate. There is, therefore, 'a good case' for arguing that Nehru 'betrayed China rather than the other way round'; it is impossible to understand why he and other seasoned policy-makers believed the Indian troops' border brinkmanship

would be tolerated in the spirit of 'peaceful co-existence'. As Nehru became trapped in an Indian nationalism that he refused to disown even in its nastiest and most illogical form, he was 'forced away from his principles' into a disastrous war, and saw his policies collapse around him. (264)

MIRA SINHA BHATTACHARJEA[28]

Nehru's 'deliberate' measures to avoid confrontation included his refusal 'to deligitimize' socialism, lend strong support to China's seat in the Security Council, and its participation in international affairs. Friendship with China was the 'cornerstone' of the entire edifice of Nehru's worldview and structure of policy, and he placed his trust in the 'Chineseness' of Communist China, on its national pride, and its Asianness. (431)

Nehru, it would appear, visualized a boundary-less India for nowhere in his voluminous writings, does India figure as 'a spatially finite entity or a distinct territorial unit'; in sharp contrast, Mao's idea of China was 'civilizational as it was political and therefore territorial'. (436) 1962 can be viewed as flowing from the 'approaches and perspectives' of the leaders of the two new states to the challenge of state formation with 'its twin tasks of territorial and political identity formation'. (428)

New Delhi's military defeat and its appeal for US aid 'symbolized its failure' to translate its national potential into national power. In its wake, India lost much of its international standing as an independent actor with its moral stature visibly diminished, its leadership of the non-aligned world weakened, and its policy of non-alignment lost its appeal and relevance. (443)

JUNG CHANG, JON HALLIDAY[29]

As border clashes worsened, Beijing 'quietly prepared for war' during May–June 1962 which it had been 'planning' for some time. Zhou was later to tell the Americans that Nehru was 'getting very cocky... and we tried to keep down his cockiness.' Mao's worry was the security of the nuclear test-site at Lop Nor in north-west China (486) which lay within range from India. He was also concerned for a fight on two fronts. To start with, he took the prospect of a Nationalist invasion of the mainland seriously, and sounded out

Washington; the latter revealed that Chiang had promised 'not to attack' without US consent. He next approached Khrushchev who pledged that Moscow would 'stand by' Beijing if China got into a border war with India, and would delay the sale of MiG-21s to New Delhi. In return, he sought Chinese support for Russian nuclear missiles in Cuba. This was 'a hefty horse-trade, one well-concealed from the world'.

On the morning of 20 October (1962), even as the Cuban missile crisis was about to break, Mao gave the go-ahead for his crack troops to storm Indian positions both on its western as well as eastern frontier. Five days later with the Cuban crisis at 'fever pitch', Khrushchev came through with his support for Mao in a statement in *Pravda* that 'mortified' Nehru. (487) By end-November, Mao having demonstrated his military superiority against India withdrew, his men having achieved his objective of 'long-term stability' on the border, leaving him free to focus on his broader ambitions.

The war dealt 'a lethal blow' to Nehru, Mao's 'rival for leadership' in the developing world. Presently the Chinese leader was to part ways with the Soviets. For while Mao failed to get Havana to sign up to his anti-Soviet stance, Khrushchev too 'back-tracked' from his previous support for China; a *Pravda* editorial of 5 November (1962) 'contained not one word' endorsing Beijing's position on the war with India. The fact was that for him (Khrushchev), as for Mao, the collaboration had been 'completely opportunistic'. (488)

II

While the preceding pages offer a sum-up, without comment, of how different authorities viewed the border dispute in perspective, those that follow spell out a critical assessment of a few select works that attracted a great deal of attention at the time they appeared, and were, in not a few cases, pivotal to formulation of public opinion, both at home and abroad. Here B.M. Kaul's *The Untold Story* (1967), J.P. Dalvi's *Himalayan Blunder* (1969), Neville Maxwell's *India's China War* (1970), D.P. Choudhury's *The North-East Frontier of India* (1978), John Lall's *Aksai Chin* (1989), and Steven A. Hoffman's *India and the China Crisis* (1990) are deserving of attention.

B.M. KAUL, *THE UNTOLD STORY*[30]

In the higher ranks of the Indian army, all through its formative years since the early fifties, General Kaul's role had been pivotal. His rapid promotions—in May 1959 he took over, in the rank of Lieutenant General, as Quarter Master General at Army Headquarters—added to his political orientation, and close physical and ideological proximity to men who wielded the levers of power soon pitch-forked him into importance. It was a matter of no great surprise that from his position of vantage as Chief of the General Staff, Kaul found himself catapulted into the Command of the IV Corps—the 'Fighting Fourth' as it came to be called. Raised overnight in the opening days of October 1962, out of disparate elements, its principal task was to defend a 350-mile long frontier in Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA), more specifically, to 'evict' the Chinese from the Dhola–Thag La segment into which they had sneaked.

If 'the luck of the draw', as Kaul terms it, had been favourable, nothing would have been a greater triumph; as ill-luck would have it, it turned out to be an adverse and unmitigated disaster. The debacle in NEFA, as along the rest of the frontier, exposed not only the woeful inadequacy of the armed response to the Chinese challenge, it starkly revealed the poor human material Kaul himself was made of.

The *Untold Story* is an attempt by the ex-Commander of the IV Corps to justify his conduct and, in the bargain, place all the blame for the disaster on shoulders other than his own. In doing so he shows himself, unwittingly perhaps, as adept at the game of managing men and things and only too willing to suppress evidence if it would serve his own selfish ends. A protégé of Krishna Menon, Kaul seriously undermined the Defence Minister's position; an under-study of the Army Chief, he demanded that General Thimaya explain some routine movements of the armed forces, alleged to have been part of an attempt at a *coup d'etat*; jealous of General Manekshaw, Kaul charged him with insubordination! He talks glibly of army discipline and yet no one undermined it more through his coterie of young officers, and by flaunting, in the face of his superiors, his so-called 'special relationship' with the Prime Minister.

J.P. DALVI, *HIMALAYAN BLUNDER*[31]

A great deal of debunking, perhaps unconscious of Kaul's *story*, comes from the pages of Dalvi's *Himalayan Blunder*. It is a first-hand account by an honest, straightforward officer who, in September 1962, was sent post-haste to Dhola, to hold and push the Chinese back into their own territory. Dalvi's description of the river and the ridge of the inhospitable terrain, of the almost non-existent line of communications through which supplies of men and munitions were to reach him is direct, uninvolved, and therefore first-rate. His assessment of Generals Umrao Singh, L.P. Sen and B.M. Kaul, with each of whom he had to deal at one stage or another, are hard to better. Often over-ruled, and at logger-heads with his superiors, he sorely resisted the temptation to resign: for placed as he was, it would have been tantamount to a dereliction of duty, desertion of his men, and abdication of responsibility. Outnumbered and out-manoeuvred, he fought in the best traditions of the Indian army and, until the very end, gave his men unstinting support and impeccable leadership.

Dalvi's narrative lacks polish which perhaps is an asset, but it lacks proper editing which jars on the ear and is a major drawback. The Brigadier is repetitive, and avoidably so. He fails to appreciate that a point once made, and well does not necessarily acquire greater force if it is made again, and again, *ad nauseam*.

NEVILLE MAXWELL, *INDIA'S CHINA WAR*[32]

On the surface at any rate, Maxwell's is a detailed, competent, if also extremely controversial book on the India–China conflict. In the blame game, as may be evident, the (London) *Times* correspondent in New Delhi is emphatic that New Delhi clearly was the aggressor, its stance one of arrogance, even intransigence. Two passages from the book picked up at random sum up the major thrust of its argument:

> Hostilities were provoked by India's reactionary ruling clique which, itself successor to a hateful imperialist regime, had been guilty of continuing the latter's unabashed aggression against a peaceful neighbour.... Worse still at places, Indian troops in the East crossed the McMahon Line into China's Tibet region.

And again,

Nor was that all. For towards Peking's oft-repeated offers to negotiate and settle the dispute in a spirit of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation, New Delhi's attitude was one of arrogance, even intransigence. It laid down impossible pre-conditions, including the ridiculous one that China should withdraw from territory which New Delhi claimed! Provoked beyond patience itself, the Chinese frontier guards fighting in self-defence, wiped out New Delhi's armed aggression all along the 2000-mile frontier.

Apart from a brief 'historical' introduction, where much history is badly mangled, the study revolves around two principal strands: (a) that long before the war took place, New Delhi had set itself unerringly, if remorselessly, on a 'collision course' with its powerful neighbour; and (b) that its 'forward policy' in terms of staking claims to territory which the Chinese People's Republic rated its own was hastily conceived, short-sighted, and therefore bound to end in catastrophe. The chapter that follows, 'The View from Peking', is largely a sum-up of the one that precedes it and may therefore, be regarded as no more than an appendix thereto. The last two spell out, at some length, the war and the ceasefire, and bring to a conclusion the earlier part of the narrative.

The 'collision course' is largely a summary of the exchanges between the two governments, interspersed by some armed encounters that developed from mid-1950. By 1959, the line had been clearly drawn, with the two no-man's lands—NEFA in the east, and Aksai Chin in the west—that the imperial era had left, now occupied by the Indians and the Chinese respectively; each side holding the area it deemed important, both for strategic and practical considerations. This meant, in plain language, that while New Delhi was making good its claim to the McMahon Line in the east, Peking was spontaneously engaged in building its highway in the west across the Aksai Chin, from Sinkiang to western Tibet. In retrospect, these formative years appear to have offered a golden opportunity to rake up territorial claims long since dormant, and yet somehow they were swept under the carpet.

Interestingly, the initiative was taken by Nehru in 1954 in regard to China's cartographic aggression. To help place it in sharper focus, it may be recalled that twenty years earlier (August 1936), the then government of India had drawn the Secretary of State's pointed attention to the disturbing fact that the 'latest Chinese atlases' showed

most of the whole of the tribal area south of the McMahon Line up to the administered boundary of British India in Assam together with a portion of northern Burma as included in China.[33]

Unfortunately for New Delhi, Whitehall ruled that 'unless' the Chinese 'should endeavour to assert their territorial claims' on the northern border 'otherwise than on paper', no protest was called for.[34] Nor did Nehru's claim, when made, avail much. Reassuringly, Chou lulled New Delhi's suspicions with the remark that his government had no time to revise his country's old maps. Here Maxwell quotes, with approval, another recent authority to the effect that it

did not occur to the Indian Prime Minister that the Chinese could with equal justice, have asked him about his maps, which also reproduced the previous imperialist government's claims without prior consultations with the neighbour concerned.

Oddly enough it escapes Maxwell, as also Dick Wilson, that the fact that the Chinese did not raise the counter-question may not have been due to politeness of manner; only a few years earlier, Nehru and India had been called all kinds of names by their media. It may well have been that Beijing recognized that the Indian frontier alignment in the east, as no doubt in the west was well-known, and hence the maps showing it—at any rate since 1939—were beyond cavil. Or was it, as Chou said later, that time was perhaps 'not yet ripe' to rake up this issue?

The 1956 discussions in Delhi were crucial in regard to the McMahon Line. The issue was raised by Chou in the context of his earlier talks with Prime Minister U Nu of Burma. As is well-known, the Chinese Prime Minister, even though unhappy about its name, was prepared to recognize the alignment. Maxwell suggests that there was

...a corollary to Chou En-lai's assurance to Nehru, however, which it appears he did not make clear. While prepared to accept the McMahon alignment, China would not simply confirm the McMahon Line....Where there is a boundary treaty China observes it, but will insist that if further negotiations are required to define the alignment and settle disputes, they should issue in a new treaty. This would, in general, confirm the old alignment but negotiated between equals, would, in the Chinese view, erase the stain of the old 'unequal treaties'.

Paradoxically, what Chou had omitted to say was filled in neither by Beijing's powerful press and radio, nor by any of Chou's all-too-

numerous aides. Was it any wonder then that some of the nuances, thought up later by Lamb, had escaped New Delhi too.[35]

Maxwell's apologia for Peking continues in the pages that follow. Explaining the genesis of the so-called 'forward policy' which he calls India's 'military challenge to a militarily far superior neighbour', he is at pains to underline how very foolish, even infantile the entire Indian approach appeared to him:

> (it) smacked of a satygraha; the satyagrahis would be armed troops, able to fight back if attacked; but the confidence in a kind of moral unassailability which would dissuade the Chinese from attacking, recalled the belief that the British would be reluctant to use force, and that if they did, it would rebound against them.... India's reputation in the world would go with the patrols into Aksai Chin like a moral armour.

Elsewhere, the author alludes to Nehru's 'nominalist fallacy' that by calling it 'police action', the nature of Indian incursions would automatically change. And underlines the fact that the prospect of India being girded for combat had its 'Faustian' attraction for the Indian Prime Minister. The stark reality however is that the so-called 'forward policy' was not viewed in that light either by the Indian government or by the Indian public; Krishna Menon's answers to Brecher's pointed questions makes this clear beyond dispute. The latter affirms, without any ambiguity, that Menon's image of China was 'dominated by a feeling of hurt, a sense of dismay, even of surprise, a mood of disenchantment'.[36] All that Maxwell's involved and repetitious argument—and it appears to be the nub of his entire thrust—is that Indian claims to territory stood invalidated because of China's superior armed might.

To set the record straight, as New Delhi saw it, there was no provocation involved or intended by it, for its aim was to get back or at least to stand by its claim to territory which the Chinese had purloined. Yet it must be accepted that Indian commanders had failed to provide against the contingency that the 'militarily far superior neighbour' might view it as a challenge. Herein the views of the army's local commanders—who pinpointed the untenability of these flag posts—deserved far more serious consideration than they appear to have received. There is a certain validity in Dalvi's assertion that among the top brass, more so among the 'Kaul boys', the rot had set in after General Thimaya was persuaded to withdraw

his resignation. In retrospect, it is unfortunate that the 'forward policy'—so-called—was viewed only in terms of the military threat; its other purpose might as well have been to gain a vantage point at the negotiating table, and this the Peking regime determinedly barred. One wonders how the whole argument against it might have turned, if the policy had worked. It is interesting to recall in this context that the Colombo proposals of December 1962 did ask Peking to withdraw its seven civilian posts from this part of Ladakh.

Besides charging India for its aggressive military posture on the ground of her thrust into Ladakh, the author sets much store by Peking's propaganda about India's refusal to negotiate and by her intransigence. He has held elsewhere that but for it, the dispute on the boundary would have been settled long ago.[37] Unfortunately here, as elsewhere in his narrative, Maxwell chooses his evidence to suit his thesis—a selective use of sources that does him or his work little credit. He cites a statement (p. 214) emanating from Peking warning New Delhi that its attitude

> of refusing to negotiate and trying to impose a unilaterally claimed alignment on China is in actuality refusal to settle the boundary question....

Later, in this very sentence, he refers to India's 'unreasonable tangling' and of the Chinese 'absolutely not retreat(ing) an inch' from their previous stand. The fact is that these two parts, completely torn out of context, have led to the omission of the intervening Chinese argument:

> The only so-called basis of the Indian government is still the so-called McMahon Line which is unlawful and invalid and which was created single-handedly by British imperialism. Such basis has been strongly refuted by the Chinese government in the correspondence and talks between the two countries. Moreover the Indian government attempted to utilize the Sino-Burmese boundary treaty to back up this un-lawful line; this attempt will also not succeed. The unshakable fact remains that it is the boundary line running along the southern foot of the Himalayas, as consistently pointed out by the Chinese Government, which is the true traditional customary line of the boundary between China and India in the eastern sector.

Maxwell fails to bring out that it was only after outlining this 'unshakable fact' that Peking adverted to its willingness to settle the boundary question through 'friendly negotiations' and in a spirit of 'mutual understanding and mutual accommodation'. The threat

that follows is that unless New Delhi gave up its attitude of 'refusing to negotiate', Peking would not budge 'an inch'. One wonders as to who was being 'intransigent' and 'refusing to negotiate'.

The author repeatedly rubs in the argument that whereas Peking has settled its boundary disputes with her other neighbours, namely, Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Outer Mongolia, India (and the Soviet Union) alone remained adamant and refused to accept the clear logic of facts. How one wonders that the reader had been informed that most of these border settlements were long-drawn-out agonies. Negotiations with Burma, for instance, commenced in 1956 and did not draw to a close until five years later, or to point out the extent to which Peking was 'generous' in its treatment of her small neighbours, and that what was vital to its interests, was never conceded. Maxwell might do well to ponder the words of a well-known geographer and knowledgeable student of Asia's frontiers:

> Indeed... by far the greater part of the more serious frontier problems within Asia (other than the Middle East) since 1945 have developed along the periphery of China, the one great imperialist power which is Asian based and rightly or wrongly arouses suspicions among its neighbours that it may again be in an expansionist phase...

Nor should he have slurred over the fact that in return for these boundary settlements, Peking extracted a high price. For, since the unwritten bargain it has enforced 'not merely' a policy of neutrality but has insisted that 'without necessarily becoming communist themselves', these states 'should, in their foreign relations, adopt a posture of "leaning to one side"'.[38]

The plain truth is, and Peking knows it, that the responsibility for the failure to reach an agreement on the India–China border rests principally on its shoulders and that, as of today, it is its refusal to accept the Colombo proposals that has barred the way of parleys being initiated. The first conciliatory step has to be taken by Peking for the ball lies squarely in its court.

A major landmark in the India–China wrangle over the frontier was the *Officials'* (Indian and Chinese) *Report*, published early in 1961. It is widely accepted even by New Delhi's worst critics, that the Indian case is better documented, better presented, and is indeed far more convincing than Peking's. Maxwell however

remains singularly unimpressed: neither side, he pontificates, 'did more than elaborate or sometimes embroider' the arguments it had used earlier. His major effort is exerted towards repudiating—and he leans over backwards to do so—the Indian contention that the 1960 map was further evidence of Peking's 'creeping cartographic aggression'. Maintaining that the contrary was true, he underscores the official Chinese version that the 1960 map was 'a mere elaboration' of the 1956 version which, Chou had solemnly pledged, 'correctly depicted' the traditional boundary in the western sector. It is claimed that the 1956 map

> did not, and by its nature could not, show a precise boundary alignment and the only definitive cartographic statement of the Chinese version of what they called 'traditional and customary boundary' is in the 1960 map. The Indian charge, based on literal comparison of these two maps, is ill-founded, if not tendentious.

The last two chapters of the book are largely a rehash, to quote the author, of 'material from unpublished files and reports of the Government of India' to which access was given to him by 'officials and officers' who believed, it was time a full account was put together. What is more, they apparently trusted Maxwell to do it 'fairly'. Comment is superfluous. At its best, such plagiarized, incomplete material selected with a bias bars both fair judgment and any valid criticism. Of the 'officials and officers', necessarily faceless, who for gains tangible or intangible—favours such a person as a *Times* correspondent could bestow—gave away the secrets of state denied to lesser mortals like the average scholar, the less said the better. After all it is a recognized attribute of 'one of the most open societies'—a category to which we are assured we belong—that to reconstruct Walpole, every secret has its price!

As a journalist of standing, Maxwell writes fine, well-chiselled sentences; his narrative reads well and must be rated as making a contribution—presenting at the least, an alternative point of view to an understanding of events that led to Sino–Indian hostilities. It does so despite its built-in, deeply rooted prejudice which oozes out of every sentence. To sustain it, there is frequent resort to those facts alone that are convenient while making some significant omissions. The *Himalayan Battleground*, a recent study of the Ladakh frontier, and Francis Watson's *The Frontiers of China* are

missing from Maxwell's 'Selected Bibliography'; so too are references to the works of men who had first-hand knowledge of the problem—Sir Olaf Caroe, to mention only one.

One final word. Perhaps our real failure in regard to China was, that in the armed encounter of 1962, we suffered a setback, and a bad one at that. Had it been the other way round, one wonders whether in place of 'India's China War', Maxwell may not have written about 'China's India War'. For it seems that he is dazzled by Peking's armed might, by Red China's military success story, a story comprising some resounding military victories. Whatever India's failings and responsibility for the 1962 war according to Maxwell, he may do well to reflect deeply on the proposition that 'an ideologically aggressive policy' at the service of 'a territorially unsatisfied power' contains in its bosom the seeds of many frontier conflicts. And what holds true in one case may also hold true in the others as well.

D.P. CHOUDHURY, *THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER OF INDIA*[39]

As frontiers go, India's north-east has been singularly quiet, if also quiescent. The Raj called it the 'forgotten' frontier, in sharp contrast to the north-west which constituted the Empire's real frontier: live, active, bloody, with a romance all its own. Understandably, the north-east suffered by comparison; it was neglected, receiving scant notice or attention.

There was good reason why the British treated it the way they did. The 'Great Game' was played in the heart of Asia, all through the nineteenth century. Russian advance, at once relentless and irresistible, posed a threat and presented a challenge. On the north-east there was no comparable pressure of an unfriendly, hostile power: China was in a moribund state. As a result, all that the British had to do was to meet a purely local situation; they did admirably well by maintaining good relations with the frontier tribes through a policy of non-interference.

In the opening years of the twentieth century, the scenario underwent a sea-change. In the wake of the Younghusband expedition to Lhasa (1903–4) and China's re-assertion of control over the Dalai Lama's kingdom, Peking initiated what could only appear as a policy of sustained activity. All out of the blue as it were,

the north-east became live—a source of anxiety, a cause for serious concern.

Understandably, Chinese policy invited British retaliation. Thus in the years 1909–11, there were a number of exploratory missions. Of these, the two that stand out are the Miri, and the Mishmi missions. The Assam Lieutenant Governor, the Army General Staff, and almost every one in the higher echelons of administration were seriously engaged in laying down a new policy. In essence they were groping for the contours of a frontier line from which the Tibetans and, by definition, their Chinese masters were to be kept out.

Luckily for the British and the Tibetans, the political situation in Tibet changed for the better. The October (1911) revolution toppled the somewhat shaky Chinese superstructure in Lhasa, as indeed in Urga (Ulan Bator), with the result that before long, their troops were beaten, reduced to a rabble, disarmed and—thanks to active British help—physically driven out across the Nathu La. The political vacuum thus created was filled up by the exiled Dalai Lama returning to his seat of power and authority in the golden-roofed Potala.

Wiser by experience, the British took time by the forelock and persuaded a by-no-means strong Republican regime in Peking to help sort out the Tibetan imbroglio. Not that the Chinese were not interested. In a situation that had meant their complete political eclipse, they hoped to regain—on the coat-tails of the British—some modicum of authority in Lhasa, if only to persuade a clamant public opinion at home that the Republic did not propose to compromise the territorial integrity of the great empire it had inherited from the Manchus.

The tripartite Simla Conference settled, so far as India was concerned, the north-eastern frontier along the Himalayan watershed which, after the British plenipotentiary who presided, came to be known as the McMahon Line. For a variety of reasons, none of which questioned the latter's validity, the Chinese disowned the actions of their principal delegate, Ivan Chen by refusing to ratify an initialled convention.

Dr Choudhury's work, which represents his doctoral thesis submitted to the University of London, revolves largely around the fifty odd years starting with the official pronouncement of a 'pacific

policy' of scrupulous non-interference in tribal affairs (1865) to the Simla confabulations (1913–14). In his penultimate chapter, and briefly, in the concluding one, he attempts to answer the Chinese charge that though the McMahon Line was valid *ab initio*, it was concluded behind the back of their plenipotentiary who was kept in ignorance. Hence it represented a policy of imperialist aggrandizement by the British and in owning the Line, free India had only compounded an earlier crime against a friendly neighbour.

The above charge has been answered convincingly, and adequately more than once. All that Choudhury has done is to reiterate that rebuttal with added emphasis. In essence, in laying down the boundary McMahon was guided by a variety of considerations, apart from the purely physical and strategic. Thus, such factors as ethnic, political, and religious were taken fully into account. Happily for him, the ethnic and geographical divides coincided for the most part. The oft-repeated statement that in Tawang, as well as in the Lohit, the boundary was based on geographical features as well as strategic considerations in total disregard of ethnic principles, has been given short shrift. The Monpas of Tawang are admittedly non-Tibetan in origin: the three small villages, south of the Lohit were settled with Tibetan immigrants by the Mishmis in their territory. The only violation of ethnic principle lay in Pemako-mostly inhabited by the Monpas—which was left north of the Line, whereas logically, it should have been south of it. The consideration here was mainly political. Similarly on the upper waters of the Subansiri, a deviation was made for religious reasons. The result could not be summed up better than in British Foreign Secretary Grey's communication to the British Ambassador in St Petersburg. The McMahon Line followed, he averred, the 'main geographical features approximating to the traditional border between Tibet and India and the semi-independent tribes under the control of the Government of India, and that as far as possible, it divides exactly the territory occupied by people of Tibetan origin from that inhabited by the Miris, Abors, Daphlas, within the British sphere of influence'. Two phrases here need to be carefully examined: 'approximating' and 'as far as possible'. McMahon, it should be obvious, knew about the compromises he made and was persuaded that there were strong reasons for them.

Nor does the Chinese plea of ignorance really wash, or to use Choudhury's words, 'stand the test of close scrutiny of the maps' of the Simla Conference. McMahon's map tabled at the conference for the first time on 17 February 1914, as well the one initialled nearly ten weeks later, on 27 April showed the India–Tibet boundary, as part of the Red Line. That Chen, no babe in the woods but an adept in the art and practice of diplomacy, accepted the boundary without lodging any known protest or seeking any clarification would show that neither he, nor his government objected to the boundary as laid down by McMahon. Nor would the charge that Chen was coerced or browbeaten into submission stand any scrutiny. He, it is known, made a brave effort on his own to influence Yuan Shih-kai to accept the Simla settlement.[40] Moreover, on the eve of his departure for home, he confided in the British plenipotentiary his hope that Peking would change its stance.[41]

The real explanation for Chinese silence over the boundary was a simple one. It lay in their 'indifference' to the tribal country north of Assam after their expulsion from Tibet. Again, the Chinese claim to this territory had no historical validity; they were never physically present on this frontier except briefly in 1910–11, when they probed it on a few occasions.

The nub of the Chinese dilemma lies in Tibet's status as it obtained at the time. Here the uncomfortable truth which they find so hard to stomach is that at Simla, the credentials of the Tibetan plenipotentiary, Lonchen Shatra were accepted and, as an equal of his Chinese counterpart, he took part in the deliberations. It was with him that Chen discussed the Tibet–China boundary, back and forth for many a weary week. In history, as in life, one cannot plough back in time. Tibet's status in 1913–14 cannot be altered by pushing back China's present occupation of the country. Nor does the validity of the India–Tibet boundary depend, as the author underlines, 'on whether or not Ivan Chen participated in the negotiations' leading to it.

It is necessary to state all this emphatically if only to straighten the record. Specious arguments about the 'distortions' in the history of Sino–Indian frontiers deceive no one except those who believe in confusing the record, or confounding the evidence through selective use of historical data. Nor does name-calling help; if

anything, it shows a complete bankruptcy of reasoned, rational argument.

To this reviewer, the real fault of Dr Choudhury, as of many of his ilk is their apologetic tone, their defensive posture. For them, China and Alastair Lamb loom large and seem to hold the whip hand; they must answer to all that has been trotted out, however outlandish and unreasonable some of their arguments may be. This approach assumes a weak case that is in need of being defended. While by no means fool-proof, New Delhi's case is a convincing one, resting on the solid rock of documentary evidence of unimpeachable veracity. Peking and its apologists, in sharp contrast, do not have much of a case; it is sustained only by documentation that is virtually non-existent.

Some lacunae in Choudhury's work are easy to pinpoint. To start with, there is no evidence to suggest that he had made any effort to revise or recast his thesis almost a decade after he submitted it. And doctoral theses rarely make for good books. What we have is a stilted narrative that jars; a padded research that could well afford to shed some of its flabbiness, its superfluous accretions. The bibliography lists no references after 1968—for constraints of space only two may be listed: Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After* (Delhi, 1974) and Suchita Ghosh, *Tibet in Sino–Indian Relations, 1899–1914,* (New Delhi, 1977)—except for the author's own articles spun out of various chapters of the book under review.

JOHN LALL, *AKSAI CHIN AND SINO–INDIAN CONFLICT*[42]

On a closer scrutiny it would appear that the crux of the border dispute with China lies in the western sector; its cutting edge—that vast, elevated, barren, uninhabited and uninhabitable waste in Ladakh's north-east, the Aksai Chin. As the title would indicate, Lall's book revolves largely around the disputed legacy of the Raj in this sector; in fact, the first three chapters, which span more than half the volume relate to the western frontier all the way from the Pamirs to Demchok. The culminating point, explicated in chapter 4 is about laying down on paper, what came to be known as the Macdonald–Macartney Line by the validity and contours of which the author swears. The brief penultimate chapter covers the ground relating to the McMahon Line in the east, while the sixth, surveys

events leading to the 1962 war with China and its aftermath. And also indulges in some 'crystal-gazing'.

An important point the author makes repeatedly and forcefully is that in building their road through Aksai Chin in the early 1950s, the Chinese were not guilty of any wrong-doing, for New Delhi had no valid claim to the territory. The Raj had, as far back as 1899, forsworn it to the Ch'ing rulers of China, a line of reasoning that follows broadly the pattern mapped out in Dorothy Woodman's *Himalayan Frontiers* (1969). Earlier, in 1964, Alastair Lamb had also spelt it out in his slim volume on *The Disputed Boundaries* and elaborated it further in his later work, *The Sino–Indian Border in Ladakh*, published in 1973. Some scholars have repudiated this argument; oddly, not one of them finds a mention in these pages.[43] Lall's own contribution nonetheless remains important. He has unearthed an impressive array of archival sources that had not been so exhaustively used earlier, to make out a convincing case.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century the Foreign Department in Calcutta had, thanks to the explorations of a host of surveyors including the legendary Johnson–Shaw duo, Deasy, and some of the unwept, unsung 'native' Pundits of the Great Trignometrical Survey of India, concluded that there were two Aksai Chins. The one in the west, north of the Lingzi Tang plains was part of Ladakh, while that to the east—whose configuration was a little hazy—merged with Tibet's Chang Thang and was part of China's domain. The Macdonald–Macartney line of March 1899 was delimited in a note sent to the Tsungli Yamen in Beijing. The note stipulated inter alia that in return for the Chinese renouncing their 'shadowy' claim to suzerainty over Hunza, the British would be willing to barter away Aksai Chin which, it was pointed out, even some Chinese maps had shown to be part of Ladakh.

Beijing could never persuade itself to send a formal reply to the Macdonald note, nor did the Raj press for one. On its own however, the latter made three changes in the alignment of the 1899 line, and by 1912 had placed Aksai Chin where it had initially belonged—in Ladakh. Beijing on its part continued to exercise its suzerain rights, such as these were, over the principality of Hunza.

The author is emphatic that the Macdonald–Macartney line offered the 'best hope for resolving the boundary dispute in the west'

and that, at the turn of the century it 'reflected the actual situation on the ground'. The real reason for not clinching the deal, he avers, lay in the 'strictly correct' procedure the British adopted rather than in the proposal itself which he holds, had 'undoubted merits'. Nor was that all. Lall maintains that there are 'sufficient grounds'—sadly neither listed nor substantiated—for holding that Beijing tacitly committed itself to the 1899 line. In the event, the 'tragic differences' that arose half a century later were due to the irresponsibility of the Qing court in not responding to Whitehall's overtures, as also to the British 'contributory negligence in not pursuing its own suggestions'. In brief, the 1962 war was predicated on a 'lack of responsible statesmanship' at the turn of the century.

Lall's own case on Aksai Chin is simply stated. The real trouble started with W.H. Johnson whose 'advanced boundary line' of 1868 was based on the Kashmir Maharaja's outpost at Shahidulla. This made Johnson opt for the Kunlun watershed as the divide and *not*, as some later surveyors were to do, on the main chain of the Karakoram. The author takes on Johnson for his 'mischief' with a zeal worthy of a better cause. A colourful character, Johnson is dubbed 'impetuous, as opportunistic as he was energetic'. Even so, he was a mere civil assistant, 'an official underdog so to speak'. It has been suggested that while at Leh, on the eve of his historic journey to Khotan in 1865, Johnson colluded with the Maharaja's Ladakh Wazir who provided him with a sizeable retinue for safe conduct, apart from generous supplies of transport and food.

Severe censure awaited Johnson on return for his grave lapse, in undertaking a journey without prior administrative approval. Sometime later however, his employers relented and on second thoughts re-employed him in 1869 on an even higher salary. In 1872, however, Johnson quit to join the Kashmir ruler's service as Wazir of Ladakh, in succession to Frederic Drew. The Maharaja's ready welcome to Johnson, Lall suggests, had 'all the appearance of a reward for services rendered'. Insinuating that in his work—which found concrete shape in the Survey of India's 1868 map and the Kashmir Atlas—Johnson had shown 'more than the usual zeal and had lent support' to the Kashmir ruler's territorial claims.

A little later however, we are informed, that Johnson's was 'a major intelligence mission' in which the Survey of India, 'with the

encouragement of the intelligence wing of the Quarter Master General's branch' was directly involved. 'For it is improbable,' the author asserts, 'that Johnson could have undertaken the mission on his own.' If both these presumptions—for which regrettably no evidence is adduced—are correct, Johnson emerges as a double dealer: for while on 'a major intelligence mission' for his employers he had, at the same time, 'proceeded to show more than the usual zeal' in the cause of his future master, the Maharaja of Kashmir.

Johnson's alleged financial malfeasance while in the Khan's dominion, as well as some apparent discrepancies in his account of what took place there, has been heavily underlined. But his own explanation, which would appear to have been accepted by his employers, has been ignored, making the charge unconvincing. This apart, on the author's own home ground, if Johnson was the intelligence agent he is made out to be, may not his alleged sins of omission and commission be explained away by the need to cover his tracks?

Whatever the truth in Lall's indictment, Johnson's personal integrity as well as professional competence were rated very high among his contemporaries. The official report of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India (1865–6) paid him rich encomiums. His explorations were viewed as being 'most valuable and important'; he was commended for his 'great energy and perseverance'; and saluted for being 'the first to give any account' of these hitherto unknown regions. The Royal Geographical Society honoured Johnson in 1875 with a gold watch for his 'survey of 1865'. Drew, no mean surveyor himself, hailed Johnson for his work and called him a 'bold and enduring traveller'. Although made 'on a hurried journey where to halt was to starve', he laid the 'foundation of every map of the region constructed since'.[44] Kenneth Mason who was Superintendent of the Survey of India in the 1920s, rated Johnson to be 'the most indefatigable of observers' and 'a brilliant triangulator, impervious to hardship and danger'.[45] Sadly none of this finds a mention in the pages of Lall's book.

In all fairness to the author however, it has to be noted that Johnson's 1865 survey did invite criticism. Colonel Walker, then Superintendent of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India—and later (1878–83) Surveyor General—who was initially very

enthusiastic about Johnson's work noted that his report 'had to be recast and reductions of astronomical observations... reduced'. He added that Johsnon had made 'an error in projecting one of his Trigonometrical stations'; that while his observations for determining the latitude of Ilchi were 'really reliable', his production of them was 'erroneous to a degree'. Walker also revealed that he had collected all possible information from Johnson and had helped him correct his map. For a balanced view, the above should have been placed side by side with Johnson's pre-1865 record. Thus in his 1861 report as Surveyor General, Sir Andrew Waugh noted that Johnson 'ascended, camped at and observed from higher elevations than has before been achieved (19,989 ft)'; that he had continued to distinguish himself as 'a great triangulator' and that he (Waugh) warmly commended his (Johnson's) 'conduct and cheerful zeal'.

An interesting fact that emerges is that in censuring Johnson, the author is—without acknowledging it—echoing Lamb who had dubbed him to be 'in a very real sense... a political surveyor' whose alignment was 'incredibly inaccurate' and 'patently absurd.'[46] Neville Maxwell has referred to Johnson's alignment as evocative of the Maharaja's 'expansionist hankerings.'[47] Lall, on much the same wavelength talks of the Kashmir ruler's 'paranoiac ambitions', conceding all the same that there was 'no suggestion in any of the recorded and oral evidence' that the Dogras cast 'covetous eyes' on Drew's 'Kuenlun Plains' or the more familiar Aksai Chin.[48] Whose cause was then Johnson pleading?

Lall admits that Johnson was but 'representing the situation in 1865' when Turkestan was in revolt and the Shahidulla outpost occupied by the Maharaja's men: 'the fact remains that the actual north-eastern boundary was not known at the time'. Years later, in 1907, Younghusband was to underline another facet of this rigmarole, namely that the entire Aksai Chin lacked jurisdictional boundaries. On closer scrutiny it would thus appear that the real problem for Lall, as no doubt for Lamb, was not so much why Johnson placed his boundary where he did but—in the author's own words—'why the Johnson boundary continued to be shown in one trans-frontier map one after the other'? Constraints of space do not permit a detailed explanation. Briefly, the answer is that barring

some modifications and a short interregnum (1899–1912), the Raj as well as its successors had broadly accepted Johnson's alignment.

A careful re-reading of the March 1899 note may also prove instructive. What it offered was a straight deal: an exchange of Hunza's claims to 'most of the Taghdumbash and Raskam districts', for Beijing's 'shadowy' claims to suzerainty over the little principality lying this side of the Karakoram watershed. And to make the deal more palatable, it offered Beijing 'a large tract of country' hitherto 'outside' the Chinese domain, namely Western Aksai Chin. Archival records reveal that the Raj's major objective was to end China's suzerain rights over Hunza, which, it was feared, would play havoc with Indian security if the Russians marched into Kashgaria, as was then widely feared. The Raj's concern, it should be evident, was *not* the merit or otherwise of the surrender of Aksai Chin. What is more, the simplistic explanation which Lall puts forth, and the much more elaborate one provided by Lamb,[49] of the easternmost reach of the 1899 line, become superfluous if it were accepted that the deal was conceived without much deliberation and that all available knowledge about the Akasi Chin, the '80° East Longitude', and the Lake Tsung range was meagre at best.

Apart from the three alterations in the contours of the 1899 line—the first, to the west of the Karakoram (1905), the second and third with regard to Aksai Chin (1907, 1912)—the Raj also made its position on the western boundary abundantly clear, in a note to Whitehall in April 1917. The 1899 line, the note emphasized, was drawn 'not as the result of any treaty or engagement with China, nor as finally and definitely marking the bounds of our spheres of influence, nor altogether as forming a scientific or strategic border'. Moreover, it could not 'in any sense' be regarded 'as a fixed or final international boundary' nor could India regard itself 'as absolutely bound' by a border which it had itself laid down, 'without the concurrence of any other party concerned'.[50] Twelve years earlier in 1905, Curzon, the then Indian Governor-General, had proposed 'to waive our claims to the Macdonald boundary' if among other things the Chinese accepted Macartney as consul at Kashgar! Nothing could demonstrate more clearly the 'sanctity' which the 1899 Macdonald line held for the Raj!

It is pleasant to be able to turn to themes free from any jarring note of discord or dissonance. The brief penultimate chapter, 'Green Mountains', is the story of the eastern sector starting with the Younghusband expedition of 1904, and ending with the tripartite Simla Conference of 1913–14. There is little that is new or earth-shaking in what the author has to say about either. He repeats the oft-stated proposition that the Adhesion Agreement (1906) and the Anglo–Russian Convention on Tibet (1907) virtually threw away the century-old British effort to buttress Lhasa's position as an autonomous political entity. Both were clearly opposed to the sentiments of the Tibetan people. He also makes the very valid point that the McMahon boundary was drawn by experts in the Army General Staff: it was 'certainly not' an amateur effort. Moreover, given that the thickness of the line represents a width of about six miles on the ground, differences over its actual demarcation would have been confined within a very narrow limit and would have been 'easily reconcilable'.

The final, and lengthiest chapter spans the twelve odd years since the PLA marched into Tibet, and reviews developments leading to the 1962 war. Here the author's own rich experience as Dewan of Sikkim (1949–54) and later, as a highly placed official of the Ministry of Defence (1958–64), lends weight and authority to the details of his narrative. There is also ample evidence of Lall's considerable command of secondary sources. As a result, some of the strands in the tragic drama that led to the souring of India–China relations and the war itself, are refreshingly interwoven. Panikkar's less-than-honourable role in laying the foundations of India's China policy in what has been called the 'first flush of cordiality', has been critically examined while some perceptive observations by his peers makes for interesting reading. A knowledgeable Indian diplomat, for instance, suggested that as a historian, Panikkar had a reputation for 'mixing fiction with fact', and that as a diplomat in Peking, he had 'a tendency to believe what he wanted to believe'. Lall quotes a Canadian source to the effect that Panikkar did his best to 'get on well with the Communists by misleading' his Prime Minister back home, while a French diplomat added that 'he (Panikkar) had consistently and deliberately' led Nehru astray about China. The author's own conclusion is hard to fault: the architect of India's own

policy of renunciation towards China was a man of 'far-reaching ambition who had been allowed far too much indulgence' by his political masters in Delhi.

Lall has covered familiar ground about Chinese violations of the border which started almost on the morrow of the much-touted agreement on Tibet (1954). There was dispute over maps, Zhou's smooth assurances during his 1956 visit of sorting out matters amicably, followed by the increasingly acrimonious exchanges between the two Prime Ministers during 1958–9. The revolt in Tibet (March 1959) was a watershed of sorts, leading to the diametrically opposite positions which New Delhi and Beijing took on its significance.

The book underscores the pertinent point that in the western sector, which was the scene of the much-maligned 'forward policy' of both Beijing and New Delhi, the former 'never precisely described' where its traditional boundary lay—a loophole that left the Chinese free to extend their claims on the ground. By varying its lines of actual control in 1956, 1960, and 1962, Beijing virtually occupied the whole of Lingzitang as well as the Changchenmo valley. Both these areas, it may be recalled, had been left to India by the 1899 dispensation. And in a characteristic understatement, Lall rates Beijing's own 'forward policy' as being 'considerably more ambitious, not to say audacious' than New Delhi's.

The study picks holes in the Indian policy of establishing police posts in Aksai Chin as symbolic of the country's sovereign authority. He points out that in the absence of the muscle required to maintain them, they were 'militarily nonsensical'. Lall also makes the interesting point that in highlighting weaknesses in the Indian case—'which has become something of a habit with some scholars'—does it follow 'as if it was a mathematical corollary that the Chinese case thereby stood proved'. He also dubs as 'entirely impracticable' and 'divorced from any sense of realism' the idea of leasing Aksai Chin to the Chinese, in return for a lease to India, of the Chumbi valley. Describing the April 1960 visit of the Chinese Prime Minister when he was 'supposedly ready and anxious' to reach an agreement while Nehru's mind was already made up, he refers to Nehru's biographer Gopal's categorical statement. At no stage during those fateful parleys, according to Nehru's biographer, 'did Zhou offer

explicitly to recognize the McMahon Line in return for the secession of Aksai Chin in the west'.

The author is less than happy about Nehru's handling of the 1962 war. If Menon was a disaster, Kaul was a calamity. And between the two, the result—'a series of horrendous mistakes.' Lall is critical of those who insist that India brought the war upon itself by professing willingness to negotiate while refusing to budge from its rigidly held positions. This view, he avers, 'fails to take account the entirely unique character' of Sino–Indian relations especially in the context of the revolt in Tibet and the Dalai Lama's flight to India (1959), the completion of the Aksai Chin road (1958), and, in the wake of the Bandung Conference (1955), the New Delhi–Beijing 'competition for the leadership of Asia'.

An interesting point made in this study relates to the much-neglected proposal of the Chinese Prime Minister, in the course of his April 1960 visit, that experts be deputed by the two sides 'to ascertain the historical and material facts through joint boundary committees visiting the border areas'. Nehru rejected the proposition for fear it would be time-consuming and opted for 'the more practical suggestion' (Gopal) of officials examining all available evidence relating to the border. The result was the 'Officials' Report'. Lall puts forth the view that any acceptance of Zhou's suggestion 'might have averted actual conflict—at least for as long as the enquiries lasted'. While the end result may have been much the same—a stalemate of sorts—time would have been gained and who knows—the conflict and New Delhi's resultant humiliation, averted? Lall makes an important point about his difficulty in determining the crest-line or the watershed in the case of the Himalayas. For, in doing so he had to include the links spanning the gorges in which the rivers—the Indus, the Sutlej, and the Brahmaputra—break through the southern slopes of the Himalayas. This creates the imperative of agreed processes and joint delimitation of the boundary. Needless to add, only an agreed boundary could claim sanctity, as well as legitimacy.

The reader would find included a number of useful appendices and sketch maps. Among the former are the Peking Gazette memorial about Hunza's tribute and the Indo–British treaty of 1870 with the Maharaja of Kashmir (Appendices III and IV). There is a

valuable sketch map of Raskam and a comparison of the three boundaries drawn by Vans Agnew (1846–7), Johnson (1868), and Macdonald (1899) facing pages 84 and 138. Happily there are not many errors, albeit the Errata may have usefully included a few more entries. Interestingly, Macartney's tenure at Kashgar lasted twenty-eight years (1890–1918), *not* eighteen as has been repeatedly suggested (pp. 8, 78, 194). A future edition may perhaps indicate the source from which an appendix has been drawn (at present only a few are listed) and a short bibliographic note on the source material.

Lest this appear to be petty nitpicking, and one hates to quibble, it is pleasant to add that this is a useful, well-researched study deserving of respect and consideration. One may not agree with all its hypotheses but they are at once important and challenging.

STEVEN A. HOFFMANN, *INDIA AND THE CHINA CRISIS*[51]

Hoffmann's is a case study of India's decision-making during the years 1959–63 which spans at once the period before things came to a boil, the fighting that followed, and the months succeeding the mediatory efforts by the Colombo powers. The author uses the International Crisis Behaviour (ICB) model to help establish 'a balanced treatment of information' and offers a discerning grasp of several important questions. To highlight only two: Why did India and China 'fail to understand' each other's frontier psychologies and strategies? And how come the government of India did not succeed in 'managing' the conflict?

Neatly divided into six well-balanced, if not always equal parts, the book surveys the nature of the conflict apart from its pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis segments. Wedged between the crisis and post-crisis bits there is a detailed analysis of the month-long hostilities. The concluding section closely examines India's decision-making processes.

Nearly all the ground covered in the book has been ploughed time and over again. Briefly, India regards the borders bequeathed by the Raj with all their ambiguities as 'historical' in nature, their historicity sanctified by a rich variety of evidence, including tradition, custom, and administration, stretching across the centuries. The author concedes that India has a 'plausible' case which China counters by

its clear perception of 'strategic' borders. Should diplomatic methods fail, the borders are 'to be secured by using armed strength'. Understandably, the two widely differing points of view on the alignment of the boundary led, inter alia, to the armed conflict of 1962; sadly, the differences have so far not been properly 'reconciled'.

The events of 1954–9 complicated matters and vitiated the atmosphere. The Chinese team's 'inflexibility' and 'sloganeering' at the preliminary border talks (April–May 1958) on Bara Hoti in the Middle Sector posed a big question mark: if Beijing was not able to negotiate 'a minor point of dispute' how would it tackle major issues? Just about this time Indian policies regarding the border got mixed up with the subversive activities of a host of Tibetan émigrés and the far-from-friendly role of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the US and that of the Taiwan regime in Taipeh.

In a detailed assessment of the pre-crisis period—from the Lhasa rebellion of March 1959 to the Chinese assault at Thagla in September 1962—the author underlines the different perceptions of the principal decision-makers in New Delhi. Apart from the Prime Minister, these included Defence Minister V.K. Krishna Menon and Home Minister Govind Ballabh Pant. Menon rationalized Nehru's 'instinctive, often emotional' ideas and acted as his 'vibrant and intellectual companion'; Pant, though loyal and 'even reverential', differed sharply with the Prime Minister both over his policy and his philosophy.

Apart from Nehru's background there was his 'attitudinal prism'—the 'lens through which foreign policy-makers filter and structure information and thereby perceive the world'. Nehru viewed India 'not merely' as a neutral in the Cold War but also as a highly respected player on the world stage, a communication channel, a go-between and occasional mediator, between the two Power blocs. While it would be 'too extreme' for anyone to apply the 'Great Power complex' to India, it should be clear that India's self-image did not permit of its acceptance of 'bullying or loss of territory to anyone'.

An interesting, if somewhat tragic, facet of the post-1959 scenario was China's 'insensitivity' to India's nationalist heritage which contrasted sharply with its overt sympathy for the Maoist revolution. Nehru's penchant for thinking in sweeping historical terms made

him view Sino–Indian relations somewhat 'romantically and rhapsodically' as a span of millennia during which the two had 'supposedly' enjoyed friendship. Later, India was credited with the view that if Tibet were removed as an irritant, and China brought out of its isolation into 'a world of emerging and re-emerging nations', it might act in a more reasonable and responsible manner. For its part, India was prepared to view China as a standard for comparison, 'not as an open rival'.

The Kongka pass incident of October 1959 changed all that, and in a radical manner. In the aftermath, India started viewing China as a 'hostile country' predisposed to harming it on the strength of 'deep-seated emotions', the border dispute being nothing but 'a surface manifestation' of its hostility. Nehru told Chou as much during their meetings in New Delhi in April 1960, insisting that Chinese activities had strengthened 'every reactionary element' in India and the 'forces of tension' in the world. He was strongly persuaded that the threat from China was part of the latter's expansionist policies, 'traditional (and) typically Chinese'. And that these were the result of its growing strength and a Communist doctrine 'more Chinese than Communistic'.

Surveying India's major strategic decisions between March 1959 and September 1962, Hoffmann highlights the so-called Forward Policy in Ladakh. And underlines his considered view that in placing posts in the Depsang Plains and the Chip Chap valley 'no territory occupied by the Chinese was involved'. The clear objective was to get China to withdraw from Ladakh, as part of a general settlement, based on the historical findings of the *Officials' Report*.

A similar policy in the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA) had led to the establishment of an Indian post at Dhola, below the Thagla Ridge. Sadly though, China was allowed to occupy the ridge. In the event, on the eve of the conflict, India and China developed two different and mutually incompatible approaches to their bilateral parleys. Contrary to popular belief, India had *not* spurned the path of negotiation, all that it demanded was that 'the most immediate and pressing subject' was the method and timing of Chinese withdrawal from occupied territory so that their rival boundary claims might be considered afresh, in the light of historical evidence. For China the 'most pressing need' was to negotiate a halt to India's

forward policy so as to knock into shape, through a barter arrangement, a border settlement that would square with the military realities on the ground.

In sum, in the weeks preceding the war, while the Chinese suggested a date (15 October) and a venue (Beijing), India called for a pullout from Dhola, as a precondition. It also indicated that no talks could be held 'under duress or continuing threat of force'.

On the war and India's military debacle, the author repeats the well-worn facts about the 'disastrous' military leadership of Kaul and Pathania, compounded by the unwillingness of their political superiors to underwrite the expansion of the Army. If only more troops and equipment had been available, there would have been no need for India to formulate strategies at short notice, and seek massive military aid from outside.

On Mullick, the intelligence chief, the author concludes that his principal objective appeared to be 'to avoid Nehru's displeasure' and maintain access to him—behaviour that was part of the 'factional style of consultation' that had evolved by 1962. The fact that the Nehru faction's main policy innovation, the forward policy, appeared to succeed, made the coterie 'largely impervious' to outside ideas and influences.

Krishna Menon was to become 'a scapegoat and a surrogate' target in place of Nehru. The destruction of 7 Brigade in or near the Namkachu valley however, 'must be blamed on the entire Nehru faction and not just (Lieutenant General B.M.) Kaul alone'. Too much of 'Indian leadership' was, Hoffmann heavily underlines, 'ad hoc in 1962'. And this, for reasons of 'insufficient institutionalization of the decision-making process and insufficient commitment to military planning'. Had Nehru been more sophisticated as an administrator or manager, he would have put in place a formal mechanism where individual options received more searching evaluations than they did.

Some of Kaul's choices were impulsive; he 'always remained too ready to overdo'. The Prime Minister and the defence minister were prepared to make clear choices under stress, though some of these choices proved to be erroneous. Not so Kaul, a fact that only underlines the importance of personality 'as an intervening variable'.

Krishna Menon was particularly interested in trading Aksai Chin for Chinese concessions such as recognition of India's claims to the Chumbi valley. Of course, whatever the specifics involved, his emphasis was on a truly 'political' solution. And till Zhou's New Delhi visit in April 1960, Nehru would have gone along with him. Not Pant though. According to Krishna Menon, Pant was 'not in favour of negotiation'. And he was hard to ignore.

On the Chinese side, the Kongka Pass incident and the effort to create military realities on the ground (which was what lay behind that incident) were part of a 'mistimed and inappropriate' method of managing the emerging border conflict. So was the attempt to secure diplomatic ratification of those realities in April 1960 when Zhou visited New Delhi. The entire Chinese strategy was made 'even more inappropriate' by the argument that no 'historical' border could provide a sound basis for boundary delimitation. For, India needed 'historical' boundaries for the purpose of national identity even as China needed 'strategic' boundaries for security purposes.

A reviewer who deeply laments that Indian intelligence 'is nothing if not, as a whole, strongly nationalist' with the result that their writings evoke 'little international resonance' has not a few bones to pick with the author of the book under review. He takes Hoffmann to task for his 'sympathetic analysis of the peculiarly unilateral Indian approach' to problems that the world views as necessarily bilateral. There is disappointment too at his failure to make 'revelations' about the manner in which India attempted to establish its boundaries with China. Allegedly, the account given in the book under review 'blurs or suppresses some important elements' of that process; especially on the origins of the McMahon Line where Hoffmann is 'confusing... blurring crucial issues'.

Another recent analysis concludes that Mullick, who had 'engineered' the Kongka Pass incident, had 'a major contribution' to make in formulating Nehru's China policy. For between him and the files pertaining to 'frontier affairs' in the Indian Foreign Office, the British Imperial legacy lived on and 'claimed more and more of Nehru's imagination'.[52]

As to Mullick's sins of omission and commission, it is necessary to recall that in all fairness to him, the Chinese objective in the western sector, as the author heavily underlines, was to come further

into Ladakh than the Aksai Chin plateau. And to establish control 'over a larger area—perhaps all the western sector territory shown in Chinese maps'. Again, China's 'specific purpose' in using violence at the Kongka Pass was 'to prevent Indians from sending patrols' any longer through the Chang Chenmo valley to reach the border at Lanak La, in line with their claim. Above all, while rival accounts of the incident were bound to differ, the fact that the Indians suffered nearly all the casualties 'gave credence to the Indian version' (pp. 75, 78).

Nehru's failures, according to this analysis. were a legion: his 'unilateralism' as opposed to the attitude of the Chinese 'who wanted negotiations and suggested mutual concessions'; his support for the Tibetan rebels, which was 'all but open'; his imposing 'too many preconditions' in spite of China being prepared to negotiate; his 'intemperate statements' about throwing the Chinese out; etc. Victory in the war over Goa 'reinforced his confidence' in the Indian state's ability to take on Beijing.[53] Here too the author has some interesting com-ments to make. For, as late as the summer of 1962, Nehru showed 'renewed interest in seeking alternatives, and was keen to arrest 'the drift' towards an escalation of the conflict. Had the Chinese been 'willing to comply', alternative ways to achieve 'some sort of settlement with honour... could well have revived in the autumn of 1962'. What the Indians demanded, however, was 'too much' for the Chinese, and the Indians were 'not willing to be more creative' (pp. 255–6).

The author, who teaches at Skidmore College in upstate New York, started as a 'fledgling researcher' on this subject gathering his material and recording interviews way back in 1966. His grasp of the subject is thorough as may be evident from the copious notes and the rich bibliography. Equally impressive is the list of those he interviewed or who responded to his queries. What gets one though, is the not-infrequent intrusion of sources who insist on anonymity. There are scores of them. Picked up at random there are three such (ns 20, 24, and 30) on page 275; four (ns 67, 72, 73, and 80) on page 278, and two (n. 27 in chapter 5 and n. 1 in chapter 6) on page 280. Anonymity raises all kinds of questions in the reviewer's mind. Moreover, one would like to know if a person/persons who preferred to remain anonymous in August 1967 (n. 30, p. 275 and many

others) changed their mind a quarter century later—presuming that they were still around.

Another interesting feature is Hoffmann's all-pervasive jargon. The discerning reader may have savoured it in the preceding paragraphs. The following passage (p. 45), not untypical of the rest, offers a fuller exposure:

> Thus their attitudinal prisms contain their fundamental psychological predispositions, drawn from such sources as ideology, tradition, culture, history and individual personality and idiosyncrasy. From the interaction of information and attitudinal prism, their psychological environment becomes defined. That environment includes images of other nations and their role, the domestic political situation, and those problems requiring decision and actions.

A word on the ICB model supposed to 'offer insights' into India's failure to understand Chinese policies and later its 'managing' (p. 261) the crisis that followed:

> The model postulates that one of initial responses to stress is to seek information about the eventual source of the threat. Information search is one of the coping methods or mechanisms that form the decision-making process. Consultation is another. A third is the establishment of *decisional forums* (i.e. defining those who take the decisions). A fourth is the *evaluation of alternatives*.[54] These methods also constitute distinct steps in the decision-making process, although they overlap and are closely inter-twined.

The end result of all the model-building would appear to be succinctly summed up in the last paragraph (p. 270) of the concluding chapter:

> In all the normal dimensions of India's decision-making about its relations with China between 1959 and 1963 were quite numerous, even if they are only partly described by the current list of ICB hypotheses. A study of India's role in the India–China conflict helps us to become mindful of how easily normal behaviour by a nation's decision-makers can lead to tragedy.

Comment is superfluous. Only one half-wonders if the same conclusion could not have been arrived at without all the bother about the ICB model which, admittedly, 'only partly' embraces the given dimensions of India's decision-making. In the bargain, shorn of its jargon and clichés, the narrative may no doubt regain an easy flow and readability in place of its uninspiring, if stilted prose.

NOTES

1. John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino–Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, New Delhi, 2004. Of special interest is chapter 3, 'The Territorial Dispute', pp. 79–109.
2. A.K. Damodaran, 'India and China Policy: A Retrospective Survey', in Surjit Mansingh (ed.), *Indian and Chinese Foreign Policies in Comparative Perspective*, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 35–50.
3. Jagat S. Mehta, 'India–China Relations: Review and Prognosis', in Surjit Mansingh, op. cit., pp. 457–83.
4. John Lall, 'The Sino–Indian Border Problem as a Leftover of History', in Surjit Mansingh, op. cit., pp. 442–54.
5. Maj. Gen. D.K. Palit, *War in High Himalaya: Indian Army in Crisis*, New Delhi, 1991.
6. Amitabh Mattoo, 'Imagining China', in Kanti Bajpai and Amitabh Mattoo (ed.), *The Peacock And the Dragon: India–China Relations in the 21st Century*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 13–25.
7. Sahdev Vohra, 'Tibet, India and China', chapter 2, in his *The Northern Frontier of India: the Border Dispute with China*, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 275–97.
8. Dawa Norbu, 'India, China and Tibet', in C.V. Ranganathan and Vinod Khanna (ed.), op. cit., pp. 274–97.
9. Nancy Jetley, *India–China Relations 1947–1977, A Study of Parliament's Role in the making of Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, 1999.
10. Ramesh Singhvi, 'Historical Introduction', in V.K. Krishna Menon, *India and the Chinese Invasion*, Bombay, 1963, pp. 62–7.
11. C.V. Ranganathan and Vinod C. Khanna (eds), *India And China: The Way Ahead after Mao's India War*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 24–53.
12. 'McMahon Draws a Line', 'The year of the Iron Tiger' (1950) and 'Not a Needle or Thread', chapters 4 and 6 in John Rowland, *A History of Sino–Indian Relations: Hostile Co-existence*, first Indian reprint, Bombay, 1971, pp. 41–50, 51–61, and 62–75.
13. S.P. Seth, 'Sino–Indian Relations', Centre for Contemporary Studies, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 1–33.
14. Yaccov Y.I. Vertzberger, *Misperceptions in Foreign Policy Making: The Sino–Indian Conflict 1959–62*, Boulder (Colorado), 1984.
15. K. Subramaniam, Introduction in Jaswant Singh, *Defending India*, Bangalore, 1999, pp. viii–xxvi.

    The citation 'State was the creation of the British...in India' is from N.S. Jagannathan, 'If you ask me... India is a Gut Feeling' in the *Book Review*, New Delhi , XXI, 9 September 1997, pp. 7–8; the citation from Gen Thimaya as well as the succeeding paragraph are from K. Subramanyam, 'Evolution of Indian Defence Policy 1947–64' in *A Centenary History of the Indian National Congress*, New Delhi, 1985, 5 vols, vol. 4 (1947–67), chapter XII, pp. 506–80.
16. Francine R. Frankel and Harry Harding (eds), Introduction (by Frankel) in *The India–China Relationship: Rivalry and Engagement*, New Delhi, 2004. In sharp contrast to Garver, the Frankel-Harding volume has a number of contributors who offer *inter alia* Indian perceptions of China (Hoffman) as well as Chinese perceptions of India (Shirk) and a useful, and much-needed, corrective in 'Convergent Chinese and Indian Perspectives on the Global Order' (Clod) which talk of harmony and accommodation and a commonalty of goals in place of conflict and discord.

17. Sumit Ganguly, 'India And China: Border Issues, Domestic Integration And International Security', in Francine R. Frankel and Harry Harding (eds), op. cit., pp. 103–33.
18. Sunil Khilnani, 'Re-engaging with Nehru', the *Book Review*, New Delhi, May 2005, pp. 4–8.
19. Subimal Dutt, *With Nehru in the Foreign Office*, Calcutta, 1977.
20. Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino–Indian Border Dispute & Sino–Indian Relations*, Lenham (Maryland), 1994.
21. Liu, op. cit., p. 10. Liu's reference is to Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line And After*, New Delhi, 1974 and *The North-east Frontier: A Documentary Study*, 2 vols, New Delhi, 1979, 1980; M.W. Fisher, L.E. Rose, R.A. Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground: Sino–Indian Rivalry in Ladakh*, New York, 1963; Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers*, New York, 1969; and P.C. Chakravarty, *The Evolution of India's Northern Borders*, New Delhi, 1971.
22. Liu, op. cit., p. 10. Liu's reference is to Alastair Lamb, *The China–India Border: The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries*, London, 1964; *The McMahon Line*, 2 vols, London, 1966 and *The Sino–Indian Border in Ladakh*, Canberra, 1973.
23. Liu, op. cit., p. 10. Liu's reference is to Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, London, 1970; Karunakar Gupta, *The Hidden History of the Indian Frontier*, Calcutta, 1971 and *Spotlight on Sino–Indian Relations*, Calcutta, 1982.
24. J.P. Dalvi, *Himalayan Blunder*, New Delhi, 1969; Niranjan Prasad, *The Fall of Towang*, New Delhi, 1981; D.K. Palit, *War in High Himalaya*, London, 1991. All three studies attribute major causes of India's defeat to faulty military equipment, inadequate 'logistical supplies and commanding system'. Vertzberger and Hoffman explore the causes of India's defeat in terms of its 'policy-making processes'. Liu, op. cit., p. 15.
25. Shashi Tharoor, *Nehru: The Invention of India*, New Delhi, 2003.
26. Judith Brown, *Nehru: A Political Life*, London, 2003.
27. Benjamin Zachariah, *Nehru*, London: Routledge, 2004.
28. Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea, '1962 Re-visited' in G.P. Deshpande and Alka Acharya (eds), *Crossing a Bridge of Dreams: 50 Years of India China*, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 427–45.
29. Jung Chang, Jon Halliday, *Mao, the Unknown Story*, London: Jonathan Cape, 2005, pp. 486–8.
30. Notes and Memoranda, 'India's China War', *India Quarterly*, New Delhi, XXVI, 4 December 1970, pp. 410–16.
31. Dalvi, ibid.
32. Dalvi, ibid.
33. India to India Office, 17 August 1936, in IOR, L/P&S/12/36/23, Part II.
34. Dick Wilson, *Asia Awakes*, London, 1970, p. 83.
35. 'Nehru probably...misunderstood...what Chou En-lai had actually said. Probably all Chou meant was...the Chinese would be prepared to accept a boundary not unlike the McMahon Line...but he would not do so on the basis of the Indian claim...settled in the imperialist days.' Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, London, 1966, 2 vols, II, pp. 583–4.
36. Michael Brecher, *India and the World: Krishna Menon's View of the World*, New Delhi, 1968, p. 322.
37. Neville Maxwell, 'China and India: the Un-negotiated Dispute', *China Quarterly*, July–September 1970.
38. Charles A. Fisher, 'The Changing Frontiers of Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, Cambridge, IV, 3, July 1970, pp. 291–8.

39. *Indian Historical Review*, Delhi, VI, 1–2, pp. 359–62.
40. Lo Hui-min (ed.), *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, 2 vols, II (1912–20), Cambridge, 1978.
41. Viceroy to Secretary of State, telegram, 2 July 1914, No. 342, *Foreign*, October 1914, Procs. 134–396.
42. *China Report*, New Delhi, 27:2 (1991), pp. 148–54.
43. There are not many works dealing exclusively with the western frontier but Margaret W. Fisher, Leo E. Rose, and Robert A. Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground*, New York, 1963, offers a succinct and reliable account with a pro-Indian stance. Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers*, London, 1969; P.C. Chakravarty, *The Evolution of India's Northern Borders*, Bombay, 1971; S.P. Sen (ed.), *The Sino–Indian Boundary Question: A Historical Review*, Calcutta, 1971; T S Murty, *Paths of Peace: Studies in Sino–Indian Boundary Dispute*, New Delhi, 1983, and *India–China Boundary: India's Options*, New Delhi, 1987, deal with the problem at some length and deserve notice. For two overly pro-Chinese presentations see Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, London, 1970 and Karunakar Gupta, *The Hidden History of the Sino–Indian Frontier*, Calcutta, 1974. The same author's 'A Note on Source Material on the Sino–Indian Border Dispute—Western Sector', *China Report*, New Delhi, II, 3, 1981, pp. 51–5 is useful.

    A recent study, K. Warikoo, *Central Asia and Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1989 is revealing about how the Raj pressurized the Kashmir ruler into abandoning his outposts at Suget and Shahidulla and accepting a British Joint Commissioner at Leh. It maintains that the British gave the highest priority to make some gains in Tibet and Burma at the cost of Kashmir's rights and claims to the area lying between the Karakoram and the Taghdumbash.
44. Frederick Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories: A Geographical Account*, London, 1875, p. 332.
45. Kenneth Mason, *Abode of Snow*, London, 1955, pp. 79–80.
46. Alastair Lamb, *The China–India Border*, London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 43; see also pp. 83–4.
47. Neville Maxwell, op. cit., p. 27.
48. Frederic Drew, op. cit., has a whole chapter (XV) on 'Ladakh: The Plateaus' (pp. 331–54) and gives the name 'the Kuen Plains' to 'that part of these uplands which lies' between the Lak Tsung range and the Kunlun mountains viz., Aksai Chin. His description (pp. 344–9) is at once first-hand and vivid. Drew visited these parts in 1869–70.
49. Lamb, *The Sino–Indian Border in Ladakh*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975, p. 80.
50. Deny Bray to J.E. Shuckburgh, 7 April 1917 in *Political Department*, Secret Frontier, November 1917, Nos. 1–67. Lall makes only a passing reference to this DO letter.
51. *International Studies*, 29, 2, 1992, pp. 231–37.
52. Neville Maxwell, 'The Battle of the Himalayan Books', *Roundtable*, London, No. 316, October 1990, pp. 430–7.

    Maxwell is critical of Michael Brecher's almost routine 'Foreword' for suggesting that Hoffmann's is an account of India's attempts 'to cope with China's persistent challenge and territorial claims'. He avers that the description 'must effect his (Brecher's) own preconception', *not* Hoffmann's.
53. Giri Deshingkar, 'India–China Relations: the Nehru Years', *China Report*, New Delhi, 27, 2, 1991, pp. 85–100.
54. Emphasis as in the text.