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CHAPTER - II

ORIGIN OF SINO-INDIAN CONFLICT

EXPANSIONISM UNDER COVER (OCTOBER 1949 - OCTOBER 1957)

One of the basic tenets of the foreign policy of independent India has been to maintain close and cordial relations with China(1). Ever since she became free, India, for various historical, political, geographical, cultural and sentimental reasons, wished to revive her ancient contacts with the people of China. When the People's Republic of China was established on 1 October 1949, India was among the first countries to accord diplomatic recognition to it. India initiated the exchange of a series of cultural and technical missions with China with a view to promote and consolidate understanding and friendship between the two countries. India went out of the way to be friendly and cooperative with Government of China and to plead its cause in the international arena.

India's friendship was prominently displayed during the Korean crisis, which developed in 1950. In her efforts to bring about a settlement of the Korean problem, India served as a communication channel between an almost ostracized China and the world outside. Following the successful mediation in Korea, India made available her good offices to China at the Conference on Indo-China, held in Geneva in the summer of 1954.

In September 1951, India declined to attend the Conference at San Francisco for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan because China was not invited to it. At a time, when to a large number of countries, Communist China appeared to be a pariah, it was India which projected China and its leader Chou En-lai before the world community at the 29-nation Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung (Indonesia) in April 1955 and made them acceptable to the countries of Asia and Africa(2).

India had been incessantly striving and vigorously pressing from 1950 onwards to secure representation for the People's Republic of China in the UNO by unseating the Formosa-based Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-Shek. Unmindful of the annoyance of many Western democracies, India stood firmly by her belief that for the sake of stability in Asia and the world a global body like UNO should not exclude so large a country as China.

India also took initiative to enter into negotiations with China on the question of Tibet, hoping that a settlement of all outstanding issues inherited from the past would further strengthen the friendship between India and China. The outcome was the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet and India. The agreement was signed on 29 April 1954 and ratified on 3 June 1954. It was the much talked about 'Panch Sheel' agreement which incorporated the Five Principles of Co-existence which, it was hoped, would guide the relations not only between the two countries but also between other countries. As a gesture of goodwill India, under that Agreement, relinquished all the extra-territorial rights in Tibet exercised by the British Government in India under the Treaty of 1904, and recognised that Tibet was a region of China. The acceptance of the legality of annexation of Tibet by China was, according to Indian way of thinking, a step that would greatly contribute to forging truly close and friendly relations with China.

But to all that India had been doing to cultivate friendly relations with China, the latter responded with a policy of duplicity. While hatching covertly plans to grab Indian territory, it professed aloud friendship with India. This Chinese policy of duplicity, with some differences of emphasis here or there, marked its attitude towards India since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

In the early 1950's signs were discernible that China coveted vast territories of other countries including India and several south and south-east Asian nations(3). With a strong Soviet Union to the north and north-west and the Pacific Ocean to the east, south appeared to be the only direction towards which China could plan to expand. The annexation of Tibet would have been the first essential step in pursuit of that aim. That step, in the Chinese way of thinking, would also have ensured security of its southern and south-western flanks. Consequently the Chinese Army entered into Tibet in October 1950. The forcible occupation of Tibet added strategic dimensions to the expansionist ambitions of Beijing.

It might have been realised that the road connecting eastern Tibet to China could not stand the stress and strain of an emergency. For complete subjugation of Tibet and total elimination of Tibetan resistance, Lhasa must be connected with Beijing through another and safer route. A road connecting western Tibet and Sinkiang could be the most plausible alternative. Such a road could make both Sinkiang and

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Tibet mutually supporting from military point of view. The least difficult route for a road linking Sinkiang with Tibet could be through the Aksai Chin area of the Ladakh region of Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. With that long-term perspective in mind, the Chinese started surveying the area some time in October 1951 for constructing such a road. The alignment selected was "along an old silk route which existed part of the way"(4). The fact that the Aksai plateau was totally uninhabited helped the Chinese in keeping their road-building activity unnoticed. Besides, the Government of China also openly swore by friendship with India and maintained a low profile so as not to arouse the suspicions of the Government of India about its surreptitious road building activity through a part of India.

This was the situation when the Government of India took initiative to enter into negotiations with China on the question of Tibet and concluded the Agreement of 1954. No doubt, to India, wedded to democracy and anti-imperialism, extra-territorial rights and privileges in Tibet were anathema. But their renunciation under the 1954 Agreement was motivated also by a desire to express goodwill and friendship for China and to convince it that India entertained no hostile designs against it(5).

But events showed soon that while India adhered to the 'Panch Sheel' as a code of international behaviour, China treated them merely as a temporary device of diplomacy.

The People's Republic of China, well aware of the traditionally and customarily delimited and accepted Indo-Tibetan border, did not, in the beginning, question its alignment. Sometime in August 1950, the Chinese expressed their gratification over the Government of India's desire "to stabilize the Chinese-Indian border" and the Government of India replied that "the recognised boundary between India and Tibet should remain inviolate"(6). To leave no room for doubt anywhere, Prime Minister Nehru, while referring to the Indo-Tibetan boundary in the Eastern Sector, had declared in Lok Sabha on 20 November 1950: "Our maps show that the McMahon Line is our boundary and that is our boundary - map or no map. That fact remains and we stand by that boundary and we will not allow anybody to come across that boundary"(7). This definite declaration of policy was not questioned by the Chinese authorities. On various occasions in 1951 and 1952, Indian interests in Tibet were discussed, but the Chinese Government did not suggest that there was any frontier issue to be negotiated. In fact, Mr. Chou En-lai, in an informal conversation with the

Indian Ambassador, K.M. Panikkar, on 27 September 1951, expressed his anxiety to safeguard in every way Indian interests in Tibet, on which matter "there was no territorial dispute or controversy between India and China"(8). In the same conversation, the Chinese Premier had also suggested that the question of stabilization of the Tibetan frontier be taken up for discussion at the earliest. But neither India nor China followed it up(9).

In 1952, Girija Shanker Bajpai, who was then Governor of Bombay after retiring as Secretary General in Ministry of External Affairs, did write to the Ministry to raise the question of the McMahon Line with the Chinese Government. But, in view of the declared stand of the Government of India on the issue as also projected in the 20 November 1950 statement of Prime Minister Nehru in Lok Sabha, to which the Government of China had neither protested nor shown disagreement with, the Government of India did not consider it necessary to raise on their own the specific issue of McMahon Line with the Chinese Government. For the same reasons they did not accept Mr. Bajpai's alternative suggestion that India should inform China that she regarded McMahon Line as the boundary and then let Beijing agree to it or dispute it(10). The Indo-Tibetan border issue did not come up during negotiations for a trade treaty.

In the early 1950's two issues did come up which could have cast a shadow on Sino-Indian relations. The first, issue was the forcible subjugation of Tibet by China which had caused great pain to India. India did register friendly protest with China against suppression of human rights and autonomy of the Tibetans. In response, China gave assurances that the autonomy of Tibet would be preserved. India accepted that assurance at its face value(11). She even told the Security Council, when it was discussing the Tibetan complaint, that China had assured India that it would not use force in making settlement with the Tibetan people. The Security Council then dropped the discussion(12) and the matter rested there.

The second issue that intrigued India during early years of 1950's was the cartographic aggression which China had been committing on India. Some Chinese maps in circulation showed about 93,240 sq km (36,000 sq miles) of territory on the north-eastern frontier of India and about 31,080 sq km (12,000 sq miles) in north-eastern Ladakh as being within China. When Prime Minister Nehru visited China in October 1954, he brought to the notice of the Chinese Government the discrepancies between Indian and Chinese maps. He said that this was presumably by

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error; so far as India was concerned, her boundaries were clear, well-known and not a matter of argument. Mr. Chou En-lai, in reply, sought to treat those Chinese maps as of little significance. He said that the maps were reproductions of old Kuomintang maps and that the People's Government had had no time to revise them(13). But Chou En-lai did not assert any claim based on those maps. During his visit to India in November 1956, Chou En-lai repeated assurance to the same effect. India accepted those assurances in good faith.

The signing of the Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet in 1954 was an occasion when the Chinese Government could obviously have raised any question regarding Tibet's frontier with India. But it did not say anything to suggest that it had any doubts about the frontier. On the contrary, China had obligated itself, as did India, to respect the other's territorial integrity. China solemnly accepted this commitment fully aware that the area south of the McMahon Line was considered Indian territory, as stated clearly by Prime Minister Nehru himself in Parliament as early as 1950.

But once the Agreement of 1954 was concluded, China had gained from India all that it could wish for. India had recognised Tibet as a region of China and she had given up all the rights in Tibet which she had inherited from the British Government of India. The Agreement had served the Chinese purpose and it could now ignore the Agreement itself.

By that time, the Korean crisis was over. China had considerably strengthened its hold over Tibet for which juridical sanction, too, had been secured under the Agreement of 1954. China, therefore, did not feel constrained thereafter in projecting its territorial designs against India. The ink on the Agreement had hardly dried when China, in utter disregard to the provisions of the Agreement, began to question the validity of the alignment of border with India.

Within a few weeks of Chou En-lai's visit to India, on 17 July 1954 the Chinese launched a protest(14) against presence of Indian troops in Barahoti (which they called Wu-Je), three kilometres south of a border pass, Tun Jun La, in Uttar Pradesh. This was the first time that the Government of China had laid claim to any part of Indian territory formally.

The Government of India thought that the claim to Barahoti was made by the Chinese in ignorance, particularly as they did not seem to be aware of its

exact location. India, accordingly gave a note on 27 August 1954(15) pointing out that there was no question of violation of Tibetan territory since Barahoti was south of the Niti Pass (one of the six border passes mentioned in the Agreement of April 1954) and inside Indian territory. India, on the other hand, protested against an attempt by the Chinese officials to cross into Barahoti.

In June 1955, Chinese troops camped on Barahoti plain, and in September, they even trespassed 16 km south of Niti Pass to Damzan and threatened an Indian detachment(16). In April 1956, an armed Chinese party of twelve, including an officer, intruded into the Nilang-Jadhang area in Uttar Pradesh(17). In September 1956, three intrusions by Chinese troops took place across the Shipki Pass into Himachal Pradesh. In the first incident, on 1 September 1956, about 10 Chinese soldiers entered the Indian side of the Shipki La and took up positions about 400 metres from Hupsang Khad. But they withdrew when Indian policemen pointed out to their leader that the Indian territory extended upto the Pass(18). On 10 September 1956, a Chinese party of about ten soldiers was again sighted on the Indian side of the Shipki La. The Indian patrol signalled the Chinese to withdraw, but instead of withdrawing they pelted stones on Indian policemen and threatened to use grenades. In spite of reminders by the Indians that the border was situated at the Shipki La, the Chinese troops remained there at least till 12 September 1956(19). In the third incident, an Indian BSF patrol party came face to face with twenty Chinese troops near Hupsang Khad, a little over six kilometres from Shipki La on the Indian side. The Indian Commanding Officer asked the Chinese to withdraw. But he replied that he had instructions to patrol upto Hupsang Khad and threatened to use arms if the Indians tried to proceed towards the Shipki Pass(20). Since 1956, Chinese soldiers had been making annual incursions into the Kaurik area, situated in the Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh(21). The Indian Government protested against these encroachments; which all took place in the central sector of the India-China border, south of the border passes recognised as such in the Agreement of 1954. The Chinese Government either claimed that those places were in Chinese territory or denied that there had been any intrusion. These exchanges were in friendly diplomatic language.

In August and September 1956 clear evidence of trespass and intrusions of Chinese was found in the Lanak La area of Ladakh(22).

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In the winter of 1956, Chou En-lai visited Delhi again. During the talks which took place between the two Prime Ministers in November 1956 and particularly in January 1957, when the Chinese Premier visited again, it was decided that while there were no disputes regarding the border, there were certain petty problems which should be settled amicably by the representatives of the two Governments. Chou En-lai had told Nehru(23) that in the case of Burma, the Government of China had accepted the boundary defined in 1914 (when Burma was part of Britain's Indian Empire); he added the Chinese Government proposed to recognise the McMahon Line in the case of India, and that he would consult the Tibetan authorities in this regard.

Notwithstanding the indication given by Chou En-lai that China would recognise the McMahon Line, Chinese troops intruded into Walong in Lohit Frontier Division of NEFA in October 1957. In the same year Chinese survey parties entered the division several times(24).

Meanwhile, the preliminary survey work on the planned Tibet-Sinkiang road having been completed by the mid-1950's, China started constructing motorable road in summer of 1955. The highway ran over 160 km across the Aksai Chin region of north-east Ladakh(25). It was completed in the second half of 1957. Arterial roads connecting the highway with Tibet were also laid. On 6 October 1957, the Sinkiang-Tibet road was formally opened with a ceremony at Gartok and twelve trucks on a trial run from Yarkand reached Gartok. In January 1958, the New China News Agency (NCNA) reported that the Sinkiang-Tibet highway had been opened two months earlier and the road was being fully utilised(26).

THE MASK IS OFF: (NOVEMBER 1957 - OCTOBER 1959)

The construction of the Tibet-Sinkiang road marked a turning point in the Sino-Indian relations. Chinese were now in occupation of a large part of the Aksai plateau, east of the highway. The network of arterial roads from the mainland China to Tibet and many radial roads from Tibet towards the frontiers of India, Nepal and Bhutan had been laid by that time. As a result, the lines of communication to and from Tibet were firm and secure, facilitating thereby complete control of Tibet by China. Having consolidated its position strategically, China no longer felt obliged to pursue its expansionist goals under cover. It could come out with territorial claims against India openly.

From 1958 onwards, the Government of China began to shed the element of duplicity in its dealings with India. Henceforth, by calculated aggressive moves, China went on occupying coveted Indian territory and consolidating its position there. In the meantime, an apparently reasonable but in reality an assertive, stubborn and aggressive attitude towards India was adopted. The degree of reasonableness in the Chinese attitude was to decrease and aggressive activities were to increase in proportion to the consolidation of the Chinese hold over occupied Indian territory.

The disclosure about China having covertly constructed a road across the Indian territory of Aksai Chin had come as rude shock to India. It is generally believed that the Indian Government did not come to know of the building of this road as Indian forward posts in this inhospitable and uninhabited region were far behind the map-marked boundary. The area was not even patrolled, and no reconnaissance parties were sent to the area either(27). Evidence is available to show that the Government of India were posted about the road-building activity of the Chinese much before(28), but they do not seem to have attached much importance to it(29). The Government of India took serious notice of it, when the Indian Ambassador in China informed them after the Chinese Press had announced its completion.

In order to ascertain the exact alignment of the road before sending a protest to China, two reconnaissance-cum-survey parties were sent out in the summer of 1958; an army party under Lt Iyengar towards the north and an Indo Tibetan Border Police party under Karam Singh, Dy SP, towards the southern extremity of the road(30). It took some time for the police party to return, as the route was long and arduous one. The army party did not return because they had been arrested by the Chinese and were released two months later. From the police party, it was learnt that a part of the Tibet-Sinkiang highway was definitely in Indian territory. It cut across Indian territory from Haji Langar in the north to Amtogar in the south(31). The Indian Government, thereupon, gave a note on 18 October 1958(32), protesting against the serious and continuous occupation of Indian territory which the road-building implied. In the note a request was also made to the Chinese Government to convey any information about the missing Army patrol and to assist in its return. China gave a brusque reply to India's protest, on 3 November 1958, saying that Indian armed personnel unlawfully intruded into Chinese territory and, as such, they had been detained but deported subsequently on 22 October. The Chinese also claimed the area

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through which Sinkiang-Tibet highway passed as belonging entirely to China(33). A note expressing surprise at the Chinese contention was presented by the Government of India to Beijing on 8 November 1958(34), but it remained unanswered despite subsequent reminders.

While India was still planning how to react to the construction of the highway by China through Indian territory, China Pictorial, a Chinese official publication, in July 1958, came out with a map of China which showed the whole of NEFA except Tirap Frontier Division, large areas of Ladakh, considerable areas in Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh and even large areas of eastern and north-western Bhutan as part of China. The publication of this map in an official Chinese journal clearly meant that in China's view, "the time was ripe for showing its teeth"(35). When the Indian Government drew the attention of the Chinese to that map and politely pointed out that sufficient time had, by now, elapsed since the new Chinese Government was established for them to correct the old maps(36), the Chinese Government repeated their earlier explanation that it was the reprint of old maps published before 1949. But this time, significantly, they said blandly that they had not yet undertaken a survey of their boundaries, nor consulted the countries concerned and they would not make changes in the boundary on their own(37). The Chinese reply left no doubt that the Chinese regarded the boundary between India and China an open issue which should be the subject of discussions(38). Thereupon, Nehru, in a letter of 14 December 1958, to the Chinese Prime Minister, pointed out that this suggestion could never be accepted by India. "There can be no question of these large parts of India being anything but India and there is no dispute about them. I do not know what kind of surveys can affect these well-known and fixed boundaries"(39).

Chou En-lai replied to the letter of Nehru on 23 January 1959. The letter(40) repudiated the traditional boundary between the two countries which had been well-recognised by both sides for centuries: Going back on all the assurances and violating the Agreement of 1954, China, thus, disputed the validity of India's northern borders and suggested that the boundary should be determined after surveys and mutual consultations, and till then the two sides should maintain status quo, thereby implying that China should not be questioned about illegal occupation of Indian territory.

In his letter Chou had admitted that the border question was not raised in 1954, but offered the

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ominous explanation: "This was because conditions were not yet ripe for its settlement and the Chinese side, on its part, had had no time to study the question(41).

One could naturally ask, what then was the purpose of China agreeing to respect India's territorial integrity under the 1954 Agreement if it had doubts as to what were the territorial limits of India. It was strange, to say the least, for any country to keep its territorial claims against another country undisclosed, profess friendship and harmony, and then at its own convenience advance claims when it considered the time was ripe.

Nehru in his reply of 22 March 1959(42), again pointed out that the boundary as shown by India on her official maps was not only based on natural geographical features but coincided with tradition and over a large part was confirmed by international agreements. But India's arguments proved to be of no avail.

The Government of China, while extending excuses for the continuing cartographic aggression against India, were, at the same time, increasing their intrusions into Indian territory and occupying it in order to make it a fait accompli.

In June 1958, Chinese crossed into Indian territory and visited Khurnak Fort, well inside Ladakh and occupied it(43). Using Khurnak Fort as a military base the Chinese, later on, established posts at Spanggur(44) and Digra(45).

On 28 September 1958, a Chinese armed party intruded into the Di Chu valley of the Lohit Frontier Division and advanced up to Jachap. Although some excuse or other was offered for such intrusions(46), their purpose, which obviously was to know the terrain and reconnoitre the ground(47), had been served.

In October 1958 they intruded into Sangcha Malla, a little over three kilometres south of the border, and Lapthal, about ten kilometres south, in the Central Sector and then established outposts at those two places(48).

At the end of October 1958, an aircraft approaching from Tibet flew over the Spiti valley, and from 29 October to 1 November there were four such violations of Indian air space in the Chini area of Himachal Pradesh by aircraft coming from North and North-East(49).

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The Khampa rebellion in the north-eastern areas of Tibet against Chinese occupation had, by early 1959, spread into central and southern Tibet. Fierce armed clashes were taking place between the Chinese troops and pro-Dalai Lama Tibetan fighters. Thousands of Tibetan refugees had crossed into India. The Chinese, it is claimed, then hatched a conspiracy to kidnap the Dalai Lama and then to crush Tibetan resistance. The plan was foiled by the escape of Dalai Lama in disguise from Lhasa on 17 March 1959. After a most hazardous journey, the Dalai Lama reached India on 31 March 1959, where he was granted political asylum. The grant of asylum to the Dalai Lama and his followers by India was on the condition that they would not engage themselves in political activities(50). This development enraged the Chinese, although they themselves had given asylum to many political activists from Nepal, Malaysia, Thailand, Burma, etc.

China expressed its great displeasure at the asylum and warm reception the Dalai Lama and his followers received in India. The Chinese considered it improper and unfriendly for Nehru to arrange a welcome for, and to pay a personal visit to the Dalai Lama at Mussoorie in April 1959. The Chinese Government, in a long statement on 16 May 1959(51) - worded in a language which was "discourteous and unbecoming even if it were addressed to a hostile country"(52) - protested against the widespread expression of sympathy with the Tibetan cause by public, Press and Parliament in India. The Government of India, while rejecting the Chinese complaint, reminded the Chinese that "in India, unlike China, the law recognises many parties, and gives protection to the expression of differing opinions and, contrary to the Practice prevailing in China, the Government of India is often criticised and opposed by some sections of the Indian people. It is evident, that this freedom of expression, free press and civil liberties in India are not fully appreciated by the Government of China"(53). As regards the expression of their strong feelings by Members of Parliament against the conduct of the Chinese in Tibet, the Government of China was asked to understand that the Parliament of India was "a sovereign Parliament of sovereign country and it does not submit to any dictation from any outside authority"(54).

The Tibetan revolt and India's sympathetic response to the plight of the Tibetans acted as a catalyst for a rapid deterioration of Sino-Indian relations which had already developed strains on account of continuing encroachments by China into Indian territory.

China now threw all propriety overboard and adopted an openly hostile and aggressive attitude towards India. It got closer to Pakistan and demanded self-determination in Kashmir while rejecting it in Tibet. The Chinese Press and radio launched a propoganda war against India. They started giving aid and asylum to rebellious Indian Nagas and Mizos, training them in China and sending them back for hostilities against India(55).

The Chinese authorities in Tibet began to subject Indian nationals including officials and traders to various forms of harassment. They made every effort to dissuade Tibetan traders from dealing with their counter-parts in India, thereby making it difficult for Indian traders to function normally in Tibet. At the same time, the Chinese also attempted, through a hate campaign, to stir up hostility towards the Indians among the Tibetans(56). In July 1959, the Government of India had to protest against the difficulties placed by China in the way of functioning of Indian officials in Tibet, as also of Indian traders and pilgrims(57).

Simultaneously, the frequency and intensity of incursions into, and hostile activities inside Indian territory, were also increased. Towards the end of June 1959, some Chinese soldiers visited Chushul and observed the airfield and defence layout of the Indian post there from a distance(58). On 26 July 1959, again 15 Chinese soldiers came close to the defensive positions of the Indian checkpost at Chushul and surveyed the landing ground there(59). Chushul is at least 18 km from the international border to the south of Pangong Lake in Ladakh. On 28 July 1959, a Chinese armed detachment intruded into the region of the Western Pangong Lake in Ladakh, arrested six Indian policemen, including an officer, who were on a reconnaissance mission. The Chinese took Indian policemen to their camp at Spanggur, and subsequently to Rudok. The Indian Government protested against the violation of Indian territory by the Chinese and requested them to release the Indian personnel(60). The Chinese reply(61) expressed surprise at India claiming the area as Indian. The Indian policemen were, however, released at Spanggur, on 18 August 1959(62). On 7 August 1959, an armed Chinese patrol, 200 strong, violated the border in the Eastern Sector at Khinzemane, north of Chutangmu. The Assam Rifles personnel at the spot requested the Chinese detachment to go back. In reply, the Chinese forcibly pushed back the Assam Rifles patrol of a dozen men to Drokung Samba bridge. There was no firing. The Chinese withdrew later and Assam Rifles men re-established themselves. Then the Chinese patrol arrived again and demanded their immediate withdrawal and lowering of their flag, but the men refused to budge(63).

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In August itself, the Chinese established an observation-cum-listening post on the hills overlooking the airfield at Chushul(64). On 27 August they hoisted their flag near Rezang La, well within Indian territory(65). The same month, the Western Command reported that in southern Ladakh the Chinese were in Gardzong in more than a battalion strength, and that a three-tonner road was under construction connecting up with Tashigong in Tibet(66). At the end of August came the Longju incident.

On 25 August 1959, a 200 to 300 strong Chinese detachment crossed the frontier in the Subansiri Frontier Division near Longju, surrounded and fired at the forward picket of a dozen Assam Rifles men. One person was killed and another was seriously wounded. The rest of the lot were arrested. A few men who were away on duty escaped and reported to the post at Longju. The next day, the Chinese came again, and encircled the small Indian garrison at the main post in Longju. The garrison personnel had to fire back in self-defence. Under overwhelming pressure, the Longju post had to withdraw ultimately(67). The Government of India sent a note of protest(68) against this provocative aggressive act correcting thereby the untruthful version of the incident advanced by Chinese note(69) given earlier.

In September 1959, the Chinese moved in further into Ladakh and established themselves at Chushul-Rezang La, and at Mandal, just south of Dambu Guru(70).

In the midst of these openly aggressive actions by China came the letter of Chou En-lai of 8 September 1959(71) which was claimed to be in reply to Nehru's letter of 22 March 1959. In his letter Chou En-lai brazenly declared that "the Chinese Government absolutely does not recognise the so-called McMahon Line"(72) and formally claimed ninety thousand square kilometres of Indian territory south of the McMahon Line, apart from large areas in the Western and Central sectors(73) which till then had been merely included in the Chinese maps. Chou En-lai also gave completely upside down version of the incidents in the border areas and charged that "the tense situation recently arising on the Sino-Indian border was all caused by trespassing and provocations by Indian troops"(74). Giving an appearance of reasonableness, Chou En-lai suggested that "an over-all settlement of the boundary question should be sought by both sides, taking into account the historical background and existing actualities and adhering to the Five Principles, through friendly negotiations conducted in a well-prepared way step by step. Pending this, as a

provisional measure, the two sides should maintain the long existing status quo of the border, and not seek to change it "by unilateral action, even less by force"(75). In this way the Chinese Prime Minister questioned the validity of the whole of India's border with China, and by suggesting the maintenance of status quo as an interim measure, he wanted to keep possession of all the occupied territory, to retain a position of strength at the time of negotiations.

Prime Minister Nehru sent a reply to Chou En-lai's letter on 26 September 1959. Nehru, in his letter(76), refuted all the charges levelled by Chou En-lai, adducing sufficient evidence in support of his contention and thus set the record straight. Exposing the Chinese game in their suggestion for negotiations about the whole of Sino-Indian boundary, Nehru stated that it was "all the more a matter of regret and surprise to us that China should now have put forth claims to large areas of Indian territory inhabited by hundreds of thousands of Indian nationals, which have been under the administrative jurisdiction of India for many years. No Government could possibly discuss the future of such large areas which are an integral part of their territory. We, however, recognise that the India-China frontier which extends over more than 3,500 kilometres has not been demarcated on the ground and disputes may therefore arise at some places along the traditional frontier as to whether these places lie on the Indian or the Tibetan side of this traditional frontier. We agree, therefore, that the border disputes which have already arisen should be amicably and peacefully settled"(77). As regards the suggestion of maintaining status quo on the border until a settlement had been reached, Nehru agreed that "status quo should be maintained" and "both sides should respect the traditional frontier and neither party should seek to alter the status quo in any manner", which would mean that "if any party has trespassed into the other's territory across the traditional frontier, it should immediately withdraw to its side of the frontier"(78). In accordance with that principle, Nehru reminded the Chinese Prime Minister, India had withdrawn her post from Tanaden and requested Chou En-lai that "in the same spirit your Government should withdraw their personnel from a number of posts which you have opened in recent months"(79).

The Chinese replied to Nehru's letter by a bloody incident near Kongka Pass in the Chang Chenmo valley in Ladakh in October 1959. On 20 October 1959, a three-member Indian police patrol party was detained by the Chinese near Kongka Pass. The party having not returned, the next day i.e. 21 October 1959, Karan

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Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police, along with 20 men went out in search of the missing party. After some distance he asked four of his team to stay behind and moved with 16 men towards the Chang Chenmo river. Here the Indian patrol party was subjected to a ruthless attack by Chinese troops, using rifles, mortars and hand grenades. Nine members of the India-Tibetan Border Force were killed and one policeman seriously injured, who, too, was probably killed by the Chinese. The rest, including Karam Singh, were arrested and were treated badly while in custody. In the firing one Chinese soldier was also killed(80).

The Chinese were, however, first to complain(81) about the incident as if they were the aggrieved party. Presenting the correct account of the incident, the Government of India lodged protest on 23 October 1959(82). In response, the Chinese claimed that the area belonged to them and the responsibility for the incident was of the Indians(83). The Government of India had to give another note along with a copy of the report of the incident(84) to show that the Chinese version of the incident was "completely at variance with facts and is a travesty of truth"(85).

Uptill now the Government of India had been sending notes of protest against Chinese intrusions and aggressive activities. Some of these notes remained un-answered. In reply to the others the Chinese claimed the intruded areas as Chinese territory. Prime Minister Nehru, in the beginning, seemingly thought that those intrusions were being made by the local Chinese frontier guards under mistaken notions about the precise alignment of the border and without the knowledge and support of the Chinese Central Government. The Indian notes, therefore, began to supply to the Chinese Government essential historical and geographical data with precise co-ordinates regarding the concerned areas. The Chinese, however, ignored the evidence which the Indian notes contained, made no comment on the historical and geographical details furnished by the Indian Government and sought generally to confuse the issues in a haze of vague counter-claims(86).

All this time, Prime Minister Nehru, had kept back all information about those intrusions from the Parliament and the people of India "in the hope that peaceful solutions of the disputes could be found by agreement by the two countries without public excitement on both sides"(87). Perhaps he felt that the problem with China could still be resolved amicably, and so political passions should not be allowed to get roused, restricting the governments freedom of action.

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But the 8 September 1959, letter of Chou En-lai had made the Chinese territorial designs very clear. The Chinese aggressive activities leading to the violent incidents at Longju and in the Chang Chenmo valley had also shown that China was bent upon realising its territorial claims by resort to force. The mask from the Chinese face was off now. It was, therefore, decided that the responsibility of safeguarding the northern borders should be given to the Army. The Army was called upon to protect the border with Tibet in the Eastern Sector after the Longju incident(88) and the border in the Western Sector was handed over to the Army on 24 October 1959, immediately after the Kongka Pass incident(89).

STEPS TO SAFEGUARD NORTHERN BORDERS

The handing over of the responsibility to safeguard the northern borders in the Eastern and Western sectors to the Army in the latter half of 1959 does not, by any means, signify that till then the Government of India had done nothing in that respect. With the fall of Sinkiang to the Communist forces in September 1949, the northern borders of Ladakh had become contiguous to Communist China. This increased the danger of Chinese infiltration along the Karakoram - Leh route. To meet this threat, the first joint IB - Army checkpost was set up at Panamik/Shyok to cover the route from Karakoram, and an Intelligence post was opened at Leh to collect information about what was happening on the borders in Sinkiang(90). Since the area to be covered by the checkpost was large and completely uninhabited, it was decided to send patrols to the area upto the Karakoram Pass during the summer to check trespassers and detect any signs of infiltration(91).

The way Communist forces had over-run areas in the mainland China and had annexed Sinkiang it was apprehended that the Chinese would soon occupy Lhasa and thereafter the entire northern frontier of India might become active and be subject to dangers(92). Having foreseen the developments, the Intelligence Bureau, in January 1950, suggested to the Government to impose some restrictions and checks on the free entry of Tibetans into India(93). Thereafter, in August 1950, the IB sent a proposal(94) for the establishment of twenty-one checkposts to guard the passes on the Indo-Tibetan frontier, from Ladakh in the north-west to Lohit Division in the north-east, against infiltration of undesirable persons from Tibet. On these, one checkpost was to be established in Ladakh (in addition to the already established Panamik/Shyok post), one in Punjab (in the area which

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now forms part of Himachal Pradesh), two in Himachal Pradesh, six in Uttar Pradesh, five in North Bengal, three in Sikkim and three in NEFA. All these posts were set up by the beginning of 1951(95).

Towards the end of 1950, China militarily occupied Tibet. The geo-strategic scenario underwent a sea change. It was felt in many quarters in India that the new situation carried within itself serious security implications to the areas bordering Tibet(96). There was also a demand that India should militarily intervene in Tibet. That could help Tibet to preserve its independence and nip in the bud, the security threat to India which was likely to emerge from military occupation of Tibet by China. But China had invaded Lhasa with well-trained, well-armed and well-equipped troops. Initially their number was not very large, but by January 1951, 10,000-20,000 Chinese troops had concentrated in and around Chamdo(97). By the end of October 1951, about 1,000 Chinese troops had reached Lhasa and a big number of them, both infantry and mounted, were on their way to the Tibetan capital(98). India was not in a position to throw a challenge to them. With bulk of the Indian army committed on the borders with Pakistan and for internal troubles, no more than one battalion or so could be spared(99). Even if more troops could have been made available, their transportation to Tibet and continuance of supplies to them would have posed enormous problems. As against the Chinese troops Indian soldiers were neither trained nor equipped for operations at such heights. In fact, India did not possess any military option in Tibet at that time due to logistical difficulties.

The subject was discussed at a meeting held by Foreign Secretary, and attended by India's Ambassador to China, Director of Intelligence Bureau and the Chief of the Army Staff. The consensus that emerged from that meeting was that "India was in no position whatsoever at that time to intervene militarily in Tibet to prevent Chinese aggression(100).

Prime Minister Nehru, at that point of time, also found a military response on a big scale not only impractical from strategic point of view, but also unwarranted because he, on several grounds, ruled out any serious Chinese threat to India(101).

However, Nehru, too, was of the opinion that China could now create trouble for India by infiltration or by occupying Indian territory along the border(102). Some steps, therefore, had to be taken to strengthen the security of the borders against the newly emerging threat(103), while the best safeguard would be friendship with China.

Soon a small committee of military experts, including a representative of IB in Shillong, was formed to assess the dangers in NEFA and suggest the places near the frontier at which Assam Rifles units should be posted(104). Subsequently, in November 1950, the Government constituted a bigger committee, headed by Maj Gen Himmatsinhji, Deputy Minister of Defence. It included representatives from the Army (Lt Gen Kalwant Singh, Corps Commander), the Air Force, the Ministries of External Affairs, Communications and Home Affairs, and the Intelligence Bureau. The Committee was "to study the problems created by the Chinese aggression in Tibet and to make recommendations about the measures that should be taken to improve administration, defence, communication, etc. of all the frontier areas"(105).

The Committee sent its report in two parts. The first part consisted of its recommendations regarding Sikkim, Bhutan, NEFA and the Eastern frontier bordering Burma. Before this part was submitted the Committee had the benefit of recommendations of the smaller committee formed earlier for NEFA(106). The second part contained the recommendations on Ladakh and the frontier regions of Himachal Pradesh, U.P., and Nepal, and was submitted in September 1951(107).

In the light of the recommendations(108) of the North and North East Border Defence Committee (as the Himmatsinhji's Committee was formally called), the Government, notwithstanding tremendous problems posed by difficult mountainous terrain of, and severe climatic conditions in the bordering areas, as also by the paucity of financial resources(109), took several steps to strengthen the security of the northern borders in all the sectors.

The border checkpoints were strengthened and their number was increased. By the end of 1952, 30 of those were in operation in the frontier, of which 7 were in Ladakh, 4 in Himachal Pradesh, 6 in U.P., 5 in Sikkim and 8 in NEFA. The number of checkpoints in U.P., was increased from 6 to 14 by the end of 1954(110). Their number in Himachal Pradesh was raised to ten (eight observation posts and two seasonal posts) by September 1958(111). Except in Sikkim where IB provided the staff, and Ladakh and NEFA where IB had a sprinkling of staff, the entire staff for border posts in the Central Sector was drawn from State Police(112).

As a result of the gradual increase in the number of border posts, there were Indian posts practically all along the frontier from Karakoram in Ladakh in the north to Kibithoo in NEFA in the north-east(113). However, a gap remained. In Ladakh border posts were established in every area(114) except in the north-eastern and northern areas known

as Lingzi Tang, Aksai Chin, Soda Plains and Despang Plains(115). Because these areas were inaccessible and uninhabited, establishment of posts there was a very difficult proposition. For those areas an alternative plan of extensive patrolling in the summer was worked out(116).

To meet the increasing demands for trained paramilitary personnel, the strength of various Police Units and the Assam Rifles(117) was increased. While adding a number of new battalions to the Assam Rifles, it was decided that instead of recruiting only Gorkhas, as was the practice till then, Garhwalis, Dogras, Kumaonis and others would also be taken; and they were trained in Army training establishments(118). The armament of the units of the Assam Rifles was also brought in tune with that of the Indian Army battalions(119).

There was an expansion of the network of the Intelligence Bureau. Steps were also taken towards the extension of civil administration in NEFA(120). An Indian official with an escort and several hundred porters had already reached Tawang in February 1951 for the purpose(121).

The work on strategic border roads was taken up and by April 1958 the construction work on the following roads was in progress:-

- i. Foot Hills - Bomdila
- ii. Mile 85/0 - Karcham-Chini-Shipki La
- iii. Siliguri-Gangtok
- iv. Gangtok-Nathu La
- v. Shimla-Rampur-Chini
- vi. Kimin-Zero Camp
- vii. Sadiya-Denning
- viii. Lakra-Kimin
- ix. Passighat-Ledum-Sagong
- x. Margherita-Khonsa
- xi. Mokokchung-Tuensang
- xii. Manali-Leh(122)

While various projects and schemes started by the Government in the wake of the Himmatsinhji Committee's recommendations were at different stages of implementation and execution, the Longju and Kongka Pass incidents took place. Those bloody incidents alerted the Government of India that the Chinese might be seriously intending to escalate the tempo of their activities on the border. To meet this situation, the Government of India ordered, on 27 August 1959, that the Army would be responsible for the security of NEFA-Tibet border(123). But the Assam Rifles border outposts would continue, with the difference that henceforth they would be under the operational control of the Army(124). Similarly, on 24 October 1959, the responsibility for the security of the Ladakh-Tibet border was also handed over to the Army(125).

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. T.N. Kaul, well-known diplomat, who was posted as Counsellor in Indian Embassy at Beijing in October 1950, has come to the conclusion that "on all grounds - political, economic, military, long term and short term, - there was no other policy India could have except try to develop friendly relations with Peking". Kaul, T.N., Diplomacy in Peace and War - Recollections and Reflections (New Delhi, 1979), p.45.
2. In contrast to Prime Minister Nehru's behaviour, Chou En-Lai, secretly contacted the Pakistani Prime Minister during the Bandung Conference and assured him that China did not consider Pakistan's participation in SEATO to be directed against China and it would not affect the establishment of friendly relations between the two countries. Mullik, B.N., My Years with Nehru - The Chinese Betrayal (hereafter referred to as The Chinese Betrayal), (New Delhi, 1971), p.621.
3. In Mao's simile, Tibet was a 'palm consisting of five fingers', namely, Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Assam, the whole of which was to be 'liberated'. Quoted in S.P. Sen (ed): The Sino-Indian Border Question - A Historical Review (Calcutta, 1971), p.171. Brief History of Modern China, published in 1954, included a map (reproduced by S.S. Khera in his India's Defence Problem, (New Delhi, 1968), which showed large parts of Soviet Central Asia, Korea, the whole of Indo-China, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, Bhutan, Nepal and vast tracts of Indian territory as 'lost territories' of China. Of India, the whole of north-eastern region, including Sikkim, NEFA and Assam, parts of northern U.P., and big chunk of north-eastern Ladakh and even the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were arrogated by that map in China's 'Dream Empire'! The map was regarded too preposterous even to protest.
4. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.196. Before constructing a motorable road, that route began to be used by the Chinese on foot or animals. The first mule caravan using this route arrived at Rudok from Sinkiang in April 1952. Ibid.
5. According to B.N. Mullik, this step was taken by India also with "the best intention of denying the Chinese any excuse to destroy Tibetan autonomy on the plea of the existence of a foreign power on the Tibetan soil". Ibid., p.596.

6. Prime Minister's speech in Lok Sabha, 25 November 1959. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy, Selected Speeches, September 1946 - April 1961 (The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Delhi, 15 August 1961), p.360.
7. The Parliamentary Debates, Pt. I, Questions and Answers, Vol. V, No.1, Third Session of Parliament of India, Monday, 20 November 1950, Col. 156.
8. Prime Minister's Speech in Lok Sabha, 25 November 1959. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy, p.360.
9. Ibid., Neville Maxwell, India's China War, p.76.
10. The details about G.S. Bajpai's suggestion and the Government stand on it, claimed to be based on 'unpublished official papers', are given in Ibid., pp.76-77.
11. India also acquiesced in the signing of the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of May 1951, though, according to previous Sino-British treaties, China could not enter into any treaty with Tibet without the consent of the British Government, in good faith to secure for the Tibetans the autonomy which they had enjoyed throughout and to ensure cultural and religious freedom for them. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.605.
12. Paul, R.S., (ed), Our Northern Borders: India - China Border Dispute (New Delhi, 1963), p.127.
13. Khera, S.S., India's Defence Problem, p.161.
14. Notes given by the Counsellor of China in India to the Ministry of External Affairs, 17 July 1954 and 13 August 1954. Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between the Governments of India and China. WHITE PAPER (hereafter referred to as WHITE PAPER), 1954-1959 (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Delhi, 1963), pp.1-2.
15. Note given to the Chinese Counsellor in India, Ibid., p.3.
16. Note given to the Chinese Counsellor in India, 5 November 1955, Ibid., p.10.

17. Note given to the Chinese Counsellor in India, 2 May 1956. Ibid., p.11.
18. Note Verbale given to the Chinese Charge d'Affaires in India, 8 September 1956, Ibid., p.17.
19. Aide Memoire given to the Chinese Charge d'Affaires in India, 24 September 1956. Ibid., pp.18-19.
20. Ibid.
21. From Official Records.
22. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.199-200.
23. Immediately after the talks with Chou En-Lai in New Delhi in 1956 Nehru had written a Minute which was quoted by him in his letter to the Chinese Prime Minister on 14 December 1958. The assurances given by Chou En-Lai to Nehru on the McMahon Line were recorded in it. The Minute read "Premier Chou referred to the MacMahon (sic) Line and again said that he had never heard of this before though of course the then Chinese Government had dealt with this matter and not accepted that line. He had gone into this matter in connection with the border dispute with Burma. Although he thought that this line, established by British Imperialists, was not fair, nevertheless, because it was an accomplished fact and because of the friendly relations which existed between China and the countries concerned, namely, India and Burma, the Chinese Government were of the opinion that they should give recognition to this MacMahon (sic) Line. They had, however, not consulted the Tibetan authorities about it yet. They proposed to do so". Quoted in Jawaharlal Nehru's letter to Chou En-Lai, 14 December 1958, WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, pp.49-50.
24. Informal note given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in India, 17 January 1959. Ibid., p.33.
25. Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China, 26 September 1959. Ibid., Vol.II September-November, 1959, p.35.
26. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.197-198.
27. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 4 November 1959, WHITE PAPER, Vol.II, p.22.

28. B.N. Mullik, who was then Director, Intelligence Bureau, has, however, claimed that he had been reporting about the roadbuilding activity of the Chinese in the area since as early as November 1952. According to B.N. Mullik the Indian Trade Agent in Gartok also reported about it in July and September 1955, and August 1957. The Chinese Betrayal, pp.196-197. S.S. Khera, who was Cabinet Secretary in 1962, too, states that information about the activities of the Chinese on the Indo-Tibetan border particularly in the Aksai Chin area had begun to come in by about 1952 or even earlier. India's Defence Problem, p.157. Also, Maj Gen Jagjit Singh (Retd) informs that in 1956, the Indian Military Attache in Beijing Brig Malik received information that China had started building a highway through Indian territory in the Aksai Chin area. He reported the matter to Army Headquarters in New Delhi. A similar report was sent by the Indian Embassy to the Foreign Ministry. The Saga of Ladakh : Heroic Battles of Rezang La and Gurung Hill (New Delhi, 1983), p.37. According to another source, Brig S.S. Malik, Indian Military Attache in Beijing, made a first reference to the road-building activities of the Chinese in a routine report to the Government as early as November 1955. Five months later, in a special report to New Delhi, the Military Attache drew pointed attention to the construction of the strategic highway through Indian territory in Aksai Chin. Simultaneously, he also sent a copy of the report to the Army HQ. Mankekar, D.R., The Guilty Men of 1962 (Bombay, 1968), p.27.
29. It appears that high priority was not given to the Aksai Chin area. Neville Maxwell refers to a directive of Prime Minister Nehru of 13 September 1959, which hints at the Government thinking. The directive said: "We have no check-posts there and practically little of access", India's China War, p.130. K.P.S. Menon gave another reason, stating: "moreover it cannot be forgotten that Aksai Chin is of no importance to India whereas to China it is of the utmost importance because it is the link between two historically troublesome regions, Tibet and Sinkiang". "The Sixties in Retrospect, p.12, quoted in Karunakar Gupta, The Hidden History of the Sino-Indian Frontier (Calcutta, 1974), p.33.
30. This step was decided upon at the suggestion of Foreign Secretary at a meeting in June, 1958, called to discuss the issue of Aksai Chin road. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.201-202.

31. Ibid., pp.202-203; Also Informal Note given by the Foreign Secretary to the Chinese Ambassador, 18 October 1958, WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, pp.26-27.
32. Ibid.
33. Memorandum given by the Foreign Office of China to the Counsellor of India, 1 November 1958, Ibid., p.28.
34. Note given by the Ambassador of India to Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Ibid., p.29.
35. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.234.
36. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Counsellor of China in India, 21 August 1958. WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, p.46.
37. Memorandum given by the Foreign Office of China to the Counsellor of India, 3 November 1958, Ibid., p.47.
38. Khera, S.S., India's Defence Problem, p.166. Also Paul, R.S.(ed), Our Northern Borders : India-China Border Dispute, p.43.
39. Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China, WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, p.51.
40. Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India, Ibid., pp.52-54.
41. Ibid., p.53.
42. Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China, Ibid., pp.55-57.
43. Note Verbale given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Chinese Counsellor in India, 2 July 1958. WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, p.22, and Johri, S.R., Chinese Invasion of Ladakh, p.32.
44. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Counsellor of China in India, 30 July 1959. WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, p.38.
45. Note given by the Foreign Office of China to the Counsellor of India, 5 August 1959. Ibid., p.39.
46. Informal note given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in India, 17 January 1959. Ibid., p.33.

47. Ibid.
48. Annexure to letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China, 26 September 1959. WHITE PAPER, II, p.51.
49. Note Verbale given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the First Secretary of the Chinese Embassy in India on 17 December 1958, WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, p.58.
50. Sen, S.P., (ed), The Sino-Indian Border Question: A Historical Review, pp.173 and 193, and Kaul, T.N., Diplomacy in Peace and War, p.110.
51. Statement made by the Chinese Ambassador to the Foreign Secretary, WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, pp.73-76.
52. Statement of the Foreign Secretary to the Chinese Ambassador, 23 May 1959, Ibid., p.77.
53. Ibid., pp.77-78.
54. Ibid., p.78.
55. Kaul, T.N., Diplomacy in Peace and War, p.111.
56. Sen, S.P., (ed), The Sino-Indian Border Question: A Historical Review, p.195.
57. Informal Note given by the Government of India to the Chinese Counsellor in India, 8 July 1959, and Note given to the Foreign Office of China by the Ambassador of India 25 July 1959. WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, pp.86-88 and 92-95.
58. From Official Records.
59. Ibid.
60. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Counsellor of China, 30 July 1959. WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, p.38.
61. Note given by the Foreign Office of China to the Counsellor of India, 6 August 1959. Ibid., pp.39-40.
62. From Official Records.
63. Prime Minister Nehru's statement in Lok Sabha, on 28 August 1959, Lok Sabha Debates, Vol.XXXIII, No.19. Cols. 4863-4864.

47. Ibid.
48. Annexure to letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China, 26 September 1959. WHITE PAPER, II, p.51.
49. Note Verbale given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the First Secretary of the Chinese Embassy in India on 17 December 1958, WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, p.58.
50. Sen, S.P., (ed), The Sino-Indian Border Question: A Historical Review, pp.173 and 193, and Kaul, T.N., Diplomacy in Peace and War, p.110.
51. Statement made by the Chinese Ambassador to the Foreign Secretary, WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, pp.73-76.
52. Statement of the Foreign Secretary to the Chinese Ambassador, 23 May 1959, Ibid., p.77.
53. Ibid., pp.77-78.
54. Ibid., p.78.
55. Kaul, T.N., Diplomacy in Peace and War, p.111.
56. Sen, S.P., (ed), The Sino-Indian Border Question: A Historical Review, p.195.
57. Informal Note given by the Government of India to the Chinese Counsellor in India, 8 July 1959, and Note given to the Foreign Office of China by the Ambassador of India 25 July 1959. WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, pp.86-88 and 92-95.
58. From Official Records.
59. Ibid.
60. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Counsellor of China, 30 July 1959. WHITE PAPER, 1954-1959, p.38.
61. Note given by the Foreign Office of China to the Counsellor of India, 6 August 1959. Ibid., pp.39-40.
62. From Official Records.
63. Prime Minister Nehru's statement in Lok Sabha, on 28 August 1959, Lok Sabha Debates, Vol.XXXIII, No.19. Cols. 4863-4864.

64. From Official Records.
The hills in question were about ten and eleven kilometres to the east of Chushul.
65. From Official Records.
67. Mankekar, D.R., The Guilty Men of 1962, p.22, and Note dated 3 September 1959, given by the Counsellor of India to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 5 September 1959. WHITE PAPER, II, p.6.
68. Ibid.
69. Note given to the Ambassador of India by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 1 September 1959, Ibid., pp.3-5.
70. From Official Records.
71. Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India, 8 September 1959. WHITE PAPER, II, pp.27-33.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., pp.28-31. Soon after, Chen Yi, the Foreign Minister of China, in a statement made before the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on 13 September 1959, repeated the charges against India and reiterated Chinese territorial claims. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.239.
74. WHITE PAPER, II, P.32.
75. Ibid., pp.27-28.
76. Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China, 26 September 1959, and Annexure to the letter. WHITE PAPER, II, pp.34-46, and 47-52.
77. Ibid., p.45.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Ambassador of China in India, 23 October 1959. WHITE PAPER, II, pp.14-15. Also Johri, S.R., Chinese Invasion of Ladakh, pp.32-35.

81. Memorandum given to the Ambassador of India by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 22 October 1959, WHITE PAPER, II, p.13.
82. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Ambassador of China in India, 23 October 1959. Ibid., pp.14-15.
83. Note given to the Ambassador of India by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 25 October 1959. Ibid., pp.16-18.
84. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 4 November 1959, and Annexure 19-26.
85. Ibid., p.19.
86. Chakravarty, P.C., The Evolution of India's Northern Border (Bombay, 1971), p.13.
87. Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China, 26 September 1959. WHITE PAPER, II, p.34.
88. Ibid., p.42.
89. The Sino-Indian Conflict: The Motives and Moves in China's Aggression Publications Division, Ministry of I&B (February 1963), p.4 and Mankekar, D.R., The Guilty Men of 1962, p.22.
90. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.105.
91. Ibid., pp.105-106.
92. Ibid., pp.106.
93. Ibid., pp.106-107.
94. Ibid., p.107.
95. Ibid., p.135. According to B.N. Mullik, as a result of the long note sent by IB to Sardar Patel, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, on 3 November 1950, on "New Problems of Internal Security", in the wake of Chinese military thrust into Tibet, and Sardar Patel's letter of 7 November 1950, to Nehru on the lines suggested by IB letter, the Government, besides deciding upon other steps, formally sanctioned the Indo-Tibet checkpost staff and wireless communication for them. Ibid., p.122.

96. In a letter to Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel visualised in the Chinese forcible occupation of Tibet a serious security threat to India and suggested a number of measures which India should adopt without delay to meet the military threat from China. Patel requested for an immediate discussion on the issue and for taking steps to face the situation. For details, refer letter from Deputy Premier Vallabhbhai Patel to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, 7 November 1950 (Extracts) in Jain, R.K., (ed), China-South Asian Relations 1947-1980, Vol.I: India (New Delhi, 1981), (hereafter referred to as DOCUMENTS), pp.29-35.
- Sardar Patel, who was also holding the Home portfolio, wrote this letter on receiving a long note sent by the Director, Intelligence Bureau, on 3 November 1950, containing recommendations on those lines. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.110-122.
97. From Official Records.
98. Ibid.
99. On the question of India sending troops to Tibet to stop the Chinese, Gen Cariappa quite categorically told a high-level meeting that he could not spare any troops or could spare no more than a battalion for Tibet because of various commitments. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.80.
100. Ibid., p.81.
101. In response to Sardar Patel's letter, Prime Minister Nehru opined that "it is exceedingly unlikely that we may have to face any real military invasion from the Chinese side, whether in peace or in war, in the foreseeable future". Prime Minister Nehru's note on China and Tibet forwarded to Vallabhbhai Patel, 18 November 1950 (Extracts), DOCUMENTS, p.43. In view of world configuration and presence of countries hostile to China to the East and the South, Nehru held that it was "inconceivable that it (China) should divert its forces and its strength across the inhospitable terrain of Tibet and undertake a wild venture across the Himalayas. Any such attempt will greatly weaken its capacity to meet its real enemies on other fronts. Thus I rule out any major attack on India by China". Ibid.

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In tactical terms also Nehru ruled out efforts to meet a full-scale Chinese invasion at that point of time because "to make full provision for it, this would cast an intolerable burden on us, financial and otherwise, and it would weaken our general defence position. There are limits beyond which we cannot go, at least for some years, and a spreading out of our army on distant frontiers would be bad from every military or strategic point of view". Ibid., p.44.

Because of the policies of the Government of Pakistan towards India, the Government had been thinking of "defence mainly in terms of Pakistan's aggression" and if China was added to it, Nehru argued, "the position of India thus will be bad from a defence point of view. We cannot have all the time two possible enemies on either side of India". Ibid.

102. Nehru realised that "there are certainly chances of gradual infiltration across our border and possibly of entering and taking possession of disputed territory if there is no obstruction to this happening. We must therefore take all necessary precautions to prevent this". Ibid.
103. Taking into consideration both practical and tactical factors, the Government of India formulated a policy in regard to Indo-Tibetan frontier which envisaged adoption of measures to control minor problems and to insure against escalation of those problems through friendship and diplomacy. Speaking on the subject in Parliament, B.V. Keskar, Deputy Minister for External Affairs, said, on 28 March 1951: "The Government is not unmindful of the protection of our frontiers adjoining Tibet It is obvious that such a complicated and big frontier cannot be well-protected if we have a border country which becomes hostile to us Therefore, we feel that in tackling the question of Tibet and China, we should always keep in mind that a friendly China and a friendly Tibet are the best guarantee of the defence of our country. The Parliamentary Debates, Pt.2, Vol IX, 1951, Second Part, Col.5320.
104. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.122 and 124.
105. Ibid., p.122.
106. Ibid., p.124.

107. The submission of this part of the Himmatsinhji Committee Report was held up to receive the recommendations of the Thorat Committee which had been set up to assess the security needs of Nepal and its requirements of Indian assistance and this latter Committee presented its report in August 1951. Ibid.
108. The Himmatsinhji Committee's comprehensive recommendations pertained to improvements in the fields of administration, development, defence, and security which included the Army and the Air Force, the Civil Armed Forces including the Assam Rifles and other police units, communications, and Intelligence.

For NEFA, the Committee recommended the reorganisation of administrative units and extension of the arm of administration nearest to the border for which a Frontier Service should be formed, and large-scale expansion of welfare activities among the tribal people, including measures for the economic development of the area. The Committee also recommended the reorganisation and re-employment of the military forces in the area, some increase in Infantry and supporting arms, the development of certain airfields and the setting up of a radar network on the eastern frontier. Considerable increase in the Assam Rifles and other Armed Police Units, development of Intelligence network along the border, and construction and improvement of roads and tracks to link all the administrative and Assam Rifles posts with headquarters and increased use of air transportation were other recommendations.

The Committee made recommendations on similar lines for the Western and Central sectors, which included extension of modern administration by the State Government right up to the frontier, the strengthening of the Ladakh Militia, earmarking of troops for the Uttar Pradesh frontier area, strengthening of the intelligence set up and the immediate construction of good roads all over the frontier.

All the recommendations of the Committee were accepted in principle by the Cabinet and thereafter each department was asked to implement them so far as they related to it. Ibid., pp.125-127.

109. According to one view, besides these, the main factor affecting the implementation of many recommendations of the N.N.E.B.D.C. (Himmatsinhji Committee) was the absence of a sense of urgency. Major K.C. Praval cites the case of the Border Roads Organisation which was set up only in 1960, almost nine years after the recommendations of the Committee were received, although the construction of roads in the strategic areas should have been accorded high priority. He has also lamented that nothing tangible was done on the recommended lines for preparing the Army for the defence of the border. Indian Army After Independence (New Delhi, 1987), p.201.
110. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.135-136.
111. From Official Records.
112. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.135-136. This was in pursuance of the policy that "the responsibility of setting up and manning checkposts should devolve on the local State Government concerned". However, in the case of Ladakh it was decided in August 1954 that the Central Government, through IB, would do the job. IB raised an Indo-Tibetan Border Force (ITBF) for doing the job. The Army was to extend various administrative facilities to ITBF. Later, 7 J&K Militia, which was under the Army but had not been constituted as a regular infantry unit, was deployed there to assist the ITB posts. The deployment of 7 J&K Militia was primarily designed to establish our de facto possession of territory on our side of the traditional border in the Ladakh sector and to prevent, by means of patrolling, infiltration into our territory by the Chinese or by other unauthorised persons. From Official Records.
113. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.190.
114. These included the posts at Tsogatsalu and Hot Springs which were set up on 17 October and 19 October 1958. Ibid., p.241.
115. Ibid., p.190.
116. Ibid., p.191.
117. The Assam Rifles was a quasi-military force headed by an Inspector General, who was an officer coopted from the Army. The Inspector General, Assam Rifles (IGAR), was answerable to the Adviser on NEFA to the Governor of Assam who was in contact with and under the Ministry of External Affairs. From Official Records.

118. Praval, K.C., The Red Eagles - A History of Fourth Division of India (New Delhi), 1982), (hereafter referred to as RED EAGLES), p.180.
119. Johri, S.R., Chinese Invasion of NEFA, p.31.
120. Praval, K.C., Indian Army After Independence, p.31.
121. Neville Maxwell, India's China War, p.73.
122. From Official Records.
123. On 1 September 1959, Headquarters Eastern Command were instructed to assume the operational responsibility of NEFA-Tibet border. From Official Records.
124. Ibid.
125. The Sino-Indian Conflict: The Motives and Moves in China's Aggression, Publications Division, Ministry of I&B (February 1963) p.4.

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