

CHAPTER - IX

CEASE-FIRE AND THE AFTERMATH

CEASE-FIRE : 21 November 1962

The dawn of 20 November 1962 was the blackest in the military history of independent India. The nation appeared to be in peril. The age old belief in the impregnability of the Himalayan barrier stood shattered. The Chinese were sweeping aside the Indian Army positions with ease. It seemed that nothing could stop their victorious march into India.

In Ladakh, in their last attack, the Chinese pushed back Indian forces from hills overlooking the Chushul airfield. A little to the south of Chushul, the Chinese capture of Rezangla, meant that the land link between Chushul and Leh was in danger of being severed. Chushul airfield itself was under the shadow of Chinese guns deployed on Gurung and Magar hills. The situation of 114 Brigade defending Chushul, was indeed precarious.

The situation in Ladakh had some redeeming features also. Through energetic action and milking the formations deployed in J & K facing Pakistan, an additional two brigade worth of troops were deployed on approaches to Leh. The Chinese had also not attempted to gain any more territory either in the DEO sector or in Indus Valley sector. It appeared that the Chinese were content to reach their 1960 claim line and advance no further. In any case any further advance to Leh was blocked by strong forces and would have been both time consuming and costly.

The withdrawal from Chushul was an orderly affair. In the forward positions on both Gurung hill and Magar hill, all stockpiled stores and ammunition were either evacuated or destroyed. All the 25 pounder guns were withdrawn intact by the gallant Sikhs of 13 Field Regiment. Only one machine gun and one recoil-less gun were lost as a result of enemy shelling. Two tanks that developed mechanical trouble were destroyed in the area of Chushul airfield. The other four AMX-13 tanks of 20 Lancers withdrew to safety and were fully battle worthy(1).

The Chinese appeared to have suffered heavy casualties in their attacks on the eastern defences of

Chushul. They did not interfere with the withdrawing Indians. In any case, the Chinese, by reaching the 1960 claim line, had made sure that Indians could not pose any worthwhile threat to their Aksai Chin highway. The possible launch pads in DBO, Demchok and Chushul areas were firmly under Chinese domination. On the other hand, Leh, still another 70-100 km to the West, was militarily clearly out of Chinese grasp. The loss of territory notwithstanding, Indian Army was standing its ground. It was a military reverse, but not a rout.

National and international attention was focussed more on fighting in Kameng Division of NEFA. The situation here was disastrous. At 0300 hrs on 20 November, the last semblance of defence at Chaku, a high point on road from Bomdila to Tezpur, was overrun by the Chinese. It was hardly a defence, as only the withdrawing remnants of 3 Sikh LI, 3 JAK Rifles and 6/8 GR were hastily deployed there(2).

There was no news about or contact with HQ 4 Mtn Div. The 4 Mountain Division, once pride of Indian Army that had won laurels in Italy fighting against the Germans in Second World War, had virtually ceased to exist as a fighting force. After the fall of Se La and Bomdila, all command and control was lost. Battalions had dis-integrated into small parties, heading for the foot hills and plains beyond. Many of these withdrawing troops were wounded and sick. The disarray and confusion had infected the rear areas also. There were no precise estimates about either the casualties or missing men. The magnitude of disaster could be gauged by the fact that even on 30 November, full ten days after the fall of Bomdila, a total of 119 Officers, 143 JCOs and 5431 Jawans were listed as missing believed killed(3).

Chaku on the road to Tezpur was the last defence in Kameng area. Once Chaku fell, there was no obstacle between the Chinese and the Corps Headquarters at Tezpur. Seeing the alarming situation and developing threat to Tezpur, Army Headquarters decided to airlift, 5 Infantry Division from Punjab. The division's task was to defend Tezpur. On 19 November, an advance party of the divisional headquarters, one brigade headquarters and one Infantry battalion flew in(4). The troops quickly dug in for the defence of Tezpur airfield as first priority.

On 20 November the situation at Tezpur went completely out of control. An advance party of IV Corps Headquarters left for Gauhati as first step of withdrawal. In an atmosphere thick with rumour and

beset with panic, this opened the floodgates. The civilian administration lost its nerve. The District Magistrate, the head of the district administration, left for Gauhati. Prison was thrown open and criminals were released. The district treasury office started burning currency to prevent its falling into Chinese hands. A pall of thick smoke hung over the city as government offices got busy in burning documents. By nightfall, Tezpur was a ghost city. The collapse of law and order was complete.

Panic stricken people in thousands crossed the Brahmaputra to get to the southern shore and safety. Tezpur airfield was full of clamouring people, among them many foreigners working in tea gardens, begging for an air lift. The remaining elements of IV Corps Headquarters were scheduled to leave by rail for Gauhati at 7 PM on 20 November. The plan had to be abandoned as the rail staff had fled and no trains were running between Tezpur and Gauhati(5).

The Prime Minister addressed the nation on All India Radio the same evening. This was indeed the lowest watermark of Indian morale. "Huge Chinese Armies have been marching in northern part of NEFA. We have had reverses in Walong, Se La and today Bomdila, a small town in NEFA has also fallen. We shall not rest till the invader goes out of India or is pushed out. I want to make that clear to all of you and specially our country-men in Assam to whom our heart goes out at this moment"(6).

The situation in other sectors of NEFA was equally bad. In Subansiri Division troops were asked to withdraw from Limeking on night 19/20 November. In Siang division, Mechuka and Tuting positions were ordered to be abandoned the same night. This wholesale withdrawal in Eastern NEFA was triggered by the reverses in Walong sector. After the abortive attempt to retake Tri-Junction failed, the defenders got unbalanced. Till then Walong was tenaciously holding out. The Walong brigade commenced its withdrawal on 16 November, initially to Hayuliang and then to Ledo in Brahmaputra valley. The withdrawal was difficult and many jawans and officers perished on high mountain passes. It is however to the eternal credit of all of them that this withdrawal did not turn into a rout. Troops withdrew as organized bodies under their leaders. The effect on military situation was grim. For a moment, before defences could be re-organized, nothing stood between the Chinese and the oil fields of Digboi and Tinsukia(7).

The Peking radio announcement in the early hours of 21 November declaring a unilateral cease-fire from mid-night 21/22 November came as a surprise! Strictly in military terms it was an understandable and logical

decision. As winter had already set, the Chinese would have found it extremely difficult to maintain the forces across the snow bound Himalayan passes. Having reached the plains of Assam, any further advance would have meant facing Indian Army that had tanks and heavy guns. The Chinese could at best muster light guns and mortars. Induction of Chinese tanks was a physical impossibility. The Chinese cease-fire proposal also mentioned the Chinese intention to immediately start withdrawal from the captured territory. The Chinese were apparently worried about the safety of their forces operating at the end of a tenuous line of communication.

In both NEFA and Ladakh, the induction of fresh Indian forces was going on at a feverish pace. By the time cease-fire came, in place of just one infantry brigade in Ladakh there was a complete division, 3 Himalayan Division, a newly raised formation had its headquarters in Leh. In addition, it also had 70 and 163 Infantry Brigades, besides 114 Brigade and three battalions of J & K Militia (later to be converted into Ladakh Scouts). In NEFA area, 5 and 23 Infantry Divisions were inducted, bringing IV Corps to its full strength. Besides the meagre IAF fleet, a squadron of C-130 Hercules aircraft of the US Air Force played a major role in this strategic airlift.

The official response to the Chinese cease-fire and withdrawal proposal was cautious. Army Headquarters sent a signal on 21 November 1962 at 1400 hrs informing the formations about the Chinese proposals(8). The troops were asked to be vigilant despite the cease-fire. Formations were asked to carry out normal patrolling activities. They were however instructed not to carry out any 'provocative actions'. The government thus, without formally accepting the cease-fire nevertheless had accepted it de-facto.

In NEFA area, the scene of major fighting, events continued to move at a fast pace. In Tezpur itself, IV Corps Headquarters that had reached Gauhati on 21 November, was asked to immediately return to Tezpur(9). Though the Corps Headquarters had moved to Gauhati, the Corps Commander, BM Kaul had continued to remain in Tezpur with a skeleton staff. All the available air transport resources and the few helicopters that were available, were utilised to spot the stragglers streaming into Assam Plains. The pilots did yeomen service, dropping food packets and evacuating seriously wounded and sick men. The pilots flew under trying conditions and bad weather. The tireless work of the helicopter pilots saved many valuable lives.

Major changes were also taking place in the Army command structure(10). On 19 November, General PN Thapar asked for and was granted leave preparatory to pre-mature retirement. On 20 November, JN Chaudhari, an Armoured Corps officer then in Southern Command, took over as the new Chief of Army Staff. On 30 November, Lt Gen BM Kaul, Commander of the ill-fated IV Corps, was transferred to XI Corps in Punjab. Kaul was to subsequently resign. Lt Gen SHFJ Manekshaw (who was to later become the first Field Marshal of the Indian Army) an officer of Gorkha regiment and winner of Military Cross during Second World War, took charge of the NEFA front on 1 December 1962. In the Ladakh theatre no changes were made in the command structure.

In less than two days Manekshaw had a measure of the situation facing his Corps. In characteristically professional manner he went about deploying the newly inducted troops. His orders to the troops were clear cut and military-like, in refreshing contrast from Kaul's long winded and often ambiguous instructions. IV Corps had three Infantry Divisions and an additional brigade to defend NEFA.

In the Kameng Frontier Division of NEFA the Chinese had reached upto a line generally in area joining Kalaktang and Chaku. Both these places are on the foot hills. Some small patrols of Chinese were believed to be operating south of this line also, though the information on this score was of uncertain authenticity. The Indians estimated that the Chinese had around two division worth of troops in this area. Opposing this, IV Corps had a division that was supported by nearly one and half regiment of tanks (nearly 60 tanks). The infantry element was deployed in the area around Misamari with the task of defending rail and road link that lay on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra and was the life line of Assam. The task for armour was to take offensive action to destroy any Chinese who ventured into the plains(11).

To the east of 5th Division, 181 Infantry Brigade covered the gap between Kameng and Subansiri areas. The brigade was deployed in area of Charduar. One squadron of tanks supported the brigade. To the east, right upto Ziro, was 2 Infantry Division. This division continued to occupy more or less its original zone. A brigade of this division held Baporijo, Ziro and Kimin with approximately a battalion each. The rest of the division continued to hold Juting, Kaying and Along. A screen position to delay the enemy continued to be based on Hlayuliang(12).

The NEFA defence were further strengthened when 23 Infantry Division moved out of Nagaland in last week of November, though division had only one brigade with it. It was deployed at Tamalpur, Bhairbkund and Udalgiri. In addition, a squadron of Armour was also deployed here. This force also had the task to act as reserve to restore adverse situation in other sectors(13).

The deployment of this formidable force under a resolute and professional commander like Manekshaw made the imminent threat to Assam recede. Manekshaw made a careful study of the road communication and the capacity of Chinese to induct and support additional forces. The Napoleonic saying that Armies march on their stomachs is even more true in the mountains. As there were virtually no local resources available, logistics and capacity to deliver ammunition, food and spares was the most critical factor on which the future course of operations depended. Manekshaw appreciated that the Chinese had the capacity, at the maximum level, to deliver around 400 tonnes per day upto Tenga Valley. This estimate was for fair weather. The condition of road beyond Tenga through the foot hills was much worse. This road passed through thick tropical forests and was subject to very heavy rains - rains that caused frequent landslides and disrupted communications. He estimated that the Chinese at the most could move about 250 tonnes per day beyond Tenga into Assam plains. Based on this estimate, he visualized that the worst Chinese threat would be of around two divisions. He was therefore confident that he had the forces available with him sufficient to destory the lightly armed Chinese, should they venture into Assam plains. The Chinese did not advance into Assam plains but instead commenced their withdrawal as per schedule(14).

CASUALTIES

Cease-fire did not however mean the end of fighting. The ordeal of the withdrawing troops continued for many more days. The biting cold was made much worse by all pervading hunger. Many men crossed over into Bhutan through uncharted terrain and snow filled passes. Many headed directly for the foot hills and Assam plains in search of safety. Weather was not the only enemy, the Chinese, despite their announcement of unilateral cease-fire, continued to ambush and fire on the withdrawing Indians.

On 22 November, the first day of cease-fire, a group of Indians just south of Dirang Dzong was fired upon with machine guns and mortars. At about 10.00 hrs the same day, another ambush took place near

Lagala Gompa, 13 km south of Dirang Dzong. In this incident about 300 Indian soldiers were fired upon by the Chinese. In the prevailing confusion, no accurate estimate of casualties could be made, but these were very heavy. A worse fate awaited a group of unarmed road workers of Border Roads Organisation. Chinese opened fire on these hapless workers near Phuting, south of Dirang Dzong. There were very few survivors(15)

The treacherous firing on withdrawing Indians did not cease on 23 November also. A group of Indian stragglers was ambushed near Shergaon. The firing that began at around 1500 hrs, lasted for a full two hours. The Chinese machine guns fell silent only when darkness came. Such incidents continued to take place right upto 26 November 1962. The fate of Brigadier Hoshiyar Singh, Commander of 62 Brigade, was in a sense typical of what happened to many soldiers(16). All contact with him was lost after 18 November. Like thousands of others, he too was trying to make it to the foot hills by taking to jungle tracks in an effort to avoid the Chinese. The first news of his fate came to light when some of the men of his party of 50 soldiers managed to reach Tezpur on 10 December. According to them their party led by Hoshiyar Singh was ambushed by the Chinese on 27 November, full six days after cease-fire, in area of Tenga. The brigadier was wounded and probably taken prisoner by the Chinese. Since the Chinese did not announce his name among the prisoners, it was surmised that he was shot dead by the Chinese. A news report to this effect was put out by PTI on 14 December.

Reacting to this report, the Chinese claimed that Brig. Hoshiyar Singh was killed in a clash near Putung near a bridge over Panchapani river. The Chinese claimed that his body was discovered much later, and exact date of his death is not known to them as the situation was fluid(17). Circumstantial evidence thus clearly shows that he was indeed killed well after the cease-fire(18).

In 2 Division sector the situation was equally bad. On 16 November at 1215 hrs, last message was received from Walong. The Operator spoke of heavy firing. Soon thereafter the brigade started withdrawing. On 17 November 1962 Brigade received direct orders, from IV Corps, to withdraw troops deployed at Mechuka. On 17 November GOC IV Corps and 2 Div traced the withdrawing column from a helicopter. The 11 Brigade commander declined the offer of helilift and withdrew along with his troops. After three days march the brigade reached Hayuliang. 3/3 GR, a battalion on the east bank of Lohit, was

completely out of touch with the brigade. To ease the difficulties of withdrawing troops, IAF helicopters carried out drops of food packets. The Gorkhas took nearly a month to reach the plains. 2/6 GR and a company of 2 Madras deployed at Mechuka commenced their withdrawal on 19/20 November, as already narrated. As the troops reached Rego, enroute to Along, they found the Chinese already there. Having left the prepared positions in Mechuka, the troops were caught in between the Chinese at these two places. The Gorkhas under Lt Col Taylor then tried to go cross country across a 14000 ft high pass. Inadequately clothed and lacking food, nearly 162 all ranks perished including Taylor(19).

There is no precise estimate of casualties. The reasons for this state of affairs are many. In the first instance, the induction of troops in NEFA was a most dis-organised affair. Units were being thrown into battle as they arrived, with little regard for normal military chain of command or the unit/formation affiliations. In addition, once the withdrawal began, the 4 Mountain Division broke up into small groups who went their own way. Most personnel were accounted under the catch all military phrase of 'missing believed killed'. The exact number of wounded or dead emerged nearly a year later. Precisely how many died due to enemy action and how many due to cold will never be known. Many soldiers who were wounded in battle, died en route. The terrain of operations, specially in NEFA, being full of inaccessible jungles and mountains, many dead bodies could never be recovered.

In Ladakh, another problem cropped up. The majority of battlefields where the dead soldiers were lying, fell within the Chinese '1960 claim line'. Indian government was reluctant to violate this 'de-facto' cease-fire line. It was many months later that many of the dead bodies were collected and cremated with full honours. In the Namkha Chu area of NEFA, skeletons were spotted as late as 1987/88(20).

In addition to these difficulties, there appears to have been an effort to downplay the magnitude of the human tragedy. On 12 December 1962, Nehru informed the Rajya Sabha that in the Sino-Indian conflict the Army suffered the loss of 197 killed, which included 11 officers, 13 JCOs, and 173 jawans. A total of 291 all ranks were wounded in battle. A full 6277 persons were still un-accounted for(21).

The Chinese Red Cross informed their Indian counterpart on 26 December 1962 that China had taken

3895 all ranks as prisoners. As per their earlier announcement after the battle of Thagla ridge, they had taken a total of 1131 prisoners(22). The figure did not include 703 sick and wounded soldiers handed over by the Chinese earlier in first and second week of December(23). The authoritative estimate of total casualties suffered by the Army was published in 1966. According to this report, the Indian Army suffered a total of 2,616 casualties (including killed and seriously wounded). Out of these 875 were directly attributed to enemy action. The rest were due to variety of causes like weather and accidents(24). The price paid by the Indian Army was heavy in deed. The Indian Army did not take any Chinese prisoner.

No reliable estimates of the casualties suffered by the Chinese are available. In case of fighting in Ladakh the Army Headquarters had asked the Western Command to make a rough estimate. The units were asked to keep in mind own strength deployed, attacking strength and number of assaults launched and their duration. The study was conducted sector wise. In the DBO sector, it was estimated that the Chinese launched a total of 11 attacks. The total strength (divided into small penny packets) of defences was approximately two companies. The units estimated that in these attacks the Chinese suffered upto 500-600 casualties. The estimates appear to be on the high side as the posts lacked defensive arty fire support. It is also a fact that these posts in most cases were not occupying dominating heights.

In Chang Chenmo & Chushul sector, 14-15 coy strength attacks were launched by the Chinese. Many of their attacks were launched in broad day light. In addition, in battle of Chushul atleast, the Indian forces had some arty & tank fire support. The defences were comparatively better prepared and tactically sited. The formations estimated the Chinese casualties at around 1300. A more conservative estimate might be around 500-600. The Chinese were similarly estimated to have lost around 600-700 men in the Indus Valley sector. According to the Western Command, the Chinese overall losses amounted to 2500 casualties, nearly five times the Indian losses(25). This amounts to almost a brigade worth of Chinese casualties. Keeping in view the overall Chinese strength in this sector i.e. a division plus a regiment (brigade), this appears to be a high figure. However the Chinese are likely to have suffered at least 1000 casualties. Some idea of the ferocity of Indian resistance could be got from the fact that the Chinese took very few prisoners. Galwan post and Razangla, Indian casualties were very

heavy. In case of a successful attack this ipso facto means heavy losses for the victor as well. Till the time the Chinese bring out their official version, this would remain in the realm of speculation.

THE CHINESE WITHDRAWAL AND INDIAN FOLLOW UP:

The cease-fire proposals made by the Chinese on 21 November 1962 also gave out their plan to quickly withdraw from the captured territory. The issue probably was an urgent one as the Chinese could not maintain their troops in such large numbers through the winter, specially in NEFA. The Chinese in their lengthy note repeated their 24 October proposal, for both sides to withdraw 20 km from line of control all along the frontier. This would keep the Chinese still in occupation of Aksai Chin area in Ladakh sector. Both sides should respect the line of actual control and undertake not to cross it and negotiations should again commence. India had rejected these proposals as it meant China keeping the fruits of her aggression.

After accusing the Indian government of aggression and blaming it for the current conflict, the Chinese made two major unilateral decisions:

- (a) Beginning from 00.00 hrs on 22 November 1962 the Chinese frontier guards will cease-fire along the entire Sino-Indian border.
- (b) Beginning from 1 December 1962, the Chinese frontier guards will withdraw to the position 20 kilometres behind the line of actual control which existed between China and India on 7 November 1962.

In the Eastern Sector, the Chinese promised to withdraw 20 km behind the McMahon line into their own territory. The Chinese also declared their intention to set up check posts in the vacated zone (between line of actual control and 20 km zone, on its own side).

The Chinese proposals while seemingly very reasonable and generous, also contained a number of 'conditions' for India to fulfill. In a nut-shell, these 'conditions' were -

- (a) Indian troops should take no offensive action against the withdrawing Chinese.
- (b) Indian troops should also remain 20 km away from McMahon Line in the East and line of actual control in Ladakh and middle sectors.

(c) Indians should not re-occupy Namkha Chu positions in NEFA or Chip Chap, Galwan, Pengong Tso and Demchok areas in Ladakh.

The Chinese note made it clear that should India not follow the above 'conditions' China "reserve the right to strike back in self-defence"(26). China thus managed to retain the areas vital to her in Ladakh and safeguard her over-extended troops in NEFA while they withdrew.

The Indian response to the Chinese withdrawal was very cautious. It was decided that the Civilian administration should be gradually extended to the area. The IB was also to establish check posts in the vacated areas. The re-induction of the Army was not planned in the immediate future. The problems connected with re-occupation of NEFA were discussed at an informal meeting in Ministry of Defence on 7 December 1962(27). Besides a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, the meeting was also attended by a representative of External Affairs Ministry, since the NEFA administration was being controlled by it. It was decided at this meeting that political officers would go back to Ziro, Daporijo, Along and Pasighat, Roing and Tezu. These were divisional headquarters and skeleton staff had continued to function there. Sub-Divisional officers were to proceed to their places later. The main problems visualized concerned the likelihood of Chinese cells left behind and their subversive activities. IB officers were asked to keep a careful watch over the situation.

In the west, in Ladakh sector, Western Command was ordered not to send patrols across the 1960 Chinese claim line, which coincided with the outermost limit of Chinese occupation in 1962(28). Following policy similar to the one being implemented in NEFA, IB posts were already established at Phobrang, Dungle and Koyul. It was also decided to send parties to posts earlier vacated in the central sub-sector i.e. Hot Springs and Tsogatsalu. In the southern Indus Valley sector, posts at Hanle, Zarsar and Chumar had not withdrawn and were ordered to continue in their location.

On 1 December 1962, Army HQ informed IV Corps, Tezpur about the Chinese intention to hand over sick and wounded prisoners of war at Dirang Dzong. The Indian Red Cross was asked to make the necessary arrangements for their reception. In the meanwhile Colonel Luthra, Advisor to Assam Governor, volunteered to organize civilian search parties to locate and help Indian Army stragglers(29). He was

given the go ahead signal. In the meanwhile, some withdrawing soldiers of 1 Sikh LI reported on 2 December that the Chinese had indeed vacated Chaku area. The Peking Radio also broadcast on 6/7 December that the Chinese had vacated Chaku which they called Yingko Pass.

The civilian rescue team concentrated its work initially in the foothills. Between 7 & 10 December from area of Kalaktang 48 Jawans were traced and rescued(30). On 11 December civilian administration was re-established at Bomdila. The Chinese had vacated Bomdila around 5/6 December. On 12 December, the Chinese handed over two officers and 16 Jawans who were sick and wounded, at Mechuka. The returnees belonged to 2/8 GR and 2 Madras. It then became known that 27 other prisoners were taken back to China. The returned sick soldiers confirmed that while attempting to cross over a snow bound pass, Lt Col D Taylor and three other officers were lost in snow and died of exhaustion and cold. Their bodies were never found. The Chinese handed over 77 sick and wounded at Dirang Dzong and 26 men at Walong. The injured and sick were quickly evacuated to rear hospitals(31).

The Chinese utilised the occasion to take full propaganda advantage. They handed over arms and equipment to the village chiefs before vacating the captured area. Chinese left Mechuka, Walong and Tawang around 21/22 December and went back to their side of McMahon Line. All equipment of any value was taken away. Before handing over arms, the Chinese made sure that only unserviceable and damaged equipment was handed back. The whole exercise was a propaganda ploy to show Chinese generosity.

The Chinese handed back 117 vehicles of all types. After some minor repairs these were made roadworthy. It was a different story when it came to arms. Out of 21 guns (25 pounders) most had either cracked barrels or were without sights. The Chinese also handed back 41 three-inch mortars, 16 medium machine guns, 200 light machine guns and 2193 small arms that included 303 rifles and sten guns. It was indeed a humiliating experience for the Indian Army. The large quantity of arms handed over by the Chinese only showed the magnitude of Indian defeat; probably that was the Chinese intention(32).

The problem in Ladakh was of a different nature. Here there were no stragglers or missing personnel but an emotional problem of Indian dead bodies still lying on the battlefields. The areas were, by and large, behind the 1960 claim line of the Chinese and so out of bounds(33).

As the Indian civil administration teams moved into various posts, a clearer picture emerged. On 12 February 1963, an Indian Army patrol visited Rezangla, the scene of fierce fighting in November 1962(34). Major Shaitan Singh, winner of the nation's highest gallantry award - the Param Vir Chakra - had died here. His body was discovered by the patrol just outside his bunker. He had received eight bullets and was still clutching his sten gun. In the intense cold of Ladakh the body was well preserved even two months after death. A grateful nation gave a fitting farewell to Shaitan Singh. His body was flown to his native village Bansar in Jodhpur district on 19 February 1963 and he was cremated with full military honours. Village Bansar was named after this hero of Rezangla.

Subsequently, Brigadier TN Raina, commander of 114 Brigade, himself went to Rezangla and Gurung hill with a large party to collect the dead. Rezangla had 96 dead bodies, (of 13 Kumaon) and Gurung hill, 26 dead bodies mainly of 2/8 Gorkhas. Evidence of heavy fighting was not lacking. The Chinese had used heavy artillery and rockets to destroy the bunkers. Shell craters of 160 mm heavy mortar were also clearly visible. A large number of used bandages were scattered on the hillside. There were also tell tale blood marks, evidence of ferocity of fighting as well as an indicator of heavy casualties suffered by the Chinese. Five bodies buried by the Chinese had wooden posts with inscriptions in Chinese and English "The Corpses of Indian Invaders"(35).

Both Gurung Hill and Rezangla were very close to the 1960 claim line and did not pose a major problem in organising search and collection of dead bodies. In March 1963, Western Command wrote to Army Headquarters saying that nearly 190 personnel are still missing from various posts in DBO sector, Changchenmo and Indus valley sub sectors(36). Most of these areas were 8-16 km inside the Chinese claim line. Any move by Indian Army personnel in these areas was likely to be construed as 'provocation' by the Chinese. Western Command therefore urged Army HQ to take up this matter with the Chinese government. It was pointed out that even during the second world war, it was common practice to permit each other to collect the dead through mutual consent.

On 3 April 1963, the Indian Red Cross approached their Chinese counterpart(37). After a delay of nearly three weeks, the Chinese reply was received on 29 April. The Chinese turned down the Indian request on ground that the dead bodies were properly buried

and there was no need to send any Indian parties into the disputed areas. But since Indians do not bury but cremate their dead, the issue was again taken up with the Chinese in May 1963. Finally the Chinese in a reply on 13 August agreed to carry out cremation and hand over ashes to Indian Red Cross(38). The Indian Red Cross intimated their Chinese counterpart that Indian representatives would like to be present during the cremation to carry out certain religious ceremonies. This was not acceptable to the Chinese and on 15 August 1963, they cancelled the arrangements. The text of the Chinese Red Cross Society's cable is quoted below.

"Your August 14 telegram received (regarding presence of Indian representatives during cremation). Our Aug 13 telegram clearly stated that collection and cremation of dead bodies of Indian military personnel would be exclusively Chinese responsibility. Chinese authorities categorically refuse your societies attempt to send people to interfere - Chinese govt has told us to halt our work of collecting and cremating the dead".

The Chinese foreign ministry repeated the above objection in a memo dated 16 September 1963. The Chinese accused the Indian government that it was trying to lay claim to these territories through this device. The Chinese claimed that the Indians who died at their posts were 'invaders' and not defending their 'motherland'(39)

This petty minded Chinese response to humanitarian requests showed the depths to which the erstwhile 'Bhai' (brother) had sunk. It also showed the extreme sensitivity of the Chinese to any Indians moves in Ladakh sector. The war was over, but the war fears and debris continued to dot the border areas.

A NATION AROUSED :

National Resurgence

It was a gloomy winter. The military humiliation had made deep wounds on the Indian psyche. Yet, paradoxically, it was also India's finest hour. The response of the people in this hour of national peril can be described in just one word - magnificent. The popular reaction to this national disaster was a mixture of emotions - there was a sense of bewilderment and also anger. The dominant mood of the nation was one of determination, determination to fight on till the last Chinese had been thrown out.

The sense of bewilderment is easily understandable if seen in the background of the earlier talk of Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai. The nation was indeed at a loss to understand the motive behind Chinese aggression. The surprise was also on another count, the successive reverses suffered in NEFA. The media build up prior to the conflict had raised people's expectations. Most newspapers fostered the impression that while in Ladakh Indian Army was at a distinct disadvantage, in NEFA, the Chinese would be quickly 'thrown out' of the Indian territory. Gen Kaul's appointment to take up the assignment, raising of a new corps at Tezpur and brave talk at political level had all raised the expectation of a swift victory. In the event, instead of victories, it was constant withdrawals. In NEFA, the Chinese captured huge territory, advanced nearly two hundred km and almost reached the Assam plains. The media, uniformly naive on military matters, depicted even tactical moves as routs. Mere place names like Tsangle, Dhola or Tsengejong, in popular imagination, conjured up visions of villages and towns being lost. The overall effect was devastating, for citizens were more uninformed than even the media about defence matters.

As the stories of shortages of all kinds and lack of preparation filtered back, there was a rising wave of anger. The anger was directed against the politicians who had kept the armed forces thus woefully equipped. Military secrecy kept the lid on command and other failures and the military saved itself from public wrath.

On another plane the anger of the people was directed against the Chinese. Chinese aggression of 1962 often was described as 'The Chinese betrayal' or a stab in the back. The war, in words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India, became one for Dharma (Righteousness). The Indian reaction was understandable, as right upto 20 October 1962, the Chinese were always perceived as fellow Asians and friends. The marching Chinese armies destroyed this feeling of Asian solidarity and a 5000 years peace between India and China. Rightly or wrongly, henceforth the Chinaman's image in Indian mind was to remain that of an ungrateful and treacherous people. In a sense China had paid a very heavy price for its military victory.

The Indian Parliament, as the highest body representing the will of the Indian people, solemnly resolved -

"With hope and faith, this house affirms the

firm resolve of the Indian people to drive out the aggressor from the sacred soil of India, however long and hard the struggle may be."

The resolution that was moved on 8 November, was passed unanimously on 14 November 1962. In addition to expressing its firm resolve to take back the lost territories, the Parliament also noted the fact that China had invaded Indian territory in spite of the friendly gestures on part of India. The parliament also paid tributes to the brave Jawans who laid down their lives in defence of the country(40).

Artists, poets and India's thriving movie industry all contributed to raising the peoples morale. There was an all round surge of patriotism, such as never seen before. The national mood was not aggressive but one of quiet determination. None could forget the humiliating military defeat. Poet Pradeep (Sharma) was inspired to write his immortal song, 'Aai Mere watan ke logon.....(Oh the people of my land.....). The song went on to remind the people never to forget the Indian blood that was shed on the Himalayas. The men who died on the Himalayan heights were not Sikhs, Marathas or Gorkhas but just simply Indians, the song went on. A moving song that brings tears to many an Indian eye even to-date. Set to a soulful tune by a master music director (Ramchandra Chitalkar) it was sung with emotion in the golden voice of Lata Mangeshkar(41) at an all party public meeting on 26 January 1963 in New Delhi. As the song ended there was a hushed silence. Many gave full vent to their feelings of grief mixed with anger. Nehru broke down completely and cried like a small child.

The Indian peoples' response was overwhelming. As if in a flash all the internal bickerings and fights ceased. The nation was consumed with just one desire 'Fight to Finish'. An elderly couple on 23 October 1962 had trekked about 16 km (10 miles) from a village near Delhi. The old man with tattered clothes demanded to see the Prime Minister. The security guards at Teen Murti House, the PM's official residence, mistook the bundle of papers the old man was clutching in his hands, as some petition. The old man's reply brought tears to the sentry's eyes. The couple had brought papers donating their entire property for National Defence Fund. School children collected their pocket money and sent it for buying guns. Indian woman's love of gold is age old and a legend. Yet the Chinese aggression saw the some women freely donating their gold ornaments. In a few cases even the most sacred of a married woman's possessions, 'the Mangalshutra', was donated(42).

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In Rajasthan 250 families from village Bardhana Khurd decided to send one son from each family into the Army. In Assam, 10,000 students from local colleges gathered outside the recruitment office demanding to be enrolled in the Army to fight the Chinese. A successful lawyer from Akola in Maharashtra, gave up his practice and joined Artillery, the very arm in which his younger brother had died fighting the Chinese at Walong. Thousands lined outside hospitals to donate blood. Students and teachers alike signed pledges in their own blood vowing to fight to the last for the defence of motherland.

The State of Punjab, with its martial traditions and contribution to the armed forces; was in the forefront of contributions to the national defence fund(43)

The industrial workers voluntarily agreed to put a moratorium on strikes. The employers on their part gave a pledge to increase production and also volunteered not have lock-outs. The immediate effect was that the port workers of Goa, electricity workers at Delhi and at paper mills of Sripur, called off their strike unconditionally. The man days lost in industry came down sharply and there was total industrial peace.

The Dravida Munetra Kazagam party of Tamil Nadu, which had spearheaded an almost secessionist campaign since 1960 suspended its agitation(44). The party was responding to a groundswell of public opinion that forced all petty disputes to be discarded in favour of national unity. Such was the overwhelming response that the National Integration Council on 1 November 1962 decided to adjourn without debate, as there was no need anymore. Soon thereafter the council was actually dissolved.

A rough indication of the kind of response can be had from the fact that when a supplementary demand of Rs.95 crores (in addition to the defence budget of around Rs.350 crores) was put up before Parliament in early 1963, the full amount was already with the government through voluntary contributions(45). It is indeed not possible to recount even a part of the sacrifices offered by the people. It would be unfair to list some and not others. These examples have been cited only to give an idea of the depth and spread of this tremendous national response. The nation is resolved to pay any price to preserve its freedom.

The Political Fallout

A momentous event like the Sino-Indian border conflict was bound to have a domestic political fallout. The diminution of Nehru's stature was one direct result. Nehru had steadfastly argued for peace ever since 1959 as tensions grew on the border. In October 1959, for the first time since independence, Praja Socialist Party organised a demonstration outside his residence demanding his resignation. Later, in August 1963 the first ever motion of no-confidence was tabled against his government. Nehru was not a mere PM but an institution in himself. For 15 years he not only won elections for his party but also ruled the hearts of his countrymen. Seen in this light, it was indeed a trauma for the great leader. In a year's time he suffered a stroke and ultimately died on 27 May 1964, barely 21 months after the border war. The fortunes of Congress Party, which had held undisputed sway over the Indian polity till then, also suffered a set back.

The functioning of Defence Ministry came under sharper focus. There had been, even earlier, rumblings of dissent, as when on 31 August 1959, General KS Thimayya, a respected officer with proven track record, had resigned due to his differences with Defence Minister Krishna Menon. That storm had died down when on Nehru's persuasion Thimayya took back his resignation the very next day. JB. Kriplani, an implacable critic of Menon, had kept a constant barrage of criticism of Nehru-Menon's handling of the China question. The events had proved Kripalani right. People of India were horrified to learn about the ill-clad and ill-equipped soldiers hurled into battle on the Himalayan front with such disastrous results.

The major casualty of the outcry against the government for its neglect of defence requirement was Menon, the Defence Minister. The PM attempted to shield Menon, but the outcry against him was so shrill that on 31 October, Nehru accepted his resignation and took over the defence portfolio himself(46). Menon was appointed Minister in-charge of Defence Production. The campaign against Menon refused to die. At a private meeting Satyanarain Sinha, a Congress party MP is reported to have told the PM, "Either Menon goes or you too go"(47). Finally, on 9 November 1962, Menon had to resign from the post of Minister of Defence Production as well.

The sentiment against Menon was primarily due to his known leaning towards communists. Some media persons went to the extent of accusing him to have

sabotaged the war effort. The truth, however, was that most major decisions were Cabinet decisions and virtually Nehru's personal decisions. The loss of prestige suffered by Nehru was a major new development. Until then, though a true democrat, Nehru held a virtual autocratic sway over his Congress Party. The outcry against Nehru was muted as there was no other alternative leader in sight. People also felt a need to stand united in face of Chinese threat.

The political fallout of the Chinese aggression affected the fortunes of the Communist Party of India. In 1959, as the tension on the Sino-Indian border arose, the party lost power in Kerala. The Communist Party, in consonance with the Soviet and Chinese opinion, saw the Sino-Indian conflict as a reactionary plot to drag India into cold war. The party had constantly urged restraint on both sides. In the context of the rising tide of Indian nationalism this 'neutralist' stance was unacceptable to the majority of Indians. Between April 1958 and 1961, the active membership of the party declined from 2,75,000 to just over 1,00,000. Worse was to follow. Across the country, Communist Party offices and members were attacked. On 31 October 1962, a mob in Delhi attacked the Central Committee office and ransacked it. There were stray cases of violence against the properties of Indo-Soviet Cultural Societies also.

The pressure of public opinion forced the Communists to take a clear stand on the issue of Chinese invasion. The National Council of Communist Party met in New Delhi on 1 November 1962 and passed a resolution condemning the Chinese aggression(48). The resolution also supported the Government stand that there could be no negotiations with the Chinese till they vacated the occupied areas. The Party Chairman, Mr S.A. Dange, whole-heartedly supported Nehru and wrote a letter to the Communist Parties the world over, condemning China for its wanton aggression(49). The first cracks in Communist unity were clearly apparent. Some members of the Communist Party Central Committee had opposed the resolution condemning China. Notable among them was Mr. B.T. Ranadive. Ranadive was arrested on 7 November 1962 under the Preventive Detention Act by the Maharashtra Government. In early March 1963 Mr E.M.S. Namboodripad from Kerala, and several prominent Communists from West Bengal including Jyoti Basu and Pramod Dasgupta, resigned from the Communist Party, to later form Communist Party of India (Marxist). Thus the Chinese aggression led to a split in India's second largest political party. The Communists never recovered from this blow and remained a marginal political force on the Indian scene for many more years to come.

Chinese nationals living in India became prime suspects in the public eye. In a series of decisions, India severed all links with China. On 10 December 1962 the Reserve Bank of India cancelled the licence of Bank of China. Its branches in Bombay and Calcutta were closed down. On 20 November the Government ordered internment of all Chinese nationals and people of Chinese origin living in Assam and border districts of West Bengal(50). On 4 December 1962, India ordered that no Chinese civil aircraft were permitted to fly over Indian air space. The Chinese in the meanwhile were taking similar actions against Indian nationals and property. The Indian Government action was selective. Only 2000 out of an estimated 15,000 people of Chinese origin were interned. These internees were detained at a camp in Deolali in Maharashtra(51). Initially only grown up men were interned, women and children being left free. The Chinese however requested permission to stay together, which was granted. The representatives of International Red Cross were invited and visited the camp to satisfy that no harm would come to the Chinese. The internment of the Chinese in a sense indicated the total rupture of relations between the two great Asian peoples(52).

The National Emergency and National Mobilization

The President issued a proclamation of National Emergency on 26 October 1962. This was issued under the powers conferred on him through Article 352 of the Indian Constitution. A Defence of India Ordinance was also promulgated simultaneously. Later, the Parliament passed the Defence of India Act, incorporating various ordinances.

Under these measures the government assumed sweeping powers. The Act gave authority to the government to issue directives to State Governments even on matters pertaining purely to the States. The legislatures also got the authority to abridge even the Fundamental Rights given to the citizens under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.

Various restrictions were placed on foreigners, including prohibiting their visit to border areas and State of Assam. The government also acquired right to requisition movable or immovable property. To ensure that industrial or commercial activity continued un-hampered, the government assured trade and industry that any losses as a result of enemy action would be made up by the government. To this end in December 1962, the Parliament passed the Emergency Risks Insurance Act 1962. The legal measures adopted

including the Defence of India Act, Civil Defence Act and various restrictions were very similar to those enforced by the British during the Second World War.

To co-ordinate and implement the defence plan, an apex body called National Defence Council (NDC) was set up. The NDC was an advisory body chaired by the Prime Minister. The charter of this body was extensive and included the following:-

- To take stock of the situation and arrangements for national defence from time to time.
- To assist in defence build up.
- To advise Central Citizen's Council on measures to ensure popular participation in defence efforts.
- To advise the government on general measures to help fight the aggression(53).

The NDC was a large body. The Cabinet ministers dealing with Defence, Home, Finance & Railways were ex-Officio members. In addition, the three Service Chiefs, Chief Ministers of border States (J&K, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam) were also members. Chief Ministers of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu were also added. The Secretaries of Defence, Finance, External Affairs, Home and Cabinet Secretary were also co-opted as members. Prominent retired soldiers like General K.S. Thimayya, Lt Gen S.P.P. Thorat, Vice Admiral Kataria and General Rejendra Sinhji were some other members. The scientific community was represented by Dr. D.S. Kothari, Dr. S. Bhatnagar and Dr. Homi J. Bhaba, while industrialist Naval Tata and Ashok Mehta and Mrs Indira Gandhi were also members. It was a large body(54).

The NDC met for the first time on 25 November 1962, and decided to set up two smaller committees, i.e., one dealing with Military Affairs and another for Peoples Participation. The Military Affairs Committee was chaired by Defence Minister Y.B. Chavan and included the three Service Chiefs as well as retired Generals Rejendra Sinhji, Thimayya and Lt Gen S.P.P. Thorat. The other Committee was presided over by the Home Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri(55).

Under the Civil Defence Scheme, nine separate organisations were set up. Each had a distinct role.

- The National Volunteer Rifles. This was to be the auxiliary to the Defence Forces. Men and women between the age group of 18-35 joined these organisations. The training included rifle shooting, nursing and operating wire-less sets.

RESTRICTED

- The National Cadet Corps. The NCC had an Army, Air and a Naval Wing. Under this scheme, selected college and school-going students received military training. The NCC strength in January 1962 was nearly 3 lakhs. It was till the Emergency a voluntary body. Now it was made compulsory for all college students.
- The Civil Defence Organisation. This trained the people in first aid, fire fighting and air raid precautions.
- Home Guards. This Organisation was already in existence in cities. Now in addition to its job of helping the police, it was to help strengthen vigilance and security at sensitive installations.
- Village Volunteer Force. This was virtually a replica of Home Guards with similar functions in villages.
- Four more miscellaneous organisations brought together Labour, Women Volunteers, Transport workers and Technically qualified people(56).

Defence Preparations

Y.B. Chavan, the new Defence Minister outlined the defence plan in the Parliament on 8 April 1963. The major effort was to be in four directions: "Firstly we have to expand the Army, secondly there has to be necessary expansion and modernization of the Air Force, thirdly, there will have to be a strong production base, and fourthly the ancillary facilities like communications and transport have to be enhanced and expanded." Chavan in a nutshell summed up the direction of Indian defence effort which in future years was to produce a formidable fighting machine. The Army's size was to be doubled, to nearly 8 lakhs(57).

The expansion was proceeding side by side with modernization of existing force. The major constraints faced were the shortage of Foreign Exchange and limited industrial capacity. Partly the problem of equipment was off set by aid from the USA and UK, specially for the 10 mountain divisions that were planned to be raised.

To cater to the expansion, the Indian Military Academy that normally trained 1000 officers, took up the challenge to train 3,200 officers trained.

Emergency commission was offered in the Army and by September 1963, nearly 5,852 such officers were commissioned. Two new institutions, one at Poona and another at Madras, trained the selected candidates for 3 months before induction into the Army. Various other measures were taken to conserve trained manpower. Junior commissioned officers (JCOs) were retained beyond service limit, and suitable retired personnel were re-called and re-employed. A school was raised to train Mechanical Engineers at Baroda and the capacity of training in High Altitude Warfare was doubled.

Equal attention was given to strengthen the production base. The ordnance and ammunition factories were working round the clock. The value of production from these factories was planned to increase from Rs.50 crores for 1962-63 to Rs.100 crores for 1963-64. The semi-automatic rifle for Army had been developed and was under production at Ishapore Factory. In aircraft manufacturing, the HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd) had taken up development of HF-24 Fighter bomber of indigenous design. In addition, work was started to develop a jet trainer (Kiran). Decision to set up a separate complex to manufacture MiG-21 Supersonic Fighters of USSR origin was also announced. The government also decided to acquire submarines for the Navy, and initial steps were taken to prepare crew and other infrastructure.

The Prime Minister, on 9 November 1962, had told Parliament that an enquiry into the causes of Indian reverses had been ordered(58). The Prime Minister told a news conference on 31 December 1962 that the enquiry would be limited to military appraisal only. Accordingly, General J.N. Chaudhari appointed a two-man commission of enquiry with Lt Gen Henderson Brooks and Brigadier P.S. Bhagat (later Lt Gen) Victoria Cross winner of Second World War. The enquiry was completed in a record time of three months. The report of the enquiry was graded Top Secret and remained hidden from the public. But Army HQ took energetic action on the findings. The training was re-oriented and suitable doctrines were evolved to fight the Chinese in mountains. The CGS, Lt Gen Moti Sagar, an able professional soldier was mainly instrumental in this. To toughen the officers and men, a new commando course was started in Mhow. It was compulsory for all Infantry Officers. Week long and tough manoeuvres in mountains was the order of the day. The men moved across country on self-contained basis. The target was to fight without any re-supply for 10 days at a stretch. Withdrawals, the bane of 1962 operations, were banished from teachings. It was continuously drilled into all that no matter if they were cut off or surrounded, the troops must continue

to fight from their prepared positions(59). There will be NO WITHDRAWALS was the simple and clear order of new Army Chief. The hyper-activity and hard training was to rescue the nation just two years later when Pakistan repeated Chinese tactics of infiltration in Kashmir. The Pakistani plan failed in face of determined resistance by a rejuvenated Indian Army.

WAR OF WORDS : DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES

The tensions on the Sino-Indian border erupted into a full-scale armed conflict on the 20 October 1962. While the shooting war was on, the wordy duel between the two countries also continued. Both chose to maintain diplomatic representatives in each other's country. A total of 81 notes, letters and memoranda were exchanged during the period between 20 October 1962 and January 1963. The correspondence dealt mainly with the broader aspects of boundary disputes, air space violation allegations, allegations regarding ill-treatment of Chinese nationals in India and Indians in China as well as disputes over properties of consulates closed down in India and China. The documents of this period were published in the form of White Paper (Vol VIII) by the Indian Government in January 1963. Some important issues that were raised, are discussed in succeeding paragraphs as these would help in understanding the gulf that has continued to separate the Indian and Chinese positions on the border row.

The Chinese offensive started on 20 October 1962 all along the Sino-Indian border. By 24 October, the Chinese had eliminated Indian check posts in Chip-Chap Valley, DBO, Galwan and Indus Valley sectors. In the east they had captured Towang and had reached northern banks of Towangchu. On an average the Chinese had advanced 20-30 km since the conflict began. On 24 October, the Chinese Premier wrote to his Indian counterpart asking him to accept the Chinese proposal for cease-fire. The salient points of the Chinese proposal of 24 October 1962 were(60) :

- Both side agree that the dispute should be settled by negotiations.
- Pending settlement both side agree to respect 'line of actual control' and also affect disengagement by withdrawing respective forces 20 km behind this line.
- Should Indian government agree to the above proposals, the Chinese are prepared to hold talks at the PM level.

The Indian Prime Minister in his reply on 27 October rejected the Chinese proposals as un-reasonable, as the Chinese had through use of force changed the 'line of actual control' and now wanted Indians to accept this forcible occupation(61). The Indian Prime Minister instead suggested that the only way to start negotiations was for the Chinese to go back to the positions held by them on 8 September 1962. Once this step was taken, negotiations could begin. The Indian side also sought clarifications from the Chinese as to what they meant by the 'line of actual control'.

The Chinese replied on 4 November 1962(62). The Chou En-Lai was glad that the Indians were agreeable to look ahead, and gave some explanation of the term 'line of actual control'. "The line of actual control mentioned in the proposals (of 24 October 1962) is basically still the line of actual control as existed between the Chinese and Indian sides on 7 November 1959. To put it concretely, in the Eastern Sector it coincides in the main with the so called McMahon Line and in the Western and Central Sectors with the traditional customary line which has been consistently pointed out by the Chinese"(63).

The Chinese explained that since they were prepared to go back to the line as held in 1959, it was a proof of their sincere desire for peace. The note further pointed out that taking the 1959 line as the basis, the Chinese proposal of 20 km withdrawal beyond this line would mean that in Eastern Sector China had to withdraw much more than 20 km (from the recently occupied Towang area, 10-20 km and a further 20 km).

The Chinese claimed that their proposals were equitable and just. They also pointed out that many Afro-Asian countries had supported the Chinese proposals, and added that this withdrawal was to be treated 'only as a preliminary step and "will in no way prejudice the claims of either side in maintaining its claims".'

The whole border issue in essence came to revolve around Aksai Chin where Chinese wanted to keep the areas occupied by them till 1959, and also wanted Indian forces to withdraw 20 km from this area so as to safeguard the Aksai Chin highway.

Nehru replied on 14 November 1962 and pointed out that the Chinese professions of peace had lost all meaning since their aggression(64). It was difficult to have faith in the Chinese bonafides, the Prime

Minister further pointed. "What the Chinese called the 1959 line of actual control was no line but a series of positions of Chinese forces on Indian territory of Ladakh, progressively established since 1957, which forcibly and unilaterally altered the status quo of the boundary". To advance a few hundred km and then offer to withdraw 20 km could hardly be called 'constructive proposal based on mutual accommodation', the note pointed out. The Indian note again reiterated the proposal to go back to the line of 8 September 1962. In effect this would mean that the Indians would retain their position in Chip-Chap, Galwan and Chushul sectors in Ladakh, established in the wake of the forward policy. In the East and Central Sectors, the difficulties were minor and revolved around small disputes over possession of Barahoti, Longju and Thag La ridge. The position, specially in Ladakh was not acceptable to the Chinese.

The announcement of unilateral cease-fire on the 21 November, was accompanied, as already mentioned, by a Chinese statement that repeated the 24 October proposals. Indian reaction was on two planes. De-facto it accepted the proposals and refrained from crossing the '1959' claim line in west and 1962 line of actual control in NEFA. Diplomatically reacting to the Chinese proposals as elaborated in Chinese Premier's letters of 27 October, 4 November and 28 November, the Indian Prime Minister disputed the Chinese version of 1959 line. He stated that at that time there were no Chinese posts at Qazil Jilga in north or south or west of Spangur lake. The Indian side further said that actually the line of control claimed to be 1959 line was the one that was established by the Chinese forces after their invasion.

India pointed out the contradiction in Chinese letter of 28 November 1962, which on one hand talked of unconditional withdrawal and on the other hand threatened re-occurrence of clashes if Indian forces did not take similar measures. The impasse on interpretations continued to dodge the normalisation of relations between the two countries.

WORLD REACTIONS

The Sino-Indian border conflict and serious Indian reverses generated a wave of sympathy in the Western world. India, a democracy, was thought to be fighting for the 'Free World'. Canada, Australia and New Zealand came forward with offer of aid of all kinds. The response of the West was seen by most Indians as quick, generous and unconditional. The prompt American response made a deep impression on the

Indian people's mind. The young American President, J.F. Kennedy, became very popular in India(65). Prof J.K. Galbraith, the US Ambassador in India at that time, wrote that overnight the mood was transformed. US was regarded as a true friend of India, he reported, and nobody was prepared to talk of non-alignment.

President De Gaulle of France, expressed his strong disapproval of China. Chancellor of Federal Republic of Germany, K Adenauer, considered the Chinese attack as a threat to the free world as a whole. The Japanese Premier criticised China and expressed deep sympathy over India's current difficulties. The Western sympathy was soon translated into concrete shape when military aid started flowing in(66).

Soviet Union's initial reaction was a markedly neutral stance with slight tilt towards the Chinese. Right from 1959, the Soviet Union had been urging restraint on both sides. The Longju incident of that year was described as an Imperialist plot to drag India into Western camp. The first official Soviet reaction to the Chinese attack came on 25 October 1962(67). Pravda, the government mouthpiece regretted this armed clash between 'Friend' (India) and 'brother' (China). The Soviet daily commented favourably on the Chinese 3 point proposals of 24 October and urged India to accept them. The Soviet stand was very soon to undergo a major change, and, by December 1962, the Soviets were already talking of 'Chinese adventurism'. It is quite likely that the muted Soviet reaction in the initial stages was due to her pre-occupation with the Cuban missile crisis(68). The Soviet Union was apparently clear that China had tried to take advantage of this crisis. The open cleavage between the two communist giants was a later development(1967). The Chinese attack on India was definitely a contributing factor in it. Soviet Union quickly balanced its initial pro-China tilt by agreeing to go through with the 'MiG Deal' that meant setting up factories in India for manufacture of supersonic MiG-21. In 1963, USSR also promised aid to build Bokaro steel plant. The supply of AN-12 transport aircraft and Mi 4 helicopters has been dealt earlier. The initial lukewarm Soviet response caused dismay in India and took a while to wash away. The Soviet caution was in stark contrast to the open and generous response of the Americans, and cost her a lot of Indian goodwill.

On 26 October 1962, the Indian Prime Minister addressed a personal letter to various heads of government explaining the origin of the Sino-Indian

conflict. The letter also sought their support and sympathy. The Indian diplomatic efforts did result in a positive response. By 7 November, nearly forty countries from all the continents expressed their support to India(69). The only country to support the Chinese was tiny Albania. Among the African countries, Ghana alone struck a discordant note. President K. Nkrumah of Ghana went to the extent of writing a letter to the British Prime Minister cautioning him against giving military aid to India, which according to him, "might aggravate the unfortunate situation"(70). In Iraq, the people demonstrated their spontaneous support to India(71). President Nasser of Egypt sent a telegram to the Chinese on 21 October 1962(72), and offered to mediate in the dispute. UAR was convinced that the Chinese were aggressors.

There were, for various reasons, some exceptions in the third world's general support for India. Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (North Korea) toed the Chinese line. Some newspapers in Indonesia, Nepal and Burma also wrote pro-China articles(73). Mr. Ho Chi Minh, the North Vietnamese leader, sent a personal message to Nehru pleading for the acceptance of Chinese proposals of 21 November 1962. Nehru in his reply did not agree with Ho and felt that the proposals meant China would enjoy the fruits of her aggression. Nehru, however, added that India is nevertheless not interfering in any way with the cease-fire or withdrawal of the Chinese(74).

Pakistani reactions had special relevance due to her constant adverse relationship with India. As the tensions on Sino-Indian border were rising in 1959, Pakistan proposed a common defence against the 'Northern' enemies. 'Dawn' a Karachi newspaper close to the Pakistani government, made this proposal in an editorial on 7 April 1959. On 4 May of the same year, the Indian Prime Minister rejected the proposal, asking a counter question, "defence against whom and for what?(75)"

As the Sino-Indian tensions broke out into a shooting war, Pakistani attitude changed considerably. Two influential Urdu papers, Jang and Nai Roshani, editorially commented upon the ongoing war. China was hailed as a peace-loving country and India was blamed for provoking the conflict. Apart from the newspapers, the Pakistan government reaction was on low key. No attempt was made to take any military advantage of India's difficulties. There is reason to believe that both the US and UK exerted considerable pressure on Pakistan in this respect(76).

Reporting about his meeting with President Ayub Khan, of Pakistan, the Indian High Commissioner there reported that the President, himself a soldier, evinced keen interest in the military happenings. Ayub Khan felt that the engagements were limited in nature and the real danger was long term and in distant future(77).

Since 1961, the Chinese and Pakistanis had been in touch on demarcation of border between Sinkiang and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir(POK). The talks had reached an advanced stage by spring of 1962. On 2 March 1963, Pakistan and China signed an agreement delimiting the border between Pak held Kashmir and China. India denounced the agreement as null and void, as Pakistan was in illegal occupation of Indian territory in Kashmir. Indian papers described it as agreement between two thieves.

Arms Aid

The flow of arms aid, mainly from the USA and Britain, had started even before the cease-fire. Nehru told Congress MPs on 29 October that some arms (mainly self-loading rifles) had been received from the USA and Britain(78). On 30 October 1962, the British PM, Sir Harold Macmillan as well the leader of Opposition, Mr Hugh Gaitskill, pledged that Britain would do whatever India asked for. Earlier the British Queen had declared her government's resolve to help India. Similar declarations were made by Canadian PM and US Ambassador in India, Mr. Galbraith, made it clear that the US assistance was un-conditional and clarified that he did not expect India to join the US military alliances in return(79).

On 9 November the French Ambassador in India announced military aid worth 10 million US dollars. The aid consisted of Allouette helicopters (Mark I and Mark III) as well as spares for French aircraft in the Indian inventory (Mysteres and Toofanis). An agreement for military aid from the US was signed in New Delhi on 14 November 1962. In deference to US wishes and Pakistani anxiety, India gave an assurance that the arms given by the US would be deployed in NEFA and Ladakh only. Philips Tolbot, the US Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asia, explained that the Communist Chinese aggression posed a threat not only to India but to the whole of Indian sub-continent. On 22 November a joint Anglo-US military mission arrived in India to make an on the spot assessment of Indian military needs. On the same day, the first of C-130 'Hercules' transport aircraft landed in New Delhi. Next day another 11 joined it. The aircraft were flown by US crew. These aircraft

were used to shift 5 Infantry Division from Ferozpur in Punjab to NEFA. The aircraft, which could operate from forward airfields, had a payload capacity of 20 tonnes. These proved invaluable in building up the Indian strength in Ladakh and NEFA(80).

The Western arms aid to India in the wake of Chinese aggression crystalized at the Nassau Summit in December 1962. The total aid package was to be \$120 million worth. This was to be shared equally by the US and the Commonwealth nations. The arms aid would help India raise six mountain divisions. Assistance was also promised to establish a chain of early warning radars on the Sino-Indian front. In addition, the immediate needs for communication were to be met through supply of modern wireless sets.

The joint statement issued at the end of Nassau Summit urged Indo-Pak reconciliation. India and Pakistan were urged to open talks to resolve the vexed Kashmir problem. The thrust of American efforts to influence India were even more clearly articulated by Defence Secretary R. MacNamara. In a testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, on 30 January 1963, he stated, "It is our belief that both India and Pakistan must now recognize that they face a common enemy to the north in Communist China. From this recognition must come the impetus for resolution of their differences, and in future their efforts must be directed against the real threat in Asia rather than be dissipated against each other"(81).

In the immediate aftermath of Indian reverses, a Chinese air threat to the Indian cities was visualised. In case the Chinese were to renew hostilities and press on to the Assam plains, India proposed to use her airforce in support of ground operations. In that event, it was suggested that the US and other Western countries might provide air umbrella over Indian cities. The proposal was not seriously pursued and receded to background once it became clear that the Chinese were indeed carrying out their withdrawal as planned. The proposal soon got transformed to holding a joint air exercise, code named Exercise 'Shiksha' (Training). On 22 July 1963, India formally announced her acceptance of this proposal.

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- The National Cadet Corps. The NCC had an Army, Air and a Naval Wing. Under this scheme, selected college and school-going students received military training. The NCC strength in January 1962 was nearly 3 lakhs. It was till the Emergency a voluntary body. Now it was made compulsory for all college students.
- The Civil Defence Organisation. This trained the people in first aid, fire fighting and air raid precautions.
- Home Guards. This Organisation was already in existence in cities. Now in addition to its job of helping the police, it was to help strengthen vigilance and security at sensitive installations.
- Village Volunteer Force. This was virtually a replica of Home Guards with similar functions in villages.
- Four more miscellaneous organisations brought together Labour, Women Volunteers, Transport workers and Technically qualified people(56).

Defence Preparations

Y.B. Chavan, the new Defence Minister outlined the defence plan in the Parliament on 8 April 1963. The major effort was to be in four directions: "Firstly we have to expand the Army, secondly there has to be necessary expansion and modernization of the Air Force, thirdly, there will have to be a strong production base, and fourthly the ancillary facilities like communications and transport have to be enhanced and expanded." Chavan in a nutshell summed up the direction of Indian defence effort which in future years was to produce a formidable fighting machine. The Army's size was to be doubled, to nearly 8 lakhs(57).

The expansion was proceeding side by side with modernization of existing force. The major constraints faced were the shortage of Foreign Exchange and limited industrial capacity. Partly the problem of equipment was off set by aid from the USA and UK, specially for the 10 mountain divisions that were planned to be raised.

To cater to the expansion, the Indian Military Academy that normally trained 1000 officers, took up the challenge to train 3,200 officers trained.

Emergency commission was offered in the Army and by September 1963, nearly 5,852 such officers were commissioned. Two new institutions, one at Poona and another at Madras, trained the selected candidates for 3 months before induction into the Army. Various other measures were taken to conserve trained manpower. Junior commissioned officers (JCOs) were retained beyond service limit, and suitable retired personnel were re-called and re-employed. A school was raised to train Mechanical Engineers at Baroda and the capacity of training in High Altitude Warfare was doubled.

Equal attention was given to strengthen the production base. The ordnance and ammunition factories were working round the clock. The value of production from these factories was planned to increase from Rs.50 crores for 1962-63 to Rs.100 crores for 1963-64. The semi-automatic rifle for Army had been developed and was under production at Ishapore Factory. In aircraft manufacturing, the HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd) had taken up development of HF-24 Fighter bomber of indigenous design. In addition, work was started to develop a jet trainer (Kiran). Decision to set up a separate complex to manufacture MiG-21 Supersonic Fighters of USSR origin was also announced. The government also decided to acquire submarines for the Navy, and initial steps were taken to prepare crew and other infrastructure.

The Prime Minister, on 9 November 1962, had told Parliament that an enquiry into the causes of Indian reverses had been ordered(58). The Prime Minister told a news conference on 31 December 1962 that the enquiry would be limited to military appraisal only. Accordingly, General J.N. Chaudhari appointed a two-man commission of enquiry with Lt Gen Henderson Brooks and Brigadier P.S. Bhagat (later Lt Gen) Victoria Cross winner of Second World War. The enquiry was completed in a record time of three months. The report of the enquiry was graded Top Secret and remained hidden from the public. But Army HQ took energetic action on the findings. The training was re-oriented and suitable doctrines were evolved to fight the Chinese in mountains. The CGS, Lt Gen Moti Sagar, an able professional soldier was mainly instrumental in this. To toughen the officers and men, a new commando course was started in Mhow. It was compulsory for all Infantry Officers. Week long and tough manoeuvres in mountains was the order of the day. The men moved across country on self-contained basis. The target was to fight without any re-supply for 10 days at a stretch. Withdrawals, the bane of 1962 operations, were banished from teachings. It was continuously drilled into all that no matter if they were cut off or surrounded, the troops must continue

to fight from their prepared positions(59). There will be NO WITHDRAWALS was the simple and clear order of new Army Chief. The hyper-activity and hard training was to rescue the nation just two years later when Pakistan repeated Chinese tactics of infiltration in Kashmir. The Pakistani plan failed in face of determined resistance by a rejuvenated Indian Army.

WAR OF WORDS : DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES

The tensions on the Sino-Indian border erupted into a full-scale armed conflict on the 20 October 1962. While the shooting war was on, the wordy duel between the two countries also continued. Both chose to maintain diplomatic representatives in each other's country. A total of 81 notes, letters and memoranda were exchanged during the period between 20 October 1962 and January 1963. The correspondence dealt mainly with the broader aspects of boundary disputes, air space violation allegations, allegations regarding ill-treatment of Chinese nationals in India and Indians in China as well as disputes over properties of consulates closed down in India and China. The documents of this period were published in the form of White Paper (Vol VIII) by the Indian Government in January 1963. Some important issues that were raised, are discussed in succeeding paragraphs as these would help in understanding the gulf that has continued to separate the Indian and Chinese positions on the border row.

The Chinese offensive started on 20 October 1962 all along the Sino-Indian border. By 24 October, the Chinese had eliminated Indian check posts in Chip-Chap Valley, DBO, Galwan and Indus Valley sectors. In the east they had captured Towang and had reached northern banks of Towangchu. On an average the Chinese had advanced 20-30 km since the conflict began. On 24 October, the Chinese Premier wrote to his Indian counterpart asking him to accept the Chinese proposal for cease-fire. The salient points of the Chinese proposal of 24 October 1962 were(60) :

- Both side agree that the dispute should be settled by negotiations.
- Pending settlement both side agree to respect 'line of actual control' and also affect disengagement by withdrawing respective forces 20 km behind this line.
- Should Indian government agree to the above proposals, the Chinese are prepared to hold talks at the PM level.

The Indian Prime Minister in his reply on 27 October rejected the Chinese proposals as un-reasonable, as the Chinese had through use of force changed the 'line of actual control' and now wanted Indians to accept this forcible occupation(61). The Indian Prime Minister instead suggested that the only way to start negotiations was for the Chinese to go back to the positions held by them on 8 September 1962. Once this step was taken, negotiations could begin. The Indian side also sought clarifications from the Chinese as to what they meant by the 'line of actual control'.

The Chinese replied on 4 November 1962(62). The Chou En-Lai was glad that the Indians were agreeable to look ahead, and gave some explanation of the term 'line of actual control'. "The line of actual control mentioned in the proposals (of 24 October 1962) is basically still the line of actual control as existed between the Chinese and Indian sides on 7 November 1959. To put it concretely, in the Eastern Sector it coincides in the main with the so called McMahon Line and in the Western and Central Sectors with the traditional customary line which has been consistently pointed out by the Chinese"(63).

The Chinese explained that since they were prepared to go back to the line as held in 1959, it was a proof of their sincere desire for peace. The note further pointed out that taking the 1959 line as the basis, the Chinese proposal of 20 km withdrawal beyond this line would mean that in Eastern Sector China had to withdraw much more than 20 km (from the recently occupied Towang area, 10-20 km and a further 20 km).

The Chinese claimed that their proposals were equitable and just. They also pointed out that many Afro-Asian countries had supported the Chinese proposals, and added that this withdrawal was to be treated 'only as a preliminary step and "will in no way prejudice the claims of either side in maintaining its claims"'.

The whole border issue in essence came to revolve around Aksai Chin where Chinese wanted to keep the areas occupied by them till 1959, and also wanted Indian forces to withdraw 20 km from this area so as to safeguard the Aksai Chin highway.

Nehru replied on 14 November 1962 and pointed out that the Chinese professions of peace had lost all meaning since their aggression(64). It was difficult to have faith in the Chinese bonafides, the Prime

Minister further pointed. "What the Chinese called the 1959 line of actual control was no line but a series of positions of Chinese forces on Indian territory of Ladakh, progressively established since 1957, which forcibly and unilaterally altered the status quo of the boundary". To advance a few hundred km and then offer to withdraw 20 km could hardly be called 'constructive proposal based on mutual accommodation', the note pointed out. The Indian note again reiterated the proposal to go back to the line of 8 September 1962. In effect this would mean that the Indians would retain their position in Chip-Chap, Galwan and Chushul sectors in Ladakh, established in the wake of the forward policy. In the East and Central Sectors, the difficulties were minor and revolved around small disputes over possession of Barahoti, Longju and Thag La ridge. The position, specially in Ladakh was not acceptable to the Chinese.

The announcement of unilateral cease-fire on the 21 November, was accompanied, as already mentioned, by a Chinese statement that repeated the 24 October proposals. Indian reaction was on two planes. De-facto it accepted the proposals and refrained from crossing the '1959' claim line in west and 1962 line of actual control in NEFA. Diplomatically reacting to the Chinese proposals as elaborated in Chinese Premier's letters of 27 October, 4 November and 28 November, the Indian Prime Minister disputed the Chinese version of 1959 line. He stated that at that time there were no Chinese posts at Qazil Jilga in north or south or west of Spangur lake. The Indian side further said that actually the line of control claimed to be 1959 line was the one that was established by the Chinese forces after their invasion.

India pointed out the contradiction in Chinese letter of 28 November 1962, which on one hand talked of unconditional withdrawal and on the other hand threatened re-occurrence of clashes if Indian forces did not take similar measures. The impasse on interpretations continued to dodge the normalisation of relations between the two countries.

WORLD REACTIONS

The Sino-Indian border conflict and serious Indian reverses generated a wave of sympathy in the Western world. India, a democracy, was thought to be fighting for the 'Free World'. Canada, Australia and New Zealand came forward with offer of aid of all kinds. The response of the West was seen by most Indians as quick, generous and unconditional. The prompt American response made a deep impression on the

Indian people's mind. The young American President, J.F. Kennedy, became very popular in India(65). Prof J.K. Galbraith, the US Ambassador in India at that time, wrote that overnight the mood was transformed. US was regarded as a true friend of India, he reported, and nobody was prepared to talk of non-alignment.

President De Gaulle of France, expressed his strong disapproval of China. Chancellor of Federal Republic of Germany, K Adenauer, considered the Chinese attack as a threat to the free world as a whole. The Japanese Premier criticised China and expressed deep sympathy over India's current difficulties. The Western sympathy was soon translated into concrete shape when military aid started flowing in(66).

Soviet Union's initial reaction was a markedly neutral stance with slight tilt towards the Chinese. Right from 1959, the Soviet Union had been urging restraint on both sides. The Longju incident of that year was described as an Imperialist plot to drag India into Western camp. The first official Soviet reaction to the Chinese attack came on 25 October 1962(67). Pravda, the government mouthpiece regretted this armed clash between 'Friend' (India) and 'brother' (China). The Soviet daily commented favourably on the Chinese 3 point proposals of 24 October and urged India to accept them. The Soviet stand was very soon to undergo a major change, and, by December 1962, the Soviets were already talking of 'Chinese adventurism'. It is quite likely that the muted Soviet reaction in the initial stages was due to her pre-occupation with the Cuban missile crisis(68). The Soviet Union was apparently clear that China had tried to take advantage of this crisis. The open cleavage between the two communist giants was a later development(1967). The Chinese attack on India was definitely a contributing factor in it. Soviet Union quickly balanced its initial pro-China tilt by agreeing to go through with the 'MiG Deal' that meant setting up factories in India for manufacture of supersonic MiG-21. In 1963, USSR also promised aid to build Bokaro steel plant. The supply of AN-12 transport aircraft and Mi 4 helicopters has been dealt earlier. The initial lukewarm Soviet response caused dismay in India and took a while to wash away. The Soviet caution was in stark contrast to the open and generous response of the Americans, and cost her a lot of Indian goodwill.

On 26 October 1962, the Indian Prime Minister addressed a personal letter to various heads of government explaining the origin of the Sino-Indian

conflict. The letter also sought their support and sympathy. The Indian diplomatic efforts did result in a positive response. By 7 November, nearly forty countries from all the continents expressed their support to India(69). The only country to support the Chinese was tiny Albania. Among the African countries, Ghana alone struck a discordant note. President K. Nkrumah of Ghana went to the extent of writing a letter to the British Prime Minister cautioning him against giving military aid to India, which according to him, "might aggravate the unfortunate situation"(70). In Iraq, the people demonstrated their spontaneous support to India(71). President Nasser of Egypt sent a telegram to the Chinese on 21 October 1962(72), and offered to mediate in the dispute. UAR was convinced that the Chinese were aggressors.

There were, for various reasons, some exceptions in the third world's general support for India. Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (North Korea) toed the Chinese line. Some newspapers in Indonesia, Nepal and Burma also wrote pro-China articles(73). Mr. Ho Chi Minh, the North Vietnamese leader, sent a personal message to Nehru pleading for the acceptance of Chinese proposals of 21 November 1962. Nehru in his reply did not agree with Ho and felt that the proposals meant China would enjoy the fruits of her aggression. Nehru, however, added that India is nevertheless not interfering in any way with the cease-fire or withdrawal of the Chinese(74).

Pakistani reactions had special relevance due to her constant adverse relationship with India. As the tensions on Sino-Indian border were rising in 1959, Pakistan proposed a common defence against the 'Northern' enemies. 'Dawn' a Karachi newspaper close to the Pakistani government, made this proposal in an editorial on 7 April 1959. On 4 May of the same year, the Indian Prime Minister rejected the proposal, asking a counter question, "defence against whom and for what?(75)"

As the Sino-Indian tensions broke out into a shooting war, Pakistani attitude changed considerably. Two influential Urdu papers, Jang and Nai Roshani, editorially commented upon the ongoing war. China was hailed as a peace-loving country and India was blamed for provoking the conflict. Apart from the newspapers, the Pakistan government reaction was on low key. No attempt was made to take any military advantage of India's difficulties. There is reason to believe that both the US and UK exerted considerable pressure on Pakistan in this respect(76).

were used to shift 5 Infantry Division from Firozpur in Punjab to NEFA. The aircraft, which could operate from forward airfields, had a payload capacity of 20 tonnes. These proved invaluable in building up the Indian strength in Ladakh and NEFA(80).

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Air Force participated. Radar and communication equipment was tested. Air Marshal Arjan Singh was the overall incharge. This was the high point of military cooperation between India and the Western World(82).

COLOMBO PROPOSALS

The Sino-Indian conflict gave a severe jolt to the new found Afro-Asian solidarity. The third world countries like Ceylon, UAR and Cambodia offered to play the role of 'honest brokers' between the warring sides. The PM of Ceylon, Mrs. Sirimavo Bhandarnaike, played a leading role in these efforts. The concrete result of these efforts was the 'Colombo Proposals'. The story of these efforts of Afro-Asian countries is important as this showed the limitations of the very concept of Afro-Asian solidarity.

Even though most countries of the third world took a neutralist stance on this issue, their reactions were coloured by the perceptions of their own national interests. Ghana's pro-China stance could well be attributed to the strong economic links she had developed with China. At the other end, Indonesia's pro-China inclinations were mainly due to her dispute with Malaysia. Indonesia was angered by the Indian support for the cause of greater Malaysia.

The six non-aligned nations met in Colombo on 10 December 1962, within twenty days of the cease-fire. The countries represented were, host Ceylon (Sri Lanka), United Arab Republic (UAR), Ghana, Indonesia, Cambodia and Burma. The opening speeches gave an idea of the daunting task ahead. Mrs. Bhandarnaike, PM of Ceylon, in her opening speech emphasised that China through her unilateral cease-fire had given proof of her good intentions, while India felt that she was the aggrieved party and had to be satisfied on the count of Chinese intentions.

The Ghanaian representative felt that the first priority was to establish necessary conditions which would enable talks between the Indian and the Chinese Prime Ministers. The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mr Subandrio, echoed the Ghanaian sentiments. Mr Aly Sabri of the UAR was explicit that the basic principle of finding a lasting solution was that "there should be no territorial gain on account of military operations".

Prince Norotom Sihanouk struck a pessimistic note. He said that the Indians felt that the proposals put forward by the Chinese were humiliating and had rejected them. The Indian counter-proposals

bore little relation to the concessions the Chinese would be prepared to make. He felt the best way would be for the two parties to negotiate directly. President Ne Win of Burma, in his opening speech, cautioned the participants against passing judgements on the rights and wrongs of the Sino-Indian dispute(83).

The deliberations continued for two days in camera. On 12 December 1962, the participants unanimously agreed on a set of proposals to be placed before India and China. The proposals mark an important watershed and deserve a detailed treatment(84).

The following is the text of the proposals of the six-nation Colombo Conference held from 10 to 12 December 1962:

"(1) The Conference considers that the existing de facto cease-fire period is a good starting point for a peaceful settlement of the Indian-Chinese conflict.

"(2) (a) With regard to the Western sector, the Conference would like to make an appeal to the Chinese Government to carry out their 20 kilometres withdrawal of their military posts as had been proposed in the letters of Prime Minister Chou En-lai to Prime Minister Nehru on 21 November and 28 November 1962.

"(b) The Conference would make an appeal to the Indian Government to keep their existing military positions.

"(c) Pending a final solution of the border dispute, the area vacated by the Chinese military withdrawals will be a demilitarised zone to be administered by civilian posts of both sides to be agreed upon, without prejudice to the rights of the previous presence of both India and China in that area.

"(3) With regard to the Eastern sector, the Conference considers that the line of actual control in the areas recognised by both the Governments could serve as a cease-fire line to their respective positions. Remaining area in this sector can be settled in their future discussions.

"(4) With regard to the problems of the middle sector, the Conference suggests that they will be solved by peaceful means, without resorting to force.

"(5) The Conference believes that these

proposals; which could help in consolidating the cease-fire, once implemented, should pave the way for discussions between representatives of both parties for the purpose of solving problems entailed in the cease-fire position.

"(6) The Conference would like to make it clear that a positive response for the proposed appeal will not prejudice the position of either of the two Governments as regards its conception of the final alignment of the boundaries."

Clarifications

The following clarifications of Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of the Colombo Conference proposals were given by the delegations of Ceylon, UAR and Ghana at the request of the Government of India:

Western Sector: (i) The withdrawal of Chinese forces proposed by the Colombo Conference will be 20 kilometres as proposed by Prime Minister Chou-En-lai to Prime Minister Nehru in the statement of the Chinese Government dated 21 November and in Prime Minister Chou-En-lai's letter of 28 November 1962, i.e. from the line of actual control between the two sides as of 7 November 1959, as defined in maps III and V circulated by the Government of China.

"(ii) The existing military posts which the forces of the Government of India will keep to will be on and up to the line indicated in (i) above.

"(iii) The demilitarised zone of 20 kilometres created by Chinese military withdrawals will be administered by civilian posts of both sides. This is a substantive part of the Colombo Conference proposals. It is as to the location, the number of posts and their composition that there has to be an agreement between the Government of India and China.

Eastern Sector: The Indian forces can, in accordance with the Colombo Conference proposals, move right up to the south of the line of actual control, i.e. the McMahon Line, except for the two areas on which there is difference of opinion between the Governments of India and China. The Chinese forces similarly can move right up to the north of the McMahon Line except for these two areas. The two areas referred to as the remaining areas in the Colombo Conference proposals, arrangements in regard to which are to be settled between the Government of India and China, according to the Colombo Conference proposals, are Chedong or the Thagla Ridge area and the Longju area, in which cases there is a difference of opinion as to the line

of actual control between the two Governments.

"Middle Sector: The Colombo Conference desires that the status quo in this sector should be maintained and neither side should do anything to disturb the status quo."

The proposals were not made public, so as not to prejudice the chances of their acceptance. The PM of Ceylon carried the proposals to China on 31 December 1962. After talks lasting 9 days, a joint communique was issued. Through this China expressed its willingness to accept the Colombo proposals as basis for starting negotiations with India. China expressed her reservations on some of the proposals concerning Ladakh Sector. It was proposed that these could be resolved through discussions with India.

Mrs. Bhandarnaike visited Delhi on 10 January 1963, immediately after her China trip. At this meeting, India sought certain clarifications, which were given as detailed above. In the New Delhi parleys, the Ceylon PM was joined by PM of UAR and Justice Minister of Ghana, both participants at the Colombo Conference. The Colombo proposals were debated for four days in both the houses of Indian Parliament. After Nehru clarified that acceptance of these proposals did not mean that India had given up her claims to the disputed areas, the Lok Sabha accepted the Colombo proposals by 349 votes against 59 on 25 January 1963.

The proposals in a nutshell meant that in the east both India and China would remain 20 km away from McMahon Line, and in Ladakh while India would remain at the present position :(the line reached by Chinese on 21 November 1962) the Chinese would have to withdraw 20 km behind this line. Without formally rejecting the proposals, the Chinese hedged their acceptance with 'modifications' and clarifications. Nehru told the Indian Parliament on 25 February 1963 that no negotiations could begin unless the Chinese accepted the Colombo proposals in "Toto". The Sino-Indian border dispute was to remain frozen on this issue for years to come. The Indian acceptance of Colombo proposals, in themselves favourable to India, was minor diplomatic triumph.

CONCLUSION

The intensity and pitch of the Indian national upsurge was such that it could not be sustained indefinitely. The Chinese cease-fire also contributed to the dousing of fierce flames of Indian nationalism. Nehru was no war leader and often talked of peace,

while the nation clasoured for war. The event left him a shattered man, a mere shadow of his former self. It was not too long after the event that all the contradictions and conflicts of a sub-continental nation, re-emerged. The noise and din of democracy made it appear as if nothing had changed. But this was a very superficial understanding. A British author commenting on the 1965 Indo-Pak War has quite rightly observed that the Pakistanis had mis-read the Indians. Indian nationalism, so visible in 1962, had neither died nor faded, but had merely gone underground(85). This characteristic Indian response was to be later seen again during the times of national crises. Fundamentally, India underwent a major change. A nation in Gandhian pacifist mould became determined to acquire military power. Possibly the roots of this go into far antiquity, as Indians perceive themselves to have been victims of aggressions for thousands of years. In the Indian mind, these misfortunes are attributed to military weakness and political disunity. In the wake of Chinese aggression, the nation resolved to eradicate both these evils. This fundamental change in Indian attitudes is probably the longest lasting consequence of the 1962 conflict.

In the realms of foreign policy, for a moment it appeared that India had all but given up her non-alignment and was ready to join the western camp. It was not to be for several reasons. The most important reason, however, was the attitude of the Soviet Union.

In a major speech to the Supreme Soviet on 12 December 1962, the Soviet Premier, Nikita Khrushchev, referred to the Sino-Indian conflict and declared:-

"China was now withdrawing its troops essentially to the line at which this conflict broke out. (It) would have done better not to have advanced at all"(86).

This speech was carried in full the next day in 'Pravda', the official Soviet newspaper. The Peking's 'Peoples Daily' on 15 December 1962 openly attacked Soviet Union for this criticism of Chinese actions. The Sino-Soviet rift had come out into the open. Soviet Union also pointedly confirmed its intention to go ahead with the 'MiG Deal' that envisaged setting up factories to manufacture the MiG-21 supersonic aircraft in India. In June 1963, Soviet Union signed agreement to help India build a steel plant in Bokaro. As the western arms aid was pouring into India, Soviet Union also pitched in with its offer of supply of

helicopters and transport aircraft on deferred payment in rupees. With his characteristic foresight, Nehru told a meeting of Indian envoys that Indo-Soviet friendship was worth 20 divisions(87).

The Americans also did not appear too keen on India giving up its non-alignment. American Envoy to India, Galbraith, told a press conference that US thought that India's foreign policy had been successful and should continue(88). The Americans might well have wanted to use India as a wedge between China and Soviet Union, as cracks appeared in the monolithic communist block. Some Indo-US contradictions were soon to surface, leading to sober realization in India that no aid was unconditional. As seen earlier, the USA and Britain soon brought pressure on India to start talks on the Kashmir issue with Pakistan. Six rounds of fruitless talks were held from December 1962 to May 1963. The American image suffered when the protracted negotiations over Voice of America transmitter in India floundered over issue of control and ownership. The negotiations were finally given up in 1964. Similar difficulties also cropped up over the quantum and quality of military aid. Indian request for supersonic fighters was turned down by US.

In the ultimate analysis, it was Nehru's determination and deft handling that prevented India from abandoning its non-alignment. Much earlier, in May 1962, Nehru had told Parliament : "The moment Indian Army and people cannot defend its borders and we have to rely on others to do it, India's freedom is lost. I would rather prefer India sink and die than it should continue in this fashion as a camp follower of some other nation"(89).

The nation had learnt its lesson. In the harsh realities of geo-politics and 'real politik', it was the strength of a nation that was its ultimate guarantee of security.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From Official Records.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. This information was forwarded by HQ IV Corps to Army HQ giving situation as existing on 30 November 1962.
4. Ibid. The brigade was 77 Infantry brigade and battalion 7 Punjab.
5. From Official Records.
6. The Times of India, 21 November 1962.
7. From Official Records.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. The Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen L.P. Sen had located himself at Gauhati since November. The main HQ moved in on 23 December 1962 and continued to remain there till April 1963.
10. Ibid. General Chaudhari at a conference in Calcutta on 9 March 1963 decided to establish Eastern Command HQ at Calcutta. He further ruled that the troops will remain short of foothills till 1963 monsoon and will only later move to Tenga valley.
11. From Official Records.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid. Appreciation of enemy threat as given out by Lt Gen S.H.F.J. Manekshaw (Later Field Marshal).
15. From Official Records.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid. The Chinese Red Cross in response to Indian Red Cross telegram of 14 December 1962, replied on 22 December that the body of Brigadier Hoshiyar Singh was accidentally discovered by the Chinese. The Chinese claimed that exact date of

his death could not be determined but nevertheless maintained that he was killed on 22 November. The story given by Indian soldiers appear to be more authentic rather than the Chinese after-thought.

19. Ibid. One D. Sarmsh wrote a letter to V.C. Shukla, Congress Party MP from Madhya Pradesh outlining the plight of Mechuka garrison. Sarmsh mentions that the troops in Mechuka were well entrenched and willing to fight when inexplicably they were ordered to withdraw on 17 November. Prior to their withdrawal the Mortars deployed at Mechuka were airlifted to rear areas leaving the troops without artillery support. This letter was passed on to the Defence Minister Chavan, and was also commented upon by the CGS, Lt Gen Moti Sagar.
20. Interview with Brigadier B.S. Malik, May 1988.
21. Asian Recorder, 1-7 January 1963, p.4967.
22. Ibid. 15-21 January 1963, p.4991.
23. From Official Records.
24. Annual Report on the Health of the Army 1962
(Army Statistical Org, New Delhi, 1966)pp.12-13.
25. From Official Records. This exercise was carried out in January 63, and there is a definite element of exaggeration.
26. Ibid. This note was handed over by the Chinese Foreign Ministry to the Indian Charge 'd' Affairs in Peking on 22 November 1962.
27. From Official Records.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid. Jawaharlal Nehru accompanied by the Defence Minister Y.B. Chavan visited Tezpur on 5 and 6 December 1962. Colonel Luthra ex-Commissioner of NEFA and Special Advisor to Assam Governor had intimate knowledge of the area as well as local contacts. His offer was greatly appreciated.
30. From Official Records.
31. Ibid.
32. AR, 5-11 February 1963, p.5028.

33. As already explained.
34. From Official Records.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. AR, 26 November - 2 December 1962, p.4910.
41. Interview with 'Pradip' held in Bombay on 14 March 1988. The response of entertainment world, like the other sections of society, was overwhelming. A noted film producer, Chetan Anand, produced a film on Chinese aggression with full co-operation of the Armed Forces. The film 'Haqqiqat' (The Truth) continues to draw crowds even todate. Describing the inaugural show in Delhi on 14 November 1964, Chetan Anand recalled that when the film ended there was hushed silence, with many an eye full of tears. Nehru was no more and a rose was placed on seat next the the President's, remembering the great Indian leader who was victim of Chinese deceit. Interview with Chetan Anand, held in Bombay on 16 March 1988.
42. A Nation Aroused: (How India is Determined to fight Chinese Aggression), Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi, November 1962.
43. Ibid. You and Freedom's Battle, Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi, December 1962.
44. The Times of India, 13 November 1962, C.N. Annadurai, MP, a leader of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, a Party that had demanded secession from India, pledged in Rajya Sabha on 12 November that his party has suspended its agitation. He pledged full support to the government to push Chinese out of India. Leaders of Akali Party Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh, agitating for Punjabi Suba also pledged similar support.
45. A Nation Prepares, Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi, September 1963.
46. AR, 3-9 December 1962, pp.4925 and 4927.

47. Bandopadhyaya, J., The Making of India's Foreign Policy, Calcutta 1970, p.121.
48. AR, 26 November - 2 December 1962, p.4910.
49. AR, 10-16 December 1962, p.4931.
50. AR, 26 November - 2 December 1962, p.4910.
51. Ibid.
52. AR, 24-31 December 1962, p.4957.
53. A Nation Prepares, Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi, September 1963.
54. AR, 26 November - 2 December 1962, p.4911.
55. AR, 17-23 December 1962.
56. A Nation Prepares, Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi, September 1963.
57. Ibid.
58. AR, 29 January - 4 February 1963, p.5016.
59. From Official Records.
60. Notes, Memoranda and letters exchanged between the Government of India and China, October 1962 - January 1963, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, 20 January, WHITE PAPER No.VIII, p.1-4.
61. Ibid., pp.6-7.
62. Ibid., pp.7-10.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., pp.14-17. Also, Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches Vol.IV, Publications Division, Government of India, 1964, pp.235-248.
65. AR, 26 November - 2 December 1962, p.4916. President Kennedy's photograph was often displayed alongside such Indian favourites as Gandhiji and Nehru. Neither his youth nor good looks really explain the phenomenon. It can quite legitimately be attributed to the Indian perception that America and specially Kennedy came to be regarded as a true friend, having been a friend in need.

65. AR, 8-12 April, 1963.
67. From Official Records.
68. This inference is drawn from the adverse Soviet reaction to the Chinese invasion that surfaced around December 1962. The Cuban missile crisis had reached its peak on 22 October 1962, when the US announced Naval blockade of Cuba. The crisis paralleled Sino-Indian Conflict.
69. AR, 26 November - 2 December 1962, p.4916. Some of these 40 countries are, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jordan, Luxemburg, Mexico, Dominican Republic, UK, USA, Bolivia, Nicaragua, France, Ceylon, Cyprus, New Zealand, Australia, Trinidad and Tobago, West Germany, Holland, Sweden, Belgium, Venezuela, Iraq, Congo, Nigeria, Argentina, Thailand, Italy and Malaya, Vatican, Israel, Somalia, Finland, UAR, Yugoslavia, Denmark, Costa Rica, Liberia, Philippines and Panama.
70. AR, 26 November - 2 December 1962, p.4916.
71. AR, 10-16 December 1962, p.4932.
72. From Official Records.
73. Ibid.
74. AR, 8-14 January 1963, p.4983.
75. Dawn, 7 April 1959 and Hindustan Standard, 6 November 1959.
76. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches Vol.IV, Publications Division, Government of India, 1964. p.245.
77. From Official Records.
78. AR, 26 November - 2 December 1962, p.4915.
79. Ibid., p.4916.
80. AR 10-16 December 1962, p.4932.
81. AR, 5-11 March 1963, p.5075.
82. AR, 10-16 December 1963. pp.5558-5559.
83. AR, 8-14 January 1963, pp.4979-4980.
84. Ibid., pp.5051-52.

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85. Russel Brines, The India Pakistan Conflict, Pall Mell Press, London, 1968, p.351.
86. AR, 8-14 January 1963, pp.4980-4982.
87. Blitz, 29 January 1963.
88. AR, 10-16 December 1962, p.4932.
89. Lok Sabha Debates, Vol.III, No.22, Column, 4549.

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