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CHAPTER - III

TOWARDS ARMED CONFLICT (NOVEMBER 1959 - OCTOBER 1962)

EFFORTS FOR SETTLEMENT THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS

Though the Chinese Government had converted a frontier which had been an undisturbed frontier of peace for centuries into an area of tension and conflict, thereby forcing the Government of India to adopt some military measures to safeguard her borders with Tibet, India did not give up efforts to reach a friendly settlement of the dispute in a peaceful way.

It was believed that by patient explanation of the facts about the India-Tibet border, China might be convinced and persuaded to accept the traditional border alignment.

The facts about the India-Tibet border were again set out in the official note of the Government of India of 4 November 1959(1). The note stated that the "traditional and historical frontier of India, has been associated with India's culture and tradition for the last two thousand years or so, and has been an intimate part of India's life and thought"(2). While declaring that the Government of India would "resist by all means available to them" any infringement of independence and integrity of India, the note expressed the Government's trust that "the Chinese Government will remove their forces from Indian territory and seek to resolve minor frontier disputes by peaceful methods"(3).

Prime Minister Chou En-lai acknowledged the receipt of Nehru's letter of 26 September 1959,(4) as well as the note of 4 November 1959, in his letter of 7 November 1959. In this letter(5), the Chinese Premier proposed that, in order to maintain the status quo, to ensure the tranquility of the border regions and to create a favourable atmosphere for talks, "the armed forces of China and India each withdraw 20 kilometres at once from the so-called McMahon line in the east, and from the line up to which each side exercises actual control in the west"(6). The Chinese Premier, however, did not respond to the facts and arguments adduced by Nehru in his letter of 26 September 1959 in support of the Indian position on the boundary question. Instead, Chou En-lai proposed in his letter that the two Prime Ministers should "hold talks in the immediate future"(7).

✓ The Chinese proposal for mutual withdrawal meant that, in return for a Chinese evacuation of Longju - the only area actually occupied by them south of the McMahon line - Indian forces would have to withdraw 20 kilometres within their own territory over the whole of the Eastern sector. This would have also left the Chinese in continued possession of a vast span of territory illegally occupied by them in Ladakh, where they had penetrated much more than 20 kilometres at many points, but India would have been required to withdraw her troops further 20 kilometres inside Ladakh also. By this proposal China wanted to consolidate what it had nibbled of the Indian territory. It was, in fact, an insidious attempt to secure a tacit recognition of its illegal occupation of Indian territory.

Nehru, therefore, in his letter of 16 November 1959, (8), proposed that in the Eastern and Central sectors, both sides should refrain from sending out patrols and thus avoid the possibility of border clashes; the Chinese should withdraw from Longju and Indian forces on their part would not reoccupy it. For the Western sector, Nehru proposed that as an interim measure, India should withdraw her troops to the line which China claimed as the boundary, and the Chinese troops should withdraw behind the traditional alignment shown on official Indian maps. Since the two lines would be separated by long distances, there would not be the slightest risk of border clashes between the forces on either side.

As regards the proposal for an immediate meeting of the two Prime Ministers, Nehru said: "I am always ready to meet and discuss with Your Excellency the outstanding differences between our countries and explore avenues of friendly settlement"(9). But, in order that "such a meeting should bear fruit" and that they did not lose themselves "in a forest of data", Prime Minister Nehru suggested that "some preliminary steps are taken and the foundation for our discussions laid"(10).

In a letter of 17 December 1959, the Chinese Prime Minister rejected India's proposal for the mutual withdrawal of forces in the Ladakh area and pressed for a meeting between himself and Nehru on 26 December 1959, either in China or at Rangoon(11). Nehru in reply pointedly asked: "How can we, Mr. Prime Minister, reach an agreement on principles when there is such complete disagreement about the facts? I would, therefore, prefer to wait for your promised reply to my letter of September 26 and our Note of November 4, before we discuss what should be the next step"(12).

It was only on 26 December 1959, that the Chinese Government sent a long Note(13), in which it only reiterated the Chinese stand and mustered such arguments as it could in an attempt to counter the formidable volume of factual Indian evidence in support of the accepted traditional boundary between India and China. The Chinese Note asserted again that the entire boundary between India and China in the Western and Central sectors had never been delimited and that the McMahon line was illegal. Since further reiterations of each other's position would lead nowhere, Nehru wrote to Chou En-lai on 5 February 1960,(14) suggesting that they might meet and discuss the problem at an early date sometime in the second half of March 1960. But he pointed out that there could be no negotiations on the basis of the position taken in the Chinese Note, viz., that the entire frontier had never been delimited. A detailed Note, producing additional evidence in refutation of the Chinese contention about the Indo-Tibetan border, as contained in the Chinese Note of 26 December 1959, was sent on 12 February 1960. In reply to the main Chinese thesis, repeated endlessly, that the entire boundary between the two countries had never been delimited and hence was open to question, the Note stated: "The Sino-Indian boundary, based on custom and tradition, follows natural features, and for the major part this customary and traditional boundary is also confirmed by treaty and agreement. This boundary throughout has been fixed and well-known for centuries. According to international usage and practice a customary boundary which follows well-known and unchanging natural features like main watersheds stands defined and does not require further or formal definition"(15).

Chou En-lai accompanied by Foreign Minister Chen Yi and a big Chinese delegation, arrived in New Delhi on 19 April 1960, on a six-day visit. Long sessions of talks took place. The meetings, however, only confirmed the fear expressed by Prime Minister Nehru earlier that there could be no agreement on principles when the basic facts were disputed.

There were some vague reports in the Press that during the talks, Chinese were proposing "overall" settlement on the basis of "present actualities" and "mutual accommodation" and constitution of a joint boundary Commission(16). In concrete terms, some concluded that China wanted to exchange recognition of the McMahon line for India giving up her claim to Aksai Chin. In other words, China wanted formal acceptance of the status quo as the solution of the border problem. But the acceptance of the proposal

would have been a "derogation of the juridical validity of the northern border but also compromise the territorial integrity of the country"(17). India stood her ground firmly and did not agree to barter away the Aksai Chin area, under illegal occupation of China, in return for China giving up its unreasonable claim on Indian territory south of the McMahon line. Since the Chinese were adamant on their claim to Aksai Chin, the talks were certain to end in failure. However, it was agreed that officials of the two Governments should meet to collate all the historical evidence and prepare a report listing the points of agreement and disagreement. The officials' report, it was hoped, "should prove helpful towards further consideration of these problems by the two Governments"(18). It was also agreed that, in the meantime, "every effort should be made by the parties to avoid friction and clashes in the border areas"(19).

Official teams of the two sides accordingly met in three sessions in Beijing, Delhi and Rangoon between June and December 1960. At the conclusion of the Sino-Indian talks at official level, each side wrote its own report in December 1960. The Indian Government, having established its stronger case, published in full the report of the Indian officials, along with the English translation of the Chinese report as supplied by the Chinese side, in February 1961. The Government of China, on the other hand, did not for long even acknowledge the existence of the report. It finally published the report as late as in April 1962.

The Report of the Officials of India and China on the Boundary Question established beyond doubt that the true traditional boundary between the two countries was that shown by India; that China kept undisclosed till September 1959 claims to 129500 square kilometres (50,000 sq miles) of Indian territory; and that China was already, at the time of the Report in December 1960, in unlawful occupation of 31080 square kilometres (12,000 sq miles) of Indian territory.

During the discussions(20), the Indian side furnished a vast and varied amount of material and fully established that the long traditional boundary shown on current Indian maps was clear and precise, conformed to unchanging natural features, had support in tradition and custom as well as in the exercise of administrative jurisdiction right up to it, and had been recognised for centuries and also confirmed in agreements. On the other hand, the Chinese side provided evidence which was scanty, imprecise, of very recent date and entirely inconsistent both in facts and arguments.

The qualitative superiority of the evidence produced by the Indian side was even greater than the quantitative superiority. The Indian evidence contained definite references to the alignment and to the areas in dispute, and provided the strongest possible proof to establish that these areas up to the boundary were traditionally parts of India.

Right at the start, while the Indian side offered to exchange maps on the standard international scale of one to one million the Chinese side were unwilling to provide map of any scale larger than one to five million. Both sides sought clarification of the location and natural features of the boundary line claimed by each. The Chinese side put nearly 60 questions, to each of which the Indian side gave full and precise answers promptly. On the other hand, the Chinese side, although claiming initially that the alignment shown on the map furnished by them was precise and clear, was unable to provide accurate information regarding the points through which their alignment ran, or even regarding the line of particular stretches. Of the nearly 120 questions put to the Chinese side to ascertain the exact location of important points along the claimed alignment, half were met by blank silence. Of the 60 odd questions that were answered, the answers to many were far from precise or complete.

That the border alignment claimed by the Chinese was wholly arbitrary was also clear from the fact that, in addition to the inconsistencies already prevailing in Chinese maps, the alignment shown in the Chinese map officially given during the talks was quite different in the Ladakh area from the alignment shown in the 1956 map which Chou En-lai had had endorsed in 1959.

The boundary line in Ladakh, as claimed by China in 1956, started east of the Karakoram Pass. It moved in the south-easterly direction, crossed the source of the Chip Chap river, moved in the same south-easterly direction for some distance and then proceeded down towards south, crossed the river Qara Qash to the west of Sumdo and then ran in a gradual arc towards south-east to the east of Shamul Lungpo. The claim line then took slightly south-westerly direction and passed Kongka La and Dambuguru and then on along the International Border to Khurnak Fort. From Khurnak Fort the line proceeded towards south, cutting the Pangong lake in the middle, then passed through the eastern extremity of the Spanggur lake. From there the line ran towards south and then in south-easterly direction where it crossed the Indus, and then moved towards south cutting the International Border to the south-west of Demchok.

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The new claim line advanced by the Chinese in 1960, though started to the east of the 1956 line, ran generally much to the west of the 1956 claim line. After cutting the earlier line east of Daulat Beg Oldi, the new line ran further to the west of the 1956 line, running close to the eastern bank of the Shyok river, cutting the Galwan river close to its confluence with Shyok, and then it ran south-east to Kongka La. From there it ran towards south, a little to the west of the 1956 claim line, passed through Sirijap and cut the Pangong lake at the point where it took a turn towards north-west. From there, it ran to the west of Spunggur lake, and then ran towards south almost along the 1956 claim line, ending south-west of Demchok(21). The new 1960 claim line covered some 5180 square kilometres (2,000 square miles) more of Indian territory in Ladakh.

In the discussions on the location and natural features of the boundary alignment, the Indian side demonstrated that the boundary shown by India was the natural dividing line between the two countries and conformed to the watershed principle. It is significant that where the Indian and Chinese alignments coincided, it was along the Himalayan watershed line. Where the two alignments differed, it was because the Chinese line arbitrarily swung westwards and southwards away from the watershed line, always towards India and never towards Tibet.

Geographical principles, however, provided only the original basis of a traditional boundary. Both the Governments of India and China acknowledged that the boundary between them was in origin a traditional one. But there was a radical difference regarding the actual alignment of the traditional boundary.

It was, therefore, necessary to ascertain whether it was the natural features along the alignment shown by the Indian Government, or along that claimed by the Chinese Government, which had been accepted for centuries as marking the traditional boundary. It would be necessary to establish that sovereign authority, in a form appropriate to the geographical terrain, had been exercised up to the claimed boundary, and particularly over the areas intervening between the two alignments. For this, it should be shown that these areas were part of administrative sub-divisions and subject to the pattern of revenue collection prevalent in the contiguous territory, and that the State wielded the power of enforcing law and order. Finally, it should be established that legislative enactments had mentioned the area and were enforced therein.

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In short, a picture of a legally constituted and effective sovereign authority should emerge, exercising the normal and regular functions of an established Government, not intermittently but continuously, over what was claimed as a national territory. The Indian side produced abundant proof to establish this pattern.

The Chinese officials made a vain attempt to dismiss a vast wealth of evidence on the ground that it came from British sources and merely represented the ambitions of British Imperialism. In fact, the Chinese side themselves tried to seek support for their stand from British official and non-official records. In any case, no evidence was brought forward to show that the British had intended deliberately to push forward the traditional boundaries.

It was inevitable that Indian evidence of the last three centuries, particularly of administration, should be largely British. But for every sector where British evidence had been mentioned, the Indian side also mentioned evidence recorded by persons of German, French or Italian origin. They could not have been impelled by the desire to support British imperialist policy. What was more, the Indian side brought forward evidence even from Chinese sources to confirm the alignment shown by India.

Thus, the Indian officials produced every kind of strong evidence to convince the Chinese of the correctness of the Indian position on the boundary question. In fact, most of the India's case could be proved from the Chinese maps and the material produced by the Chinese themselves. But the Chinese seemed to be adamant not to be convinced. They "disputed every treaty, every tradition and even geography"(22). Under the circumstances, the failure of the official level talks was inevitable. The whole exercise yielded nothing in so far as the resolution of the boundary problem was concerned.

CHINESE AGGRESSIVE ACTIVITIES

It is no wonder that the efforts put in by India to resolve the border tangle peacefully through diplomatic means yielded little fruit. The basic cause for such a failure lay in the dual policy of China whereby it professed a desire for peaceful settlement of the border question while pursuing, at the same time, the path of flagrant aggression. Keeping India busy in negotiations, the Chinese went on extending their occupation of Indian territory,

always asserting that their interpretation of the India-China boundary was correct and the occupied territory had been with India illegally. To cover their provocative and aggressive activities, China kept on accusing Indian troops of creating tension on the border and disturbing the peace of the area.

After having consolidated their position in Tibet, the Chinese intensified their military activities directed against India. The People's Liberation Army cadres started propogating that they had come in Tibet to save it from 'expansionist designs' of the neighbouring countries. They launched a propoganda that it would be in the interest of the Tibetans to help China in annexing bordering areas. The Chinese also tried to win the allegiance of the various tribes inhabiting the bordering areas, telling them that they belonged to the same stock and they would free them from India(23).

The Chinese had started constructing strategic roads, many of them usable even during the winter. The Chinese also started improving communications in the border areas. It was also noticed that they were constructing some airstrips near the Indo-Tibetan border.

By the end of 1959, the Chinese had spread west and south of the Aksai Chin road and established new posts disregarding Indian protests(24). Later they also constructed a road from Lanak La to Kongka La. In the north, they had built another road, west of the Aksai Chin Highway, from the northern border to Qizil Jilga, Sumdo, Samzungling and Kongka La. Another road connected Shamul Lungpo with this road from the north(25). That established for the Chinese north-south line of control from Qara Tagh, Shamul Lungpo and Lanak La.

During 1960, the Chinese turned their attention further south of the Chang Chenmo valley, by opening posts at Nyagzu and Dambuguru. During 1961, they completed construction of a road linking these posts to Khurnak Fort and to Kongka Pass. Yet another new road connected Rudok in Tibet with Spanggur(26).

With the construction of roads both towards and inside Indian territory, the Chinese consolidated their hold over the occupied areas by establishing a network of year-round forward checkpoints as stages from where patrols could be sent for further incursions into Indian territory. By the end of summer of 1960, the Chinese had established a regimental headquarters at Qizil Jilga, another in the

area to the east of the Lanak La and the third at Rudok. These regiments formed a division, the headquarters of which was located near Shahidulla in Sinkiang. The division itself was a part of the regional Army Headquarters linked by road to Urumchi, the capital of Sinkiang. The units of those regiments were being reinforced to full strength and the troops of the so-called frontier guards had already arrived in sufficient numbers in forward areas(27). By October 1961, they had established 61 new posts - seven in Ladakh, fourteen opposite the Central sector, twelve facing Sikkim in the Chumbi valley, three opposite Bhutan and twenty-five across NEFA border(28).

Forward patrolling and intrusions were resorted to by the Chinese troops deep inside Indian territory in the Western, Central and Eastern sectors.

In June 1960, more than 25 armed Chinese soldiers moved into Taktsang Gompa, the monastery village in the Tawang area, a little over 7 km within Indian territory in the Eastern sector(29).

In September 1960, the Chinese turned in a new direction, for the first time sending across an armed patrol several hundred metres into Sikkim, near the Jelep La(30).

In the Western sector, a Chinese patrol reached a point hardly eight kilometres east of Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) in autumn 1960(31). The Chinese continued to patrol the Chang Chenmo valley. It was learnt in August-September 1961 that they had established a strong military base at Nyagzu, well within Indian territory. The same time it came to knowledge that the Chinese had also converted Dambuguru, south of Nyagzu, into a military base(32).

Besides intrusions on land, "aircraft flying from Tibet", had violated Indian airspace 102 times from December 1950 to September 1960(33). Of those, 52 air violations took place since March 1960 alone(34).

In 1961, not a month passed without a Chinese intrusion or encroachment. Those incidents were now, more often than not, accompanied by firing. Since the beginning of 1961, the Chinese had started patrolling right up to the new boundary line which they had put forward during the officials' meeting, obviously with a view to justify their claims on the ground of occupation(35). As soon as the weather improved, from April 1961 onwards, Chinese made further intrusions.

On 20 April 1961, Chinese personnel once again crossed into Sikkim near the Jelep La(36). The next month they intruded near Chushul in the Western sector(37). In July 1961, a Chinese patrol crossed the frontier in the Kameng Frontier Division in the Eastern sector and penetrated more than a kilometre west of Chemokarpola(38). In September, the Chinese crossed into Sikkim for the third time, again near the Jelep La(39).

Road-building activities were also noticed, as a result of which new roads leading to the border in Arunachal Pradesh, opposite Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal were constructed. New roads were also constructed in North-east Ladakh, and some old ones were improved. Those roads included seven inside Indian territory in Ladakh, several close to the border in the Central sector; six roads to Sikkim and Bhutan borders and eight to the border in the Eastern sector(40).

From the above activities, it was apparent by October 1961 that Chinese, eversince December 1959, had been directing their efforts at seizing more Indian territory wherever possible and creating evidence in support of their 1960 claim by pushing forward the line of actual control.

China also took advantage of Tibetan exodus, following the brutal suppression of the Revolt of 1959, to smuggle their espionage agents by the score, who mixed themselves with the fleeing Tibetan refugees. These agents, racially akin to the local people on the Indian side of the border, spread themselves all over NEFA and Assam(41).

To support those activities, Chinese military strength was being increased all along the Indo-Tibetan border. By October 1961, the Chinese had a Division, stationed at Rudok, opposite the single understrength Indian brigade in Ladakh. They had all the regular support arms for their troops, such as heavy mortars, recoilless guns; and their infantry had semi-automatic rifles(42).

As the year 1962 dawned, Chinese intrusions multiplied along the Indo-Tibetan frontier, and many thousands Chinese soldiers moved up all along the border. The whole of south Tibet had been readied as a formidable base, obviously for some military adventures, since such elaborate measures were not needed to police Tibet.

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According to an assessment, made in May 1962(43), the Chinese had further strengthened their military posts by bringing additional troops from the rear. The total strength of their troops along the Himalayan frontier, including the border with Nepal and Bhutan, was 61 battalions (equivalent to nearly 7 Indian divisions) as compared with 45 battalions deployed in September 1961, all along the Himalayan frontier. The position with regard to Chinese troops deployment along various sectors of India's northern frontier was as follows:-

	<u>As in</u> <u>September</u> <u>1961</u>	<u>As in</u> <u>May 1962</u>
Ladakh	4 bns	4 bns
		(Although there was no increase in strength, four companies had been moved from the rear areas to forward positions at Sumdo, Hot Spring, Spanggur, Dambuguru and Nyagzu)
Central Sector	5 bns	5 bns
Northern Sikkim	Nil	3 bns
Eastern Sikkim	3 bns	6 bns
		(The addition of 3 bns was effected in November - December 1961 in Chumbi Valley soon after exchange of rather strong notes between India and China)
NEFA	15 bns	18 bns
Total*	27 bns	36 bns

* Strength of Chinese troops deployed along the frontier with India (including Sikkim)

In January 1962, the Chinese forces occupied Roi village, nearly 1 kilometre south of Longju in the Subansiri Frontier Division of the Eastern sector. Indian protest against this aggression(44) was rejected on the ground that the village was in Chinese territory(45). Since early 1962, the Chinese troops had stepped up their aggressive forward patrolling in the Western sector. In spite of Indian protest against it, Chinese troops kept up forward patrolling in the Chip Chap area right through April and May 1962(46). In fact, the Government of China announced on 30 April 1962 that they had ordered patrolling in the whole of the Western sector from the Karakoram Pass to the Kongka Pass and demanded that India withdraw two of her posts in the area(47). Sometime before mid-April, the Chinese had set up a new military post a little over 9 km west of Sumdo(48). In May 1962, the Chinese set up a new post in Indian territory 16 kilometre south-east of Spanggur(49). In June 1962, the Chinese occupied 8 pickets at a distance of a few kilometres in the east and north-east of Daulat Beg Oldi(50). They also extended their occupation further west in the Qara Qash region of Ladakh and established 5 pickets and also constructed a branch road, thereby assuring supplies to those pickets(51).

In this way, the Chinese had pushed forward towards their 1960 claim line in the Western sector. By April-May 1962, they had completed the construction of roads inside Ladakh linking the outposts which had been established in 1960-61(52). In addition, they had also started building three new roads in Ladakh: one from Samzungling along the Galwan river; another from Khurnak Fort to the vicinity of Sirijap; and the third from Spanggur to Shinzang along the southern bank of the Spanggur lake(53).

In May 1962, China took another highly provocative anti-Indian step. It entered into an agreement with Pakistan to start negotiations to locate and align the portion of the India-China boundary west of the Karakoram Pass in the Kashmiri territory under unlawful occupation of Pakistan. India promptly drew the attention of China that the sovereignty over the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir vested solely in the Indian Union, and that any agreement reached with Pakistan regarding any sector of the boundary of Kashmir would have no legal validity(54). But China paid no heed to Indian protest.

INDIAN STEPS TO DEFEND THE BORDER

Chinese aggressive activities against India had not only been continuing but, since the latter half of 1959, they were even intensified. India was, therefore, obliged to take some defensive measures to halt the aggressive Chinese advance.

In the wake of Chinese incursions both in NEFA and Ladakh in August 1959, the DMI, Army Hqrs, had prepared an Appreciation(55) in September 1959 of the threat posed by the Chinese to the northern borders. Although the Appreciation deduced that "with the present state of development" it was unlikely that the Chinese can "launch a major incursion on any part of the country" or create "a situation where there is a likelihood of major operation taking place"(56), yet it mentioned that the Chinese, whose "intention of coming over Himalayas onto our side is apparent", were prepared and, in fact, would continue to create border incidents unless threatened by major retaliatory action by India. Based on the assessment of the strength of the Chinese troop deployment across the border, the Appreciation made detailed recommendations for positioning of troops in various sectors to counter the Chinese threat(57). The Appreciation recommended that "any vulnerable points which we have on the frontier should be adequately protected against the Chinese forces that are deployed"(58).

But certain constraints worked which made immediate implementation of those recommendations not feasible. The political leadership in the country, too, shared the Army's assessment that whatever be the situation, China was not likely to launch a big attack on India(59). They were, therefore, reluctant to respond to the Chinese aggressive activities in a big way. Instead of rattling swords, greater reliance was being placed on solving the border dispute at political and diplomatic level. Moreover, for various historical and economic reasons, the expansion and modernisation of Indian armed forces had not been taken up ever since India attained freedom(60). To do that now, a serious cut would have to be effected into the Governments appropriations for national economic development. Also, the logistics posed tremendous problems for the Army to physically control the long border. Border areas had to be developed; roads connecting those areas had to be constructed and a network of airfields had to be created before the required contingents of the Army could be inducted and maintained in those sensitive areas. It required time. Hence, to start with, the strength of the police and militia was increased(61) to perform frontier defence duties under the operational control of the Indian Army.

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In October 1959 occurred the Kongka Pass incident which added an element of urgency to the implementation of the recommendations of the Appreciation. In November 1959, 4 Infantry Division was ordered to move to Assam to take up the responsibility of safeguarding the northern border from Sikkim to Burma(62). This move should have taken place soon after the August 1959 decision of the Government to hand over the security of the border in the Eastern Sector to the Army, but it did not, due to problems of logistics. Now, in November its three brigades (5, 7 and 11) were moved to Assam, notwithstanding the absence of logistical set-up for deploying the division in NEFA(63). The responsibility of 11 Bde was to look after the 225-km long, Sikkim-Tibet border. The task of defending over 1075-km long NEFA-Tibet border (i.e. McMahon Line) was given to 7 and 5 Bdes with the former being made responsible for the Kameng Frontier Division and the latter for the defence of rest of NEFA(64).

With a view to construct lines of communication in the northern border area, the task of building roads was taken up earnestly in January 1960 with the setting up of a semi-military organisation - "General Reserve Engineering Force (GREF)" better known as Border Roads Organisation(65).

In NEFA "Operation ONKAR"(66) was launched in 1960. According to this plan, there was to be a large expansion of the Assam Rifles, and units were to be posted all along the frontier and also in the areas not occupied till then(67). Those posts were to be manned by Assam Rifles personnel but were to be established under Army supervision. The siting of those posts and their exact location was, however, decided mainly by the Intelligence Bureau and not the Army(68), although the Army Headquarters, on being consulted in this respect, had authorised the Eastern Command to site those posts as they deemed it fit(69).

As regards the Central Sector, sometime in mid-1960, Army Hqrs asked the Western and Eastern Commands to submit their recommendations regarding the quantum of troops required to take over the responsibility of the defence of Indo-Tibetan border in Himachal Pradesh (some portion of it then touched Punjab of that time) and U.P. from the police, and the time required to effect this change-over. Although the two commands gave their requirements(70), they showed disinclination for taking over the responsibility because of many administrative difficulties, particularly of stocking and provision of accommodation. In view of the difficulties

expressed by both the Commands, Army HQ decided that Police Forces should continue to be responsible for the defence of the border in this sector. However, the commands were instructed to complete all preparations to enable regular troops to take over border security duties from the police at short notice in an emergency.

For the defence of UP-Tibet border, HQ Eastern Command, in a paper(71), had recommended two defence lines, one to be held during the summer and the other during the winter. Till early 1960, the UP-Tibet border was being guarded by six companies of Special Police Force (SPF)(72). By July 1961 the strength of SPF had gone up to 9 companies, seven (21 platoons) of which manned seventeen summer posts on the border and one company was with the Bn HQ and the remaining one in Jammu and Kashmir(73).

In Ladakh, new Intelligence Posts were opened(74) and some of the existing ones strengthened by putting Army units there(75). Some posts were opened by the Army(76).

The decision to hand over the border in Ladakh was implemented in April 1960 with the induction of Headquarters 114 Infantry Brigade(77) with 7 and 14 Jammu and Kashmir Militia Battalions under its command(78). In April 1961(79) the brigade was strengthened with the addition of 1/8 Gorkha Rifles and some ancillary troops. Notwithstanding tremendous difficulties posed by lack of road communications(80), shortage of aircraft, severe wintry conditions and other logistical problems, the three battalions of the brigade were not only deployed in forward areas(81), but a few additional posts were also established, bringing their number to 27 by the end of 1961. Those posts were:-

(a) Nubra Valley Sector

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| i. Khalsi | vi. Daulat Beg Oldi |
| ii. Biagdangdo | vii. PT 16550 |
| iii. Thoise | viii. Track Junction |
| iv. Pa Deshkit | ix. Sultan Chushku |
| v. Panamik | x. Shyok and |
| | xi. Murgo. |

(b) Chang Chenmo and Chushul Sector

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| i. Nala Junction | iv. Phobrang |
| ii. Hot Spring | v. Chushul |
| iii. Tsogetsalu | vi. Base Rezangla |

(c) Indus Valley Sector

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| i. Tsakala | vi. Demchok |
| ii. Dungti | vii. Jara La |
| iii. Dumchek | viii. Hanle |
| iv. Chang La | ix. High Ground and |
| v. Koyul | x. Zarsar(82) |

In view of the increasing Chinese activities in the northern areas an air landing ground was built at Daulat Beg Oldi in 1961-62 where Dakotas and Packets, bringing supplies, could land. DBO was transformed into a military base with supply depots at Sultan Chushku and Murgo(83). Also efforts were made to improve the tracks linking Panamik with Thoise and Murgo with DBO. The Army opened a new post at Charding La(84) which along with the post at Chang La enabled them to protect the two sides of Demchok. IB set up a new post at Chumar, almost right on the frontier, to cover south-eastern end of Ladakh(85).

In the midst of reports about intensifying aggressive Chinese activities in the bordering areas, a high powered meeting(86) was held under Prime Minister Nehru in New Delhi on 2 November 1961(87). At this meeting, after the DMO had explained the existing positions and after a general discussion, Nehru decided(88) that Indian forces should remain in effective occupation of the whole frontier from NEFA to Ladakh and they should cover all gaps by setting up posts or by means of effective patrolling. No longer should the Chinese be allowed to encroach surreptitiously into our territories not occupied by Indian troops or police. He, however, ordered that our troops should not fire except in self-defence(89).

There was nothing new in this directive. The tasks had already been accepted by the Army in October 1959. In fact, the Defence Minister had been stressing this step since the summer of 1960(90). What happened now was that the directive coming directly from the Prime Minister speeded up the implementation process.

The Army HQ on 5 December 1961, issued an order(91) in which as regards the Ladakh sector, the Western Command was instructed "to patrol as far forward as possible from our present positions towards the International Border as recognised by us. This will be done with a view to establishing additional posts located to prevent the Chinese from advancing further and also to dominate any Chinese posts already established in our territory". The instruction to the Western Command also said: "This 'forward policy' shall be carried out without getting involved in a clash with the Chinese unless it becomes necessary in

self-defence". Regarding U.P. and other Northern areas (including the Eastern Sector) the Eastern Command was told that "there are not the same difficulties as in Ladakh. We should, therefore, as far as practicable, go forward and be in effective occupation of the whole frontier. Gaps should be covered either by patrolling or by posts". The order visualised that the implementation of the directive "will entail considerable movements of troops with attendant logistical problems" for which "a fresh appraisal of your task in view of the new directive from Government, especially with regard to the additional logistical effort involved" was demanded by 30 December 1961,(92). Meanwhile "Wherever possible action should be taken as indicated above"(93).

The large expansion of Assam Rifles started earlier had made sufficient number of trained personnel available by the end of 1961. Now the Army HQ directive(94) gave impetus to the setting up of new posts under "OP ONKAR" expeditiously as near the border as practicable. With all the constraints put up by the difficult terrain, adverse weather conditions and lack of adequate maintenance facilities, firm bases/posts were established at several new places as near the McMahon Line as possible and the strength of already existing posts was increased. Although those posts were being manned by Assam Rifles, they were physically established under supervision of the Army. The posts were in most cases a platoon strong and almost entirely dependent on air-dropped supplies. In February 1962 the Assam Rifles detachments had been posted at Chutangmu, Chuna, Khinzemane and Bum La in the Kameng Frontier Division(95).

In the case of Ladakh, by the time the implications of the new policy had been worked out, the winter of 1961-62 had far advanced. Hence it was only from April 1962 that the induction of another battalion could be taken up and it was concentrated at Leh by mid-May 1962(96). Now army units from DBO started moving eastwards and setting up posts along the Chip Chap river valley, and within a couple of kilometres of the Chinese posts to prevent their further penetration westwards(97). The task was difficult, due to the terrain and lack of proper communications and logistic support. Although there were now four battalions posted in Ladakh, the force was most inadequate to defend the front, covering nearly 480 kms from DBO in the north to Demchok in the south. Perforce troops had to be dispersed into small, isolated posts each barely 10 to 20 strong. Obviously, such posts could act only as flag posts, merely to show physical presence of Indian troops in

new areas in which they were located. Those posts, however, could serve one purpose. The Chinese pattern of encroachment had always been to creep into Indian territory whenever it was unguarded, but not to launch an offensive against the Indian posts. In view of this, it was decided to establish as many posts as possible in Ladakh, even though in penny pockets, rather than wait for substantial build-up(98). By "leapfrogging" Chinese posts they could block surreptitious Chinese advance further into Indian territory and could watch the patrol activities of the Chinese. In this way, by the end of September 1962, 36 Indian posts had been established in Ladakh(99) as against forty seven posts set-up by the Chinese in the area by that time(100). As a result of the setting up of these posts by the two sides, Indian presence was established in a fairly deep area in the northern sector from DBO to Tsogetsalu. Around Chushul the Indian posts and the Chinese posts confronted each other at close range and in the south around Rezangla and Demchok the Indian posts reached almost up to the International Border(101).

As regards the UP-Tibet border, the HQ Eastern Command, recommended that if the forward posts were to be converted into all-weather posts, the available strength of SPF (i.e. eight companies) had to be augmented by two to three companies and 9 Inf Bde should have four bns, one each to be deployed in three sectors(102) and the fourth with Bde HQ to be moved from Lucknow to Nainital or Ranikhet. But the idea of deploying the Bde in the hill region was not agreed to by the AHQ. Other recommendations were discussed at a meeting in Delhi on 8 February 1962. In view of the many difficulties it was decided that it would not be possible to undertake the conversion of any of the police posts to all-weather posts in 1962, but the priority for conversion to all-weather posts was to be accorded to the posts at Sangchamala and Pulamsumda. In a letter dated 28 February 1962,(103), AHQ asked the HQ Eastern Command that not more than one battalion should be committed in an "Operational Role" so as not to disturb the turn-over programme.

As noted earlier, the Chinese had reinforced considerably their posts all along the Indo-Tibetan border by May 1962. A report on the "Frontier Security Situation" prepared by the Intelligence Bureau(104) was discussed on 17 May 1962 at a meeting presided over by the Defence Minister(105). After reviewing the position, the Defence Minister ordered that all the gaps left still unoccupied in the border areas should be filled up. Even if sizeable forces could not be spared, there should be at least a platoon of the Army or police or the Assam Rifles at each of those places(106).

In the wake of this order, efforts were further intensified. In the Eastern sector some Assam Rifles platoons were placed under 4 Inf Div in May 1962(107) which speeded up the establishment of forward posts "as close to the border as possible"(108) under 'OP ONKAK'. By 20 July 1962, a total number of thirty four posts (8 in Kameng, 8 in Subansiri, 7 in Siang and 11 in Lohit Frontier Divisions) were established in NEFA along the border with Tibet(109). Those posts included the one at Dhola, established a little south of the Namkha Chu on 4 June 1962 under the guidance of Captain Mahabir Prasad of 1 Sikh who accompanied the Assam Rifles party(110). In June 1962 the HQ 4 Inf Div designated Tawang as the Divisional Vital Ground and, consequently, 7 Inf Bde was moved to Tawang to strengthen the defences of the town(111). As regards the availability of troops, a total force of 2 Inf Bde and 74 platoons of Assam Rifles stood deployed for the security of a long border along very difficult terrain(112).

FURTHER DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

Though the Government of India, being forced by aggressive Chinese activities, had to take limited protective measures, she continued to make approaches for easing tension so that a proper climate could be created for further talks to resolve the differences with China.

The voluminous 'Officials' Report had unmistakably shown the strength of India's case on the border dispute. In the wake of its publication it was surmised that now, probably, China might adopt a reasonable attitude. To see whether it had affected any change in the Chinese stand, R.K. Nehru, Secretary General in the Ministry of External Affairs, visited China in July 1961 on his return journey from Mongolia. In his meeting with Premier Chou En-lai, R.K. Nehru found no change in Chinese position on Ladakh(113).

In its note of 1 March 1962, China rather accused that the Government of India had "refused to hold negotiations", since it has been persisting "in its illegal occupation of the Chinese territory south of the so-called McMahon Line in the eastern sector" while demanding that "China withdraw from vast tracts of Chinese territory in the western sectors"(114). The contradiction in Chinese argument was very clear. China had recognised McMahon Line in the case of Burma but when it came to India the same very line became 'so-called' or illegal. As regards the Western Sector, all should accept that the Aksai Chin plateau belonged to China contrary to vast amount of evidence adduced by India, only because China so claimed and it had forcibly occupied it.

The Government of India, in its Note of 13 March 1962, refuted the charge that they refused to negotiate. They urged the Chinese Government for the "restoration of the status quo through the withdrawal of Chinese forces from Indian territory, into which they have intruded since 1957", because it was "an essential step for the creation of a favourable climate for any negotiations between the two Governments regarding the boundary"(115). But to the Government of China the Indian approach was "in fact tantamount to the summary rejection of peaceful settlement"(116). What the Chinese meant by 'peaceful settlement' was first to recognise that Aksai Chin was Chinese territory and had always been in its lawful possession. The continuance of that possession was the maintenance of status quo as viewed by China. It was on this basis that "as far as the Chinese side is concerned, the door for negotiations is always open"(117). The note of the Government of India, sent in reply to the Chinese note, refuted the Chinese charges and stated that "while the Government of India are always willing to negotiate with the Government of China, they cannot obviously compromise with any aggression on Indian territory. Nor can they negotiate as long as their territories remain under Chinese occupation. It is for the Government of China to correct the errors of the recent years and, by withdrawing from the Indian territory, create the essential conditions for peaceful negotiations so that the boundary question is settled"(118).

On 14 May 1962, the Government of India took initiative afresh for breaking the ice. In a note(119) sent to the Chinese Government, India urged it to give serious consideration to Prime Minister Nehru's proposal of 16 November 1959 for the withdrawal of Indian forces in Ladakh to the west of the boundary line shown in the 1956 Chinese maps, and of Chinese forces to the east of the international boundary shown in official Indian maps. As a token of India's earnest desire for peaceful settlement, India made an offer "to permit, pending negotiations and settlement of the boundary question, the continued use of the Aksai Chin road for Chinese civilian traffic"(120). This was a very fair proposal, leaving the disputed territory in occupation of neither of the parties with an important exception in favour of the Chinese for the continued use of the Aksai Chin road by China for civilian purposes. But China spurned the offer, saying: "How can one assume that the Chinese Government would accept unilaterally imposed submissive terms? Is China a defeated Country?"(121). As a counter move China expressed its willingness to consider the proposal only if India withdrew from NEFA(122), thereby disputing the validity of the McMahon Line which it had accepted earlier in an agreement with Burma.

The Government of India, in a note dated 26 July 1962(123), showed further relaxation by letting the Chinese to continue their illegal occupation of Indian territory up to their 1956 claim line as a starting point till a settlement was arrived at by asking them not to intrude beyond it and reiterated their willingness, as soon as the prevailing tensions had ceased and the appropriate climate was created "to enter into further discussions on the India-China boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials"(124).

The Government of India had, however, to come in for much adverse criticism for this relaxed stand both in Parliament(125) as well as in the Press(126).

But the Chinese Government, in its reply(127) remained adamant even to the above suggestion of the Government of India and blamed India for creating tensions by its so-called intrusions into "Chinese territory" in Ladakh. China asked India to stop it and then start discussions on the boundary question for which "there need not and should not be any pre-conditions"(128).

Almost simultaneously with the above Chinese note, the Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi, in a broadcast on the Italian-Swiss Radio TV Network on 3 August 1962, had proclaimed that "to wish that Chinese troops would withdraw from their own territory is impossible. That would be against the will of 650 million Chinese. No force in the world could oblige us to do something of this kind"(129).

The November 1959 Indian proposal, by each side withdrawing behind the claim line of the other, would have separated the personnel of two countries far apart to remove the chances of clashes and tensions and would have thus created favourable atmosphere for peaceful discussions on the boundary issue. But China had unabashedly rejected it in every form.

What steps could have been taken to ease the tensions? The Government of India suggested in the same note that an essential preliminary, therefore, was "a definition of measures that should be taken to restore the status quo of the boundary in this region which has been altered by force during the last five years and to remove the current tension in this area so as to create the appropriate climate for purposeful discussions"(130). And for discussing those essential preliminary measures the Government of India invited China to send its representative to India(131).

While notes for finalisation of dates for talks were still being exchanged, the Chinese expanded the area of tension. On 8 September 1962, Chinese troops marched across the hitherto quiet international boundary in the Eastern sector.

CHINA ESCALATES AGGRESSION

While India was making peaceful approaches to China to help in easing tensions thereby creating suitable atmosphere for negotiations on the boundary question, China went on increasing its provocative and aggressive activities all along the border. The Chinese forces were extending their military bases; they had already established a number of new posts bringing their number to 47 by the end of September 1962(132) and were poised in strength in menacing proximity to existing Indian border posts in the Central and Eastern sectors(133). They were also busy in making roads to their frontier posts and moving stores of rations, ammunition and other war materials to these posts opposite NEFA(134) as well as in Ladakh(135).

Meanwhile, reports were coming in about fresh arrivals of troops in Tibet(136). Those reports indicated that the Chinese had deployed long range Artillery Units along the Central and Eastern sector borders. The troops deployed in Ladakh were more or less regular soldiers, mostly equipped with heavy Machine-guns, Mortars and Howitzers, the forces deployed opposite the NEFA border included units of guerilla fighters as well(137). According to an assessment of "Chinese Army Strength and dispositions across the Northern Frontier", made in the beginning of September 1962, the total deployment of Chinese troops along the northern frontier had gone up by 6 battalions since the beginning of the summer of 1962(138). Of the total strength of Chinese troops in Tibet, which was of the order of eight divisions, a little under seven divisions were dispersed in the south and south-western border areas and in addition two regiments (6 battalions) were deployed opposite North Ladakh(139). The deployment of 6 battalions of the Chinese against Indian positions from DBO to Spanggur area marked an increase of 2 battalions since the spring of 1962(140). In the area in front of south Ladakh and the Central sector, the strength of Chinese troops, which had remained at 5 battalions till June 1962, had been augmented by 2 battalions(141). Against Sikkim, three regiments (brigades) were deployed of which two were in the Chumbi Valley and one brigade opposite North Sikkim(142). Across NEFA, the estimated Chinese

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deployment was of the order of 19 battalions(143). The above estimate, however, took into account only those Chinese troops which were located near the Indian border and did not include 3 to 4 divisions held by the Chinese as reserves in places like Lhasa, Gyantse, Shigatse, Chamdo and Nagchuka in case they were required during any operation(144).

All the above military preparations were followed by a spurt in provocative activities of the Chinese troops and intrusions by them deeper in the Indian territory. On 6 July a Chinese patrol found that Indians had already established a post in the Galwan Valley. They sent a protest note(145) which was suitably replied to by India(146). Then on 10 July 1962, over 350 Chinese advanced towards the Indian post manned by about 30 Gorkhas. They closed in to approximately 45 metres and surrounded the post. The post was cut off. On the night of 12/13 July, the Chinese advanced to within 15 mtrs of the post. After the initial surrounding of the post, the Chinese vacated the area to the south and south-east with a view apparently to give the Indian post option to withdraw. The Chinese troops tried every trick, short of a direct assault, to intimidate, cajole and isolate the post. The Indian post was ordered to stand fast. The Gorkhas did not budge an inch(147) nor did they fire. The orders were to fire only if fired upon. The Chinese continued the encirclement of the post, though they moved back a little on 14 and 15 July. The Chinese did not permit the relief of the post and threatened to open fire on a party that was sent for the purpose in August. Consequently, the post had to be supplied by air(148).

Soon after the encirclement of the Galwan Valley post, a Chinese party of 70-80 troops, on 21 July 1962, opened fire with LMGs, mortars and rifles on routine Indian patrol of 14 Jammu and Kashmir Militia, about 8 km south-east of the DBO camp. The patrol exercised great patience and restraint and did not return fire. Later, however, in the face of Chinese persistent firing, the Indians were forced to return the fire in self-defence. In this action, one Naik and one Sepoy were seriously wounded(149). On the same day, the Indian patrol of 1/8 GR was fired upon by the Chinese. In this action 2 Indian soldiers were wounded(150). Then, on 27 and 29 July, the Chinese again fired at Indians on several occasions in the central regions but no casualties were reported(151). On 4 August 1962, the Chinese fired a shot near Karakoram Pass close to the Indian post at DBO(152). On 26 August at 1200 hrs, a party of the Chinese troops attempted to ambush an Indian patrol on routine

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duty about 53 km south-east of DBO. The Indians, however, detected the ambush. The Chinese opened fire and the Indians were forced to return it(153). There was an incident of firing by the Chinese on Indian patrol party in the Galwan Valley area on 2 September 1962. Indians had to return fire(154).

Chinese aircraft frequently violated Indian air space particularly in the Eastern sector(155). In the Eastern sector, during the period June/July, the Chinese had intensified their border patrolling opposite the Subansiri and Siang Frontier Divisions. They had about one battalion each deployed in the border-areas there. The Chinese troops brought under control the Pemako area opposite North-Eastern Siang Frontier Division. They had intruded about 140 metres inside Indian territory at Lhola in the western part of Siang Frontier Division(156).

In June/July, the movement of some senior Chinese officers was noticed opposite Subansiri and Siang Frontier Division. They obviously had come for reconnaissance of the area(157). A Chinese VIP also visited the Thag La Ridge in July 1962. By that time, the Chinese had constructed a road upto Le village, approximately 10 km short of the McMahon Line(158).

During the last few months, all Chinese border posts had moved forward and had been considerably reinforced. The Chinese posts had now come very near to Indian Frontiers. Since July, Chinese troops across the NEFA had been practising Jungle Warfare and training in hand grenade and musketry. They had constructed defence works in all the forward posts. They had been issued modern machine-guns in place of the old weapons. Telephone lines had also been brought quite near the Frontier(159). The Chinese had posted 2 companies of their troops in front of the Khinzemane Indian post and a company at Shao opposite Bumla(160).

The biggest threat was posed by the Chinese in the Eastern sector in August when they moved troops to the Thag La Ridge in the Kameng Frontier Division and occupied it. By the end of August 1962, they had concentrated about 400 troops in the area(161).

The next month the Chinese moved two additional battalions across the Subansiri Frontier Division to bring their strength in the area to one full Brigade. As in the case of Kameng Frontier Division, defence preparations, road construction, storing of supplies and ammunition had been made in this area also(162). In the Siang Frontier Division, the Chinese had moved

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forward close to the border at Tamadem and Lola. They had reinforced Ngiti and Nayu and were rapidly constructing roads to the frontier - and also parallel to it. The Chinese strength deployed against the Siang border had reached 5 battalions(163). Chinese activities had also been noticed across the Lohit Frontier Division and the Drowa Gompha - Rima road leading to Kibithoo and Walong had been improved. There was also movement across the Anini frontier and posts had been established there also(164).

The concentration of troops in great strength and other military activities by China all along the border as well as deep inside Indian territory particularly in Ladakh was not only leading to highly provocative intrusions and bloody incidents but it seriously threatened the security of the whole of the border areas.

The Chinese now demonstrated their aggressive intentions in the Eastern sector also in September 1962. On 8 September 1962, Chinese troops were noticed moving across the Namkha Chu in the Tawang sector. In a few hours about forty of them(165) crossed the river, virtually surrounded Dhola and threatened the small post manned by troops from 9 Punjab. The Chinese troops also destroyed two bridges near the post on the Namkha Chu. The news of the seige was flashed to Lumpu, where the battalion Commander of 9 Punjab was present. The post Commander at Dhola was immediately informed that reinforcements were being despatched. In the meantime he was told to hold on at all costs(166). The Chinese settled into positions near and dominating the post, thus repeating the tactics they had adopted in the Western sector against Indian posts. By 14 September, the intruders, however, withdrew about 700-900 metres north-east of the Indian post across the Namkha Chu(167).

On 20 September 1962, the Chinese again started a serious clash at the Dhola post. About 2130 hrs, two Chinese soldiers crept up near the post and lobbed hand grenades at it. The Indian post fired Verey lights and saw a considerable number of Chinese soldiers massed some distance away. The Chinese soldiers opened fire on the Indian post, which was compelled to reply in self-defence. Intermittent firing continued until the morning of 21 September. The Chinese resumed firing after a short interval. After the incidents of 20 and 21 September, there was intermittent firing on 22-25 September. On 28 September, the Chinese used automatic weapons. The Indian troops retaliated(168). In those bloody clashes both sides suffered casualties. Suddenly the Chinese stopped firing. But it turned out to be the proverbial lull before the storm.

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Side by side with these highly provocative and aggressive activities in the border areas, China also launched a hostile and malicious propaganda against the Indian Government. China dubbed Prime Minister Nehru as a reactionary, a Western lackey, and accused him of abandoning the path of non-alignment(169). The Chinese also indulged in propaganda, in varying degree of intensity, asserting claims to Indian territory and affirming the Chinese determination to take it(170).

The increasing intensity of hostile and aggressive China activities against India, particularly in Ladakh, forced the Government of India to take some more steps to tighten the security measures.

After the Galwan Valley incident in early July 1962, the order given to the post was modified from 'fire only if fired upon' to 'fire in self-defence'. On 21 July 1962, Commander 114 Inf Bde issued modified order to all post Commanders authorising them "to open fire at their own discretion for defence of post which will be defended at all costs"(171). On 22 July 1962, Army HQ gave the discretion to all post Commanders to fire on the Chinese if their posts were threatened(172) and thus confirmed the modified order given by the Brigade Commander a day earlier. This changed order was given effect to in the beginning of September 1962 in an incident in the Chip Chap Valley when the Chinese advanced menacingly close to one of the Indian posts. The Indian post had to open fire on the Chinese when the latter disregarded order to halt and back off. In the incident, Chinese suffered casualties(173).

The 8 September incident (when Chinese troops invested the Dhola post south of the river Namkha Chu in the Kameng Frontier Division in the Eastern Sector) and subsequent positioning of Chinese troops south of the Thagla ridge brought about a qualitative change in the situation. It was for the first time, that the Chinese crossed the international boundary in the Eastern Sector in strength. The crisis was approaching the flash point.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Prime Minister Nehru, in his letter of 26 September 1959, sent to Prime Minister Chou En-Lai, has stated the facts about the Indo-Tibetan border in detail. WHITE PAPER, No. II, pp.34-46.
2. Ibid., p.20.
3. Ibid.,p.24.
4. Ibid.,pp.34-46.
5. Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India, 7 November 1959, WHITE PAPER, No.III pp.44-45.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p.45.
8. Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China, 16 November 1959. Ibid.,pp.46-50.
9. Ibid.,p.49.
10. Ibid.
11. Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India, 17 December 1959. Ibid.,pp.51-55.
12. Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China, 21 December 1959. Ibid.,p.56.
13. Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China to the Embassy of India in China, 26 December 1959. Ibid., pp.58-79.
14. Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China, 5 February 1960. Ibid., pp.80-81.
15. Note of the Government of India to the Chinese Government, 12 February 1960. Ibid.,p.82.
16. Times of India, (New Delhi), 21, 23 and 24 April 1960. According to T.N. Kaul, a senior diplomat closely associated with the development of Sino-Indian relations, Mr. Chou En-Lai, instead of suggesting a settlement recognizing NEFA

within India and Eastern Aksai Chin as part of China as had been indicated earlier, harped on his six points and wanted to open the whole border question anew. Diplomacy in Peace and War, p.114.

17. An Indian official statement quoted in Times of India, 24 April 1960.
18. Joint Communique of the Prime Ministers of India and China, 25 April 1960. DOCUMENTS, p.171.
19. Ibid.
20. For details about the proceedings of the official level discussions and for comments on REPORT, See China's Betrayal of India - Background to the Invasion (Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi; November 1962) pp.28-34.
21. Based on the information given in Chinese Aggression in Maps (Director, Publications Division, Old Secretariat, Delhi; Revised edition, January 1963), Map 3.
22. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.278.
23. From Official Records.
24. Jagjit Singh, The Saga of Ladakh, p.38.
25. From Official Records.
26. Mankekar, D.R., The Guilty Men of 1962, p.38.
27. Johri, S.R., Chinese Invasion of Ladakh, p.41.
28. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.313.
29. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 29 July 1960. WHITE PAPER IV, p.3.
30. Memorandum of the Government of India to the Government of China, 27 September 1960. Ibid. p.4.
31. Johri, S.R., Chinese Invasion of Ladakh, p.41.
32. Ibid., p.42.
33. Mankekar, D.R., The Guilty Men of 1962, p.23.
34. Statement showing details of Air violations of our Air Space as annexure to Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 22 August 1960. WHITE PAPER IV, pp.29-30.

35. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.310.
36. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 6 May 1961. WHITE PAPER, V, p.11.
37. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 31 October 1961, Ibid., p.53.
38. Ibid., p.54.
39. Ibid., p.53.
40. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.313.
41. Mankekar, D.R., The Guilty Men of 1962, p.20. In a small hamlet north of Bomdila, a Chinese operated a tea-stall along the Missamari-Towang road. Also, at Chaky, south of Bomdila, a Chinese agent operated a wireless set for nearly 18 months before being detected. Ibid.
42. Praval, K.C., Indian Army After Independence, pp.240-241.
43. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.324-326. Also From Official Records.
44. Note given by the MEA, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China, in India, 18 April 1962. WHITE PAPER, VI, p.27.
45. Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, to the Embassy of India in China, 15 May 1962. Ibid., p.44.
46. For example, in early May 1962, a 100 strong Chinese patrol reached upto 130 metres from our Post Alfa, located about 24 kms to the north-east of DBO. From Official Records.
47. Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, to the Embassy of India in China, 30 April 1962. WHITE PAPER, VI, p.39.
48. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 15 April 1962. WHITE PAPER, VI, p.26.
49. Ibid., 21 May 1962, p.49.
50. Johri, S.R., Chinese Invasion of Ladakh, p.54.

51. Ibid.
52. From Official Records.
53. Mankekar, D.R., The Guilty Men of 1962, p.41.
54. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.27-28. Also Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 10 May 1962. WHITE PAPER, VI, (November 1961-July 1962), pp.96-97.
55. From Official Records.
56. Ibid.
57. The deployment pattern recommended by the Appreciation was as follows:-
- (i) A bde in the Ladakh area. This bde could well maintain one or even two local militia bns to provide strong bases on the periphery at Shyok and Chushul with outpost at Demchok and Nawi.
 - (ii) Assam Rifles type of bns, one for Himachal Pradesh Sector and another for U.P. Sector.
 - (iii) A striking division with armour against Chumbi Valley to be stationed in Gangtok-Kalimpong area in Sikkim to act as a deterrent to Chinese and impose a threat to Shigatse.
 - (iv) A bn worth of Frontier Guards or militia for Sikkim and Bhutan each.
 - (v) A division for NEFA with a bde in Bomdila-Tawang Sector, a bde in Daporijo-Limeking Sector and a third bde in reserve for remainder of NEFA. This Division could contain one-third Assam Rifles type of units. Besides, it also recommended strengthening of the intelligence set-up and deployment of more wireless intercept stations on the frontier and construction of motorable roads to connect battalion bases to the road heads. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. B.M. Kaul said in a report of June 1962 that "I am convinced that the Chinese will not attack any of our positions even if they (viz. Indian Positions) are relatively weaker than theirs". From Official Records. In Mullik's opinion

endorsed by the External Affairs officials present at the November 1961 meeting presided over by Nehru, the Chinese were not likely to react to the establishment of Indian posts over their claim line except in diplomatic protests - certainly not with force. Maxwell, Neville, India's China War, p.221.

60. At that time the state of affairs in the Army, too, was not good. There was widespread frustration in the armed forces, particularly the Army, because of differences between the Defence Minister V.K. Krishna Menon and the Chief of the Army Staff, Gen K.S. Thimayya.

61. By 1960, the total number of border check-posts had gone upto 67 - 9 in Ladakh, 9 in Himachal Pradesh, 17 in U.P., 10 in Sikkim and 22 in NEFA. The total staff employed in those posts was 1,334. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.136.

62. 4 Infantry Division, with Headquarters in Tezpur, was placed under newly raised 33 Corps (HQ-Shillong) which was responsible for the entire north-eastern region. In 1960, Lt Gen S.P.P. Thorat, GOC-in-C Eastern Command, had prepared of his own an Appreciation for the defence of the McMahon Line. He divided NEFA into two by a "Defence Line" south of which Chinese penetration was not to be accepted at any cost. This defence line ran from Towang to Bomdila, Ziro, Daporijo, Along, Roing, Tezu, Lohitpur, Hayuliang and Jairampur. The northern sector was to be defended by 90 platoons of Assam Rifles and the southern by three divisions of Army. In the "Defence Line" of revised appreciation for 1961, Roing was removed. From Official Records.

63. The poor state of communications delayed forward moves of 7 bde and it was only in April 1961 that the Bde Hqs could move to Towang. Ibid., The tasks given to the bde were :-

- (i) defend Towang - Primary role;
- (ii) prevent any penetration of the McMahon Line;
- (iii) establish Assam Rifles posts ; and
- (iv) assist Assam Rifles posts.

Dalvi, J.P., Himalayan Blunder (The Curtain-Raiser to the Sino-Indian War of 1962) (Bombay, 1969), p.118.

5 Inf Bde was sent to Walong to support the Assam Rifles, if need arose. The policing of Lohit Frontier Division, as of other NEFA divisions, was the responsibility of a battalion of the Assam Rifles. From Official Records.

64. From Official Records.
65. Border Roads completed the road connecting Foothill with Towang via Bomdila in eighteen months. Mankekar, D.R., The Guilty Men of 1962, p.31.
66. Code-name given to a plan to establish Assam Rifles posts along the McMahon Line from Khinzemane in the west to the India-Tibet Burma tri-junction. It was to have been completed by the end of July 1962. Niranjana Prasad, The Fall of Towang, 1962 (New Delhi, 1981), p.16.
67. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.323-324.
68. Niranjana Prasad, The Fall of Towang 1962, p.17.
69. From Official Records.
70. Eastern Command had demanded one Inf Bde HQrs with five bns instead of one bde group with three bns already earmarked for U.P.-Tibet border and the Western Command asked for an additional bde HQrs with three bns as against the one bn earmarked already for the defence of the Himachal Pradesh-Tibet border. From Official Records.
71. From Official Records.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. For example, Zarsar in South-East Ladakh and Qizil Langar between Murgu and DBO. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.309.
75. For example, Hot Springs Post. Ibid.
76. For example, at Sultan Chushku, about 16 kms south of Murgu and at Phutsang La. The second post was, however, to be abandoned during the winter. Ibid.

77. Advance HQ 114 Inf Bde had moved from Srinagar to Leh on 1 May 1960. From Official Records.

78. Ibid. Keeping in view all considerations affecting the defence of Ladakh, a Brigade Group consisting of five battalions was considered essential. However, due to various factors, like the availability of aircraft, flying conditions, building up of maintenance stocks and construction of accommodation and the state of airfields in the theatre, it was not found possible to implement the plan and accordingly it was modified to suit phased induction. In the initial stages, therefore, it was decided to induct four bns, but even this could not materialise in 1960. Instead only two bns could be deployed. From Official Records.

79. According to B.N. Mullik, the vigorous activities on part of the Army for the defence of the border areas from April 1961 were the direct outcome of the advent of Gen P.N. Thapar and Lt Gen B.M. Kaul as COAS and CGS respectively. The Chinese Betrayal, p.310.

80. 'Border Roads' cut the Srinagar-Leh road and made it capable of taking heavy traffic on which military traffic could begin to ply only in May 1962. From Official Records.

81. According to deployment plan, 14 J&K Militia was to look after the area north of the Galwan river, 1/8 GR to hold the area between Galwan river and Chushul and 7 J&K Militia the rest of the area south of Chushul. Jagjit Singh, The Saga of Ladakh, pp.38-39.

82. From Official Records.

83. Johri, S.R., Chinese Invasion of Ladakh, p.80.

84. The establishment of this post in area Charding La was reported on 9 June. From Official Records.

85. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.310.

86. Present at this meeting, besides Nehru, were Defence Minister V.K. Krishna Menon, new Foreign Secretary M.J. Desai, COAS Gen P.N. Thapar, Lt Gen Kaul, CGS, Director I.B. B.N. Mullik and his Deputy, Hooja, DMO, Brig D.K. Palit, and other officials. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.314. Also From Official Records.

87. From Official Records. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.314, has wrongly given 12 November 1961 as the date of the meeting.
88. According to Neville Maxwell, it was B.N. Mullik who argued that the Chinese intended to come right up to their claim line but that they would keep away where Indian troops were present even if in a small number and hence the Indian Army should quickly move forward to fill the vacuum, as otherwise Chinese were bound to do so within a few months. The final outcome of that meeting was on the lines suggested by him. India's China War, p.221. According to Lt Gen B.M. Kaul, who was also present in that meeting, Nehru framed this policy principally for the benefit of the Parliament and public and also perhaps as a 'strategy of beating the Chinese at their own game'. The Untold Story (New Delhi, 1967) p.281.
89. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.314. Paragraph (a) of the three-paragraph directive pertained to Ladakh sector, paragraph (b) to U.P. and other northern areas and paragraph (c) gave allowance to "the numerous operational and administrative difficulties" in the implementation of (a) and (b). From Official Records.
This policy-directive was mistakenly called the 'forward policy' since it did not include the ingredients of the British policy known by the same name pursued earlier in relation to the frontier. But nomenclature, appearing convenient, stuck.
90. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, pp.314-315.
91. Before this order was issued, Gen Thapar had written to the Defence Minister warning against Chinese reaction to that policy in Ladakh and the problems posed by the inclement weather and inadequacy of logistics for a suitable build-up. However, he had informed that reconnaissance parties had already been ordered towards the Aksai Chin area to establish posts in pursuance of that directive as soon as the weather permitted. From Official Records.
92. From Official Records.
93. From Official Records. The Army HQ order while excluding the following paragraph (c) of the Government directive, "In view of the numerous operational and administrative difficulties,

efforts should be made to position major concentrations of forces along our borders in places conveniently situated behind the forward posts from where they could be maintained logistically and from where they can restore a border situation at short notice" added the concluding portion thereby converting the Government directive into a categorical order.

94. According to Army HQ directive to HQ Eastern Command, it should establish new posts which should be manned by Assam Rifles personnel. Only in critical sectors such as the Tawang sector, regular troops were to be located near the border; in other cases they were to be kept concentrated at suitable locations where they could be more easily supported logistically and from where they could move forward to restore a situation when necessary. From Official Records.
95. From Official Records.
96. Ibid.
97. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.324.
98. From Official Records.
99. Those posts included two in Pangong Lake area, two in Chip Chap area, three in Chushul and one at junction of river Shyok and Galwan, which were established after June 1962. But this figure might not have included temporary/subsidiary posts since the total number of all types of posts established by the troops under that brigade by the end of September 1962 came to forty eight. From Official Records.
100. From Official Records.
101. Ibid.
102. Those sectors were: (i) Pulamsumda - Uttarkashi axis, (ii) Mana-Joshimath and Barahoti - Joshimath axes; and (iii) Lipulekh - Carbyang and Milan - Askot axes.
103. Ibid.
104. A report had pointed out some gaps which were still unoccupied by the Indian Army and the Chinese plan of forward patrolling might result in their intruding into these areas. The assessment recommended that it would be desirable to push forward Army, Assam Rifles or police units to occupy these gaps as early as possible. From Official Records.

105. Foreign and Defence Secretaries, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Defence (H.C. Sarin), the COAS, the Dy COAS, the CGS and Director, Intelligence Bureau were others who attended that meeting.
106. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.326.
107. From Official Records.
108. Ibid.
109. It was stated that the number of the Assam Rifles checkpoints along the NEFA-Tibet border was thirty five. With the establishment of a seasonal post at Chuna/Topgee in the Lungar area by 4 Inf Div, on their own, the number rose to 35 by September 1962. From Official Records.
110. The place actually was Che Dong a few kilometres north of the Dhola feature, but the man on the spot somehow gave it the name of Dhola and it stuck.

The idea was to establish a post at the tri-junction of India-Bhutan and Tibet, but that area being inaccessible due to heavy snow, this place (viz., Che Dong) was selected. Che Dong was north of the McMahon Line marked by a thick line in the available maps. Maj Gen Niranjan Prasad, GOC 4 Inf Div is reported to have questioned the siting of the post on that ground but he was told that the line drawn in those maps because of its thickness misrepresented the boundary which should be along the Thagla Ridge to the north on the basis of the watershed principle. Then Gen Prasad made representation to the effect that in that case "either the post should be withdrawn or moved forward to tactically sound position on the Thagla Ridge itself". He was ultimately told in September 1962, that Thagla was Indian territory and we must exercise our right on it. From Official Records.

111. Johri, S.R., Chinese Invasion of NEFA, p.43.
112. From Official Records.
113. Maxwell, Neville, India's China War, p.218.
114. Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, to the Embassy of India in China, 1 March 1962 WHITE PAPER. VI, p.15.

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115. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 13 March 1962, Ibid., p.18.
116. Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, to the Embassy of India in China, 22 March 1962. Ibid., p.24.
117. Ibid.
118. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 30 April 1962. Ibid., p.36.
119. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 14 May 1962. Ibid., pp.4143.
120. Ibid., p.43.
121. Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, to the Embassy of India in China, 2 June 1962. Ibid., p.57.
122. Ibid.
123. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 26 July 1962. WHITE PAPER VII. pp.34.
124. Ibid. p.4.
125. In Parliament the note was described as disgraceful, 'a most shocking and surprising document.' Lok Sabha Debates (3rd Series), Vol.6 1962/1884 (Saka) (August 6 to 18, 1962/Sravana 15 to 27, 1884 (Saka), Second Session 13 August 1962. Col.1496.
126. The Hindustan Times, in its two-part editorial "The Road to Dishonour" published on 9 and 10 August 1962, commented that the Government of India note has "all but sanctified the illegal gains of Chinese aggression in Ladakh as the price for the opening of a new round of negotiations with the overlords of Peking. In so doing it has broken faith with the people of India - the people and its Parliament."
127. Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, to the Embassy of India in China, 4 August 1962. WHITE PAPER VII. pp.1718.
128. Ibid., p.18.

129. Quoted in Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 22 August 1962. Ibid., p.36.
130. Ibid., p.37.
131. Ibid.
132. By 12 July 1962, the Chinese had set up 9 new posts (7 in Chip Chap River region, one in Chang Chenmo Valley Region and one in Spanggur Region), six of which were located well inside Indian territory even beyond the Chinese claim line as shown in their 1956 maps, (See Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 12 July 1962. WHITE PAPER VI, p.83) bringing their number set up in recent months to 13. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 14 July 1962. Ibid., p.88. Subsequently between 12 July and 22 August 1962, the Chinese set up 18 new posts (ten in Chip Chap region, 2 in Galwan Valley region, four in Pangong-Spanggur region and two in Qara Qash region). Besides, four camps were established and five additional strong points were set up by the Chinese forces around an Indian post on the Galwan river. Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 22 August 1962. Ibid., VII. pp.3233. After establishing one post, on 23 August, provocatively located in close proximity of the supply line to Indian posts (Note, 24 August 1962. Ibid., p.40), the Chinese set up four more posts (2 in Pangong-Spanggur region and 2 in Qara Qash region). Note, 28 August 1962. Ibid., p.47. In the beginning of September, two new posts were set up, one in the Chang Chenmo Valley region and another in the Pangong-Spanggur region. Note, 7 September 1962. Ibid., p.59. By 21 September, the Chinese had established 6 more posts in Ladakh (four in Chip Chap region, one in Qara Qash region and one in Pangong-Spanggur region). Note, 21 September 1962. Ibid., p.82.

In all, the Chinese had, upto the end of September 1962, set up 47 posts (as against 36 set up by Indians) as follows:

- 26 in Chip Chap region
- 2 in Sumdo Region
- 3 in Galwan Valley region
- 5 in Chang Chenmo Valley region
- 6 in Pangong Lake region and
- 5 in Spanggur area

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Practically all those posts were connected by motorable roads. The strength of troops at the Chinese posts varied from one platoon to double companies (about 250 men) as against the strength of the Indian posts which varied from a section (about 10 men) to a platoon (about 30 men). From Official Records.

133. According to an IB review of the situation, made in May 1962, the Chinese had, even as early as April 1962, moved fairly large additional forces to the border and they were hurriedly extending their road communications and building fortifications round their frontier posts. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.339.

Subsequently, it was estimated that the Chinese had concentrated about 40,000 troops (about four infantry divisions) all along the frontier with NEFA, about 30,000 (about three infantry divisions) opposite Ladakh and about 3,000 troops (about a regiment equivalent to an Indian brigade) at Thuling Math facing Bara Hoti in the Central Sector - Johri, S.R., Chinese Invasion of NEFA, p.44.

134. Ibid.

135. From Official Records.

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid.

139. Ibid.

140. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.336. Also From Official Records.

141. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.336.

142. Ibid.

143. Ibid.

144. Ibid., p.336.

145. Memorandum given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, to the Embassy of India in China, 8 July 1962. WHITE PAPER, VI, p.78.

146. Notes given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 10 July 1962. Ibid., pp.81-82.

147. Naib Subedar Jang Bahadur Gurung, post Commander, was awarded VSM Class II for his cool bravery displayed in dealing with the situation.
148. From Official Records.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.
151. Ibid.
152. Ibid.
153. Ibid.
Also Johri, S.R., Chinese Invasion of Ladakh, p.75.
154. From Official Records.
155. There had been 25 known air violations by Chinese aircraft in NEFA in a couple of months before the October 1962 invasion, obviously on air reconnaissance and photo missions. Mankekar D.R., The Guilty Men of 1962, p.20.
156. From Official Records.
157. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.334.
158. From Official Records.
159. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.343.
Also From Official Records.
160. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.343. Also From Official Records.
161. From Official Records.
162. Mullik, B.N., The Chinese Betrayal, p.344.
163. Ibid.
164. Ibid.
165. From Official Records. The post Commander had, however, reported the number of the Chinese troops at about six hundred calculating that if he reported that several hundred Chinese troops were threatening his post, it would surely bring the Army to his assistance. Dalvi, J.P. Himalayan Blunder, p.217.

166. From Official Records.
167. Ibid.
168. Ibid.
169. S.K. Lamba, "September 8, 1962 And After", in Rana, Satya Paul (ed), Our Northern Borders - India-China Border Dispute (New Delhi, 1963), p.49.
170. From Official Records.
171. Ibid. This order was issued in anticipation of its confirmation by higher Commands. The confirmation of the order by Army Headquarters was received subsequently.
172. From Official Records.
173. This incident has been mentioned by Neville Maxwell, India's China War, p.253 on the basis of reports in The Times (London) and the Baltimore Sun of 12 September 1962, and the Hindustan Times of 15 September 1962, in its editorial "New Danger" has also referred to it.

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