

INDIA
AND HER
NEIGHBOURS

A STUDY OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL
RELATIONS AND INTERACTIONS

By the Same Author

- * INDO-PAK RELATIONS—TASHKENT TO SIMLA AGREEMENT
- * INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

DR. S. S. BINDRA

Department of Political Science
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar



DEEP & DEEP PUBLICATIONS
D-1/24, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027

OLIN
DS
341
.3
I4
B61
1984

OLIN
DS
341
.3
I4
B61
1984

INDIA
AND HER
NEIGHBOURS

A STUDY OF MODERN ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL
RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURS

S. S. BINDRA

*Dedicated To The
Loving Memory of
Late Bhai Kishan Singhji*

© 1984 S. S. BINDRA

All rights reserved with the Publisher including the right to translate or to reproduce this book or parts thereof except for brief quotations in critical articles or reviews.

Printed in India at Print India, Mayapuri, New Delhi-110064.
Published by DEEP & DEEP PUBLICATIONS, D-1/24, Rajouri Garden,
New Delhi-110027. Phone : 504498

CHINESE MILITARY ACTION IN TIBET AND THE SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

The invasion of Tibet by China was the first major incident which gave a setback to the centuries old contacts between India and China. The expulsion of Chinese Minister and his staff in Lhasa by the Government of Tibet provoked, the Government of China and the latter ordered her army to march towards Tibet. The Chinese action was based on the plea that she has full sovereignty over Tibet. But the Tibetans refuted the Chinese claim and considered herself as an independent country. The history of Tibet shows that, she had been an independent country. According to Richardson, although Tibet remained under the Chinese influence for quite sometime, it was free from actual Chinese rule except for a short period. Only during the Manchu regime, Tibet was successfully attacked by China in 1720 AD and till 1792 it was regarded as a Chinese protectorate but after that China left Tibet. As is evident from fact that when Dogra General Zorawar Singh attacked Tibet in 1841 and when Nepal attacked Tibet in 1856, no Chinese protection was offered.⁵

During the last three hundred years in several agreements regarding Tibet's boundary with neighbouring countries, Tibet had been a signatory on her own right. These agreements included the 1684 Treaty between Ladakh and Tibet, the 1842 Treaty between Kashmir and Ladakh on one side and Tibet and China on the other, the 1856 Treaty between Nepal and Tibet and lastly the 1914 Convention between Great Britain on the one side and Tibet and China on the other.⁶

On 1 January 1950, Chairman Mao Tse-tung proclaimed the "liberation of three million Tibetans from the "imperialist aggression" as the main task of the People's Liberation Army of China. This established that the Government of China meant to enforce her authority in the vast and rugged territory lying between India and China proper. Interestingly the Government of India did not challenge the claim of China over Tibet and the former expressed the hope that the matter would be settled peacefully and that Tibet should be allowed to maintain its autonomous status which she had been enjoying since the last forty years. But the Government of India was definitely worried about the unsettled

conditioned across the border and on 13 August 1950, she formally represented to the Government of China about it.⁷

Nevertheless, between the establishment of the Interim Government in India and the victory of the Communists in China in December 1949, India and China had different opinions on a number of issues. At the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in December 1947, the Kuomintang delegates protested against the display of a map of Asia in which Tibet was shown to be a territory outside China and also raised objection regarding the separate invitation to the Government of Tibet for attending the Conference and subsequently they did not like the participation of the Tibetan delegation. They were also not happy the way in which India was trying to assume the leadership of Asia. Furthermore, China was not happy when her demand was rejected by India regarding the withdrawal of Hugh Richardson, former Office-in-Charge of the British Mission in Lhasa and a well-known supporter of the independence of Tibet till August 1949. The Kuomintang Ambassador in India objected to the boundary of Kashmir shown in a map incorporated in a documentary film. He informed the Government of India in November 1949 of his Government being firm on not recognizing the McMahon Line. Nationalist China did not show any sympathy towards India when the latter lodged a complaint with the UN against Pakistan's aggression in Kashmir and nor any appreciation of her advocacy of Indonesia's independence from the Dutch control.⁸ The Chinese attitude of distrust and suspicion towards India was soon to manifest itself even more glaringly in the context of Communist China's Tibet policy.⁹

But the Indian Government was more or less interested in the peaceful settlement of Tibetan issue. The Indian Ambassador to China K.M. Panikar, obviously on the advice of Nehru, personally conveyed to Chou En-lai that India was interested in maintaining peace in the region. But the Chinese Premier once again talked of liberating the Tibet and described this task as a "sacred duty" of his Government but while elaborating the point he ruled out the military solution of the problem.¹⁰

On 21 August, the Government of China declared her willingness to solve the problem of Tibet by peaceful and friendly measures and their desire to stabilise the China-India border. The Government of India welcomed the Chinese desire regarding Tibet

and said that "the recognised boundary between India and Tibet should remain inviolated".¹¹

But it seems, the Chinese had no faith in the negotiated settlement of the issue and the Chinese troops started the process of the liberation of Tibet on 7 October 1950, without any prior warning or ultimatum and nearly 40,000 Chinese troops crossed border into Tibet at several points all along the eastern border and because of the superiority overwhelmed the Tibetan border forces. By 10 October, they succeeded in capturing the Tibetan town Chambo, 300 miles east of Lhasa and by 22 October were in control of Lhodzong and other major eastern passes into Tibet. On 25 October the Chinese News Agency made the first announcement regarding the entry of People's Liberation Army into Tibet "to liberate the people of Tibet, to complete the unification of China, to prevent imperialism from invading an inch of the territory of the father land and to safeguard and build up the frontier regions of the country. The Chinese Government further proclaimed that in the settlement of the Tibetan questions "no foreign interference will be tolerated".¹²

The Government of India was perturbed because of the Chinese action and drew the attention of the Government of China to the harmful effects of restoring to military action, as it meant postponement of the admission of the People's Government to the UN as well as unrest and disturbances on India's borders. India had at that time initiated the effort which she had persistently continued to secure representation for the People's Republic of China in the UN. India was of the view that, as indeed she continues to be, that unless the UN included representatives of the effective Government of such a large segment of the world's population, it would be difficult for the world organization to ensure stability and peaceful settlement of disputes. Peking's answer was to accuse India of having been affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet. J. L. Nehru expressed his shock at the unwarranted allegation and reiterated the "well-meant advice by a friendly foreign Government which has a natural interest in the solution of problem concerning its neighbours by peaceful means".¹³ Speaking in the Indian Parliament on 7 December 1950 he said:

It is not right for any country to talk about its sovereignty or

suzerainty over an area outside its own immediate range. That is to say, since Tibet is not the same as China, it should ultimately be the wishes of the people of Tibet that should prevail and not any legal or constitutional arguments. That I think is a valid point. Whether the people of Tibet are strong enough to assert their rights or not is another matter. Whether we are strong enough or any other country is strong enough to see that this is done is also another matter. But it is a right and proper thing to say, and I see no difficulty in saying to the Chinese Government, that whether they have suzerainty over Tibet or sovereignty over Tibet, surely, according to any principles, the principle they proclaim and the principles I uphold, the last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the people of Tibet and nobody else.¹⁴

A lengthy debate took place in the Indian Parliament on the issue of Chinese invasion of Tibet. The members were participating in the debate after Dr. Rajindra Prasad had addressed the Parliament. He said:

it was a matter of deep regret to us, therefore that the Chinese Government showed have undertaken military operation in Tibet. When the way of peaceful negotiations was open to them.

Because of close cultural ties:

India must, therefore necessarily concern herself with what happens in Tibet and hope that the autonomy of this peaceful country will be preserved.¹⁵

Some ruling party members criticised the Chinese and demanded that the Government of India should take strong notice of it and use all the resources at her disposal in maintaining the freedom of Tibet. A member also referred that Government of India should made her policy on Tibet more clear. A demand was also put forward by a number of parliamentarians that Government of India should give a fresh look to her defence policy and because of the changed circumstances in Asia must strengthen the Indian armed forces. It was also called to shape the defence strategy according to the changed circumstances and look after the

interests of Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal.¹⁶

Even, Sardar Patel, the then Home Minister of India was also critical of India's policy towards China and the stand taken by Nehru Government. He was worried about the security and integrity of India because of Chinese unjustified action in Tibet and in a letter to J.L. Nehru on 7 November he drew the attention of the latter on the Chinese designs in Asia. He wrote:

the Chinese interpretation of suzerainty seems to be different. We can, therefore, safely assume that very soon they will disown all the stipulation which Tibet has entered with us in the past... is Recent and bitter history also tells us that Communism is no shield against imperialism and that the Communists are as good or as bad as imperialists as any other... Chinese ambitions in this respect not only cover the Himalayan slopes on our side but also include important parts of Assam.... In the guise of ideological expansion lie concealed racial, national and historical claims.... In our calculations we shall now have to reckon with Communist China in the north and north-east... a Communist China which has definite ambitions and aims and which does not in any way, seem friendly disposed towards us.¹⁷

It seems J.L. Nehru considered Patel's letter in a soft way and was not aware of the long term expansionist designs of the Communist China. He continued to strengthen Sino-Indian friendship and did not allow his policy of friendship to be altered because of the suspicious and interrupterate attitude of China on the Tibetan issue. The Indian role in the Korean Crisis has clearly reflected the Indian Government attitude towards China. The Government of India had voted in favour of the UN action against North Korea, but when Communist China joined the Korean war, India did not like the way UN General Assembly had declared China as an aggressor and her representative spoke in favour of localising the conflict.

The public opinion in India has full sympathies with the Tibetan people and Nehru was aware that there was a need for taking strong and clear stand on the Tibetan issue. On 6 December 1950, he spoke at length in the Parliament and said that India wanted the autonomous status of the Tibet should be respected by

the Chinese but the liberation of Tibet by China with the help of People's Liberation Army was not a good step and had come as a shock to India. While elaborating his point he further said: "From whom they were going to liberate Tibet is, however not quite clear. They gave us to understand that a peaceful solution would be found, though I must say that they gave us no assurance or guarantee to the effect. On the one hand, they were prepared for a peaceful solution, on the other they talked persistently of liberation". At the same time he said India had never denied or challenged the Chinese suzerainty over Tibet.¹⁸

Some members took strong notice of Nehru's statement in the Parliament. Even the ruling party members grilled the Government for adopting a suspicious policy on the issue of Tibet. Prominent among these were Prof. N.G. Ranga, J.B. Kirplani, M.A. Ayyangar and M.R. Masani. Professor Ranga was not satisfied the way in which Nehru Government was handling the Tibetan issue. In the course of his speech he recalled the close cultural ties between India and Tibet and described Chinese intervention in Tibet as threat to Indian security. He was furious with Nehru because of his reference of Indian recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. M.R. Masani doubted the Chinese sincerity because of her faith in aggression. A ruling party member suggested the formation of Moscow-Delhi-Peking Axis which in his opinion would be helpful in promoting peace in the region. S.P. Mookerjee of the *Hindu Maha Sabha* criticised the Government for not making adequate preparation to defend 2000 miles of the Himalayan frontiers.¹⁹

Nehru in a statement on 7 December 1950 defended his Government attitude towards the Tibetan issue. He said that his occasional reference of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was a historical fact because: "We have repeatedly admitted Chinese suzerainty over Tibet just as we have laid stress on Tibet's autonomy... the last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the people of Tibet and of nobody else".²⁰

The Government of India adopted a very cautious approach on the Tibetan issue and could not afford to displease the Government of China at the cost of pleasing the Tibetans. That was probably the prime factor which was in the mind of the foreign policy planners of India at that time.

The Government of India got some relief when on 23 May

1951 when China and Tibet signed a treaty. The Tibetans accepted the Chinese suzerainty and were satisfied with autonomous status which the Chinese recognised under the treaty.

THE PANCH SHEEL AGREEMENT

After 1951, the Sino-Indian interaction increased in political, cultural and economic fields. India became the chief spokesman in the UN regarding Chinese admission and Nehru got support in India from all walks of life. Following India's mediatory role in Korea, there was a discernible conciliatory shift in China's attitude towards India, partly in response to India's constant friendly overtures and partly influenced by a subtle change in international Communist tactics. The Chinese press started praising Nehru's statesmanship and spoke of India as a neutral and peace-loving country. The Government of India also welcomed the soft attitude of the Chinese and started taking measures to put Sino-Indian relations on a strong footing in a wider perspective. As a gesture of goodwill Government of India readily agreed to remove her telegraphic lines and military escort in Tibet and slowly and gradually started dealing with her in Tibet in the framework of normal consulate relations. In September 1952, the Indian Political Agency at Lhasa was named Indian Consulate General.²¹ No doubt, India did not like the way China had settled her affairs with Tibet, yet the former had to face realities and the Sino-Indian Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between India and the Tibet Region was signed on 29 April 1954.²² Under this agreement, India gave up all extra-territorial rights and privileges enjoyed in Tibet by the British Government of India and recognised that Tibet was a region of China. It provided for the establishment of Chinese Trade Agencies in New Delhi, Kalimpong and Calcutta and India retaining her Trade Agencies in Yatung, Gyanste and Garlok. It specified pilgrim routes and laid down regulations for trade and intercourse across the common border. The Agreement was to be in force for eight years. Agreements were made under supplementary notes for the withdrawal of Indian military escorts and the transfer to the Chinese of the rest houses and posts and telegraphic installations which Britain had handed over to the independent Indian Government, on the payment of a reasonable price. The Government of India finally decided to hand them

over free of cost and without compensation as a gesture of goodwill.²³ In the words of J.L. Nehru, the important portion of the Agreement was its preamble which stated:

The principles and consideration which govern our mutual relations and the approach of the two countries each other as follows:

- (i) Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
- (ii) Mutual non-aggression;
- (iii) Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
- (iv) Equality and mutual benefit; and
- (v) Peaceful co-existence.

He further said these principles were indicating the policy that India was pursuing in regard to these matters not only with China but with any neighbour country, or for that matter any other country.²⁴

The way was then clear for the promotion of cordial relations between India and China. The Five Principles presumed that there were no bilateral problems awaiting solutions between the two countries, and that such issues as might arise thereafter would be settled on the basis of mutual goodwill.

It seemed, by signing the agreement India surrendered to China the Tibet region which was earlier considered a buffer state between India and China. The notable feature of the agreement was that the Government of India formally recognised Tibet as "the Tibet region of China". As Tibet became the part of China and any interference in the Tibetan affairs would be considered the violation of *Panch Sheel Agreement* which clearly debarred the two countries from interfering in the internal affairs of each other.

As the agreement was initiated by the Government of India and what she had in her mind was only close trade and cultural links with Tibet.

It was also considered as one side because India conceded all that China wanted, she did not ask for or received anything in return.²⁵

On the other hand the agreement was politically of much significance because it certainly contributed a lot towards the improvement of Sino-Indian relation. The Chinese who had earlier asked the Communist Party of India to overthrow the Nehru

Government and described Nehru as "a running dog of imperialism", seemed to have given up their old attitude of hostility and contempt for the leaders of India. Frequent press statements started appearing in the press of both the countries expressing their common approach to colonialism. India supported the Chinese claim over Taiwan and Chinese supported Indian stand on Goa.²⁶ Chou En-lai visited India in June 1954 at the invitation of Nehru and in the joint statement issued at the conclusion of their talks in two Prime Ministers re-affirmed the Five Principles and declared:

If these principles are applied not only between various countries but also in international relations generally, they would form a solid foundation for peace and security and the fears and apprehensions that exist today would give place to a feeling of confidence.... The Prime Ministers expressed their confidence in the friendship between India and China which would be the cause of world peace and the peaceful development of their respective countries as well as the other countries of Asia.²⁷

The agreement was welcomed by almost all the political parties except the *Hindu Maha Sabha* and the *Parja Socialist Party*. On the floor of the House, the ruling party and the members belonging to the Communist Party of India welcomed it and praised with high tone the policy of the Nehru Government towards China. The main argument against it was that Indian Government had appeased the Chinese by going out of way and compromising with them on the issue of Tibet by accepting their undue demands of China on Tibet.²⁸

The events preceding the agreement if taken into mind would convince even a layman that the intentions of the Chinese from the very beginning were not clear and they had something else in mind when they concluded the agreement with India on Tibet. Nehru it seemed because of some miscalculations became too soft towards China.

STRAINS IN THE SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

The main issue on which both India and China did not see with eye to eye is the question of the adjustment of boundaries. It would be worthwhile here to examine the geo-political situation of both the countries which would be helpful in understanding the

whole issue in a better way.

The frontier between India and China including the frontier of Bhutan which is attached to India by special treaty and whose external relations are the responsibility of the Government of India, extends over 2,640 miles. The entire length of the border has been long recognised by customs, and the greater part of it has also been defined by the treaty. The boundary follows the geographical principle of the watershed, which is in most places the crest of the Himalayan mountains. Because of the very high altitude and inhospitable climate the areas along this vast frontier are very sparsely or not at all uninhabited. India's administration system, including tax collection and the enforcement of law and order has extended right up to the border, but it has naturally taken the form appropriate to the geographical terrain and to the population, many of whom, particularly on the eastern frontier, are tribal people with whose way of life, the Indian Government have not wished to interfere unduly.

In the western sector the boundary runs for about 1,100 miles from the tri-junction of the boundaries of India, China and Afghanistan, marking off the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir from Sinkiang and Tibet. Two-thirds of the frontier in this sector is between Tibet and the Ladakh area of Kashmir. The Ladakh-Tibet frontier was recognised by a treaty signed in 1842 by the representative of Kashmir on the one hand and of the Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China on the other.

In the middle sector the natural boundary marks off the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh from Tibet. The boundary has been well recognised by Custom and usage. Part of the alignment of the boundary was implicitly described in the India-China Agreement of April 1954 which specified six border passes between Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh on the one hand and Tibet on the other.

The natural boundary between the Indian state Sikkim and Tibet about 140 miles which lies along the crest of watershed, was confined by a Convention signed by Britain and China at Calcutta in March 1890, and was later jointly demarcated on the ground. The Bhutan-Tibet boundary (about 300 miles) is a natural and traditional one, following the crest of the Himalayan range.

In the eastern sector, the traditional boundary which runs from Bhutan to the tri-junction of the China-Burma-India border was

formalised at a Tripartite Conference held at Simla in 1913-14 and attended by the Plenipotentiaries of the Government of India, Tibet and China. The borderline, which was delineated on a large scale map, came to be known as the McMahon Line after the name of the British Indian representative at the Simla Conference. It is the frontier between Tibet and the North-east Frontier Agency of India.

I. Border issue

It was hoped by the Government of India that the *Panch Sheel* principles would open a new chapter in the History of Sino-Indian relations. No doubt, it did open a new chapter but in a different form. The Chinese Government by claiming thousands of square miles of Indian territory had raised the issue of unsettled border between the two countries within a few weeks of Chou En-lai's visit to New Delhi, the Chinese on 17 July 1954 lodged a protest that over thirty Indian troops armed with rifles had crossed the Niti Pass on 29 June 1954 and intruded into Wu-Je of the Ali area of the Tibet Region of China. The note further stated that the "incident was not in conformity with the principles of the non-aggression and friendly co-existence between India and China and the spirit of the Joint Communiqué issued after the end of Premier Chou En-lai's visit to India."²⁹

The Government of India in a note given to the Chinese Councillor in India on 27 August 1954 described the allegations levelled against India regarding the border violation by Indian troops in the Tibet Region of China as entirely incorrect. On the other hand, some of the Tibetan officials had tried to cross into Indian territory in Hoti Plain without proper documents.³⁰

When Nehru visited China in October 1954, he drew the attention of the Chinese leaders to the maps published by the Government of China in which Indian and Chinese boundary alignments were shown in a wrong way. These maps had shown nearly 50,000 square miles of Indian territory as part of China. Nehru in the course of his discussion with the Chinese leaders said that this was presumably by error and also made it clear that so far as the boundaries between India and China were concerned they were clear and well-known and there was no point in arguing on this matter. Chou En-lai also pointed out that the maps were merely a reproduction of old Kuomintang maps which his Government

had published without revising them because of the lack of time and the matter should be closed because of its insignificant nature. The controversy over maps once again came into limelight. In a note given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Councillor of China in India on 21 August 1959 pointed out the map published on pages 20-21 of the "China Pictorial" magazine (No. 95—July 1958) in which the borders of China have been indicated by a thick brown line. Though this map was on a small scale there were clear inaccuracies in it in so far as China's border with India was concerned. The border as depicted in the map included as Chinese territory (i) four of the five Divisions of India's North-east Frontier Agency; (ii) Some areas in the north of the State of Uttar Pradesh; and (iii) large areas in eastern Ladakh which form part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It appeared that the entire Tashigong area of Eastern Bhutan and a considerable slice of territory in north-west Bhutan have also been included as Chinese territory.³¹ In reply to Indian objections the Foreign Office of China on 3 November 1959 stated that in the maps currently published in China, the boundary line between China and her neighbouring countries, including India, was drawn on the basis of maps published in China before the liberation. The Chinese Government believed that with the various neighbouring countries a survey of the border regions, a new way of drawing the boundary of China would be decided on in accordance with the results of the consultations and the Survey.³²

The Government of China claimed certain Indian areas as part of China and a number of conversations were held in both New Delhi and Peking in the year 1955-56 in connection with the ownership of the territory of Barahoti and Wu-Je. The Government of India was confident that the differences between the two countries could be resolved in a peaceful and friendly manner. The border dispute took a new shape when the Government of China refused to recognise the McMahon Line which demarcated the border between India and China. In an answer to a specific question by a member whether India has been discussing the controversy over McMahon Line with the Chinese Government, J.L. Nehru emphatically declared in the *Lok Sabha*: so far as the broad boundary, the international frontier is concerned between India and the Chinese state including the Tibetan region, it is not a matter of dispute so far as we are concerned. It is a fixed thing.

There is nothing to talk about.³³

J.L. Nehru in a letter to the Prime Minister of China on 14 December 1958 reminded him that when the latter visited India in 1956, he accepted the McMahon Line between China and Burma and would like to recognize it between India and China also.³⁴ Chou in reply to Nehru's letter accepted that McMahon Line figured in the talks between the two but maintained that it was a product of the British policy of aggression against the Tibet Region of China and denied that he had recognized it. No doubt, related documents were signed by a representative of the local authorities of the Tibet Region of China but the fact of the matter was that the Tibet local authorities were dissatisfied with this unilaterally drawn line. He also wrote to Nehru that the boundary between the two countries had not been formally delimited and some differences existed.³⁵ J.L. Nehru in reply to Premier Chou's letter wrote back to him on 22 March 1959 and tried to clear the doubts the Chinese leaders had in their mind regarding the McMahon Line. He wrote, the so called McMahon Line runs eastwards from the eastern borders of Bhutan and defines the boundary of China on the one hand and India and Burma on the other. This line was in fact drawn at a Tripartite Conference held at Simla in 1913-14 between the Plenipotentiaries of the Governments of China, Tibet and India. At the time of the acceptance of the delineation of this frontier, Lonchen Shatra, the Tibetan Plenipotentiary in letters exchanged, stated explicitly that he had received orders from Lhasa to agree to the boundary as marked on the map appended to the convention. The line was drawn after full discussion and was confirmed subsequently by a formal exchange of letters and there was nothing to be indicated that the Tibetan authorities were in any way dissatisfied with the agreed boundary. Moreover, although the Chinese Plenipotentiary at the conference objected to the boundaries between inner and outer Tibet and between Tibet and China, there was no mention of any Chinese reservation in respect of the India-Tibet frontier either during the discussions or at the time of their initiating of the convention. This line has the incidental advantage of running along the crest of the High Himalayan Range which forms the natural dividing line between the Tibetan Plateau in the north and the sub-mountainous region in the south. He once again reminded that when Premier Chou En-lai visited India in

January 1957, he was prepared to accept this line as representing the frontier between China and India in this region.³⁶

But recognising the McMahon Line in Burma in one breath and refusing to recognise it in the contiguous territory of India's North-east Frontier in the next, China's illogical and opportunistic position stands self-exposed.

In September 1959, the People's Government conveyed to India for the first time that the Sino-Indian border had never been delimited formally and proceeded to lay claim to some 50,000 square miles of undisputably Indian territory comprising about 14,000 square miles in Ladakh, 32,000 square miles in NEFA and smaller areas on the border of the Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In addition, China has also claimed areas in Bhutan and Sikkim.

In October 1959, Chinese military forces advanced forty miles into Indian territory in the Chang Chenmo Valley in Southern Ladakh. Encountering an Indian patrol party near Kongka Pass the Chinese opened fire which resulted in the killing of nine Indian soldiers. The Chinese had taken into their custody ten other members of the patrol party. To extort confessions from the captured men, they were subjected to harsh and inhuman treatment.³⁷

To sort out the border issue, the Prime Minister of India and China met in New Delhi in April 1960 and the talks lasted for six days without producing anything. At the conclusion of the talks it was announced that both the Prime Ministers had agreed that officials of the two Governments would meet to examine all relevant documents in support of the stands of the two Governments and prepare a comprehensive report. They agreed that meanwhile every effort should be made to avoid friction and clashes in the border areas. Accordingly official teams of the two sides met at Peking, Delhi and Rangoon between June and December 1960.

The ideas at that time was that after getting the report setting forth the claims of the two sides, the political leadership of the two countries would decide how to settle the dispute. However, in the heightened tension whipped up over the question at that time, the release of the official report further complicated the whole issue without any clue to the settlement of the dispute—a situation which drifted from bad to worse until the outbreak of

hostilities all along the border in 1962.³⁸

II. Revolt in Tibet

Tibet became the part of China under the 1951 agreement but the Chinese did not care to implement the provisions of the agreement sincerely. They openly violated the assurances which they promised to implement. That was the main reason behind the severe clashes that took place in Tibet from 1956 onwards between Tibetans and the Chinese forces. Lhasa witnessed an open revolt against the Chinese in March 1959. The Government of India was strictly following in letter and spirit the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement and did not interfere in the Tibetan affairs because in her opinion it was a domestic issue.

The Chinese Government indirectly blamed India for the disturbances in Tibet. In a statement to Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of China to the Indian Ambassador on 22 March 1959 said:

the local Government in Tibet under instigation and support of the imperialists and foreign reactionary elements have torn up the agreement on the peaceful liberation of Tibet. This entirely is an internal affair of China and we shall never permit interference from outside.³⁹

The Government of India reacted sharply to the pointed allegations levelled by the Chinese and denied Indian involvement in the Tibetan affairs. The Chinese also alleged that Kalimpong was a centre for collusion with imperialists against Tibet. Nehru in a statement in the *Lok Sabha* emphatically repudiated the Chinese charge. He declared "it is wrong to say that Kalimpong was a kind of centre from which activities were organised. We have very good control of our check posts and over people coming and going between Tibet and India."⁴⁰

On 3 April 1959, Nehru informed the *Lok Sabha* that Dalai Lama with a small party of eight had crossed into Indian territory on the evening of 31 March. He was received by Assistant Political Officer of the Tawang Sub-Division, which is a part of the Kameng Frontier Division of the North-East Frontier Agency.⁴¹ The Government of India made all the necessary arrangements for his security and stay at Mussoorie. Nehru himself visited Mussoorie and have had a talk with the Dalai Lama. Nehru

made it clear that the Dalai Lama entered India of his own and at no time we suggested that he should come to India and it was on his request that India granted him political asylum. India's policy was governed by three factors: (i) the preservation of the security and integrity of India; (ii) India's desire to maintain friendly relations with China; and (iii) Indian deep sympathy for the people of Tibet.⁴²

The revolt in Tibet and the subsequent events created further complications in the relations of India and China. The Chinese Government was not happy the way Government of India was taking interest in the Tibetan issue. On 16 May 1959, the Chinese Ambassador made a statement to the Indian Foreign Secretary and conveyed the unhappiness of his Government regarding the calling of Tibet a "country" by responsible persons of Indian political parties, including the ruling party, a demand made in India that Tibet question be submitted to the UN and even proposed the holding of a tripartite conference of India, China and Tibet to settle the Tibetan question. Most of the political parties in India went so far as to form organisations in support of the Tibetan rebels. The Government of India allowed the groups of ruffians to make provocations and disturbances in front of the Chinese Embassy and Consulates General in India and described these words and deeds in the nature of serious interference in China's internal affairs.⁴³

The Chinese Government levelled some other allegations against India like the Dalai Lama was abducted to India by the Tibetan rebels.⁴⁴ India refused to believe the Chinese arguments and made her position clear in a note given to the Chinese Ambassador on 23 May 1959.⁴⁵

Allegations and counter-allegations against each other were levelled by the two countries and the process continued for quite sometime. The Government of India on 24 July drew the attention of the Chinese Counsellor in India regarding the articles being circulated in the Tibet region of China which contained false statements and would likely to create grave misunderstanding between India and China. *The Lhasa Daily* in Tibetan language on 23 June published an article entitled "Gyantse in the History of the Imperialist Design in Tibet". The article gives details of the invasion of Gyantse by British troops in 1904, and proceeds to state as follows:

the place immediately near to the British Imperial cemetery is the cantonment of Indian Army stationed at Gyantse. The 1954 Agreement specified the withdrawal of the Indian troops from Gyantse. The people of Gyantse could clearly see that the legacy of British imperialism in Tibet was inherited by the Indian expansionist element. During the course of their stay at Gyantse, the Indian Army forcibly took foodgrains and fodder from the people of Gyantse. The people were forced to do corvee work for them, they had to provide supply transport, firewood, servants, etc., in return for nothing to the Indian army. The Indian troops were fond of riding military horses, and they rode rough shod the green fields of the people and this destroyed the autumn harvest. Officers and men of the Indian troops visited the traitor Phala and held parties and games of Majong. These evil deeds of the Indians army are very much resented by the people of Gyantse. And though the fire of their anger was burning in the stomach, there was no opportunity for the smoke to come out of the mouth.⁴⁶

The extracts quoted above were factually and historically incorrect and were obviously intended to damage the friendly relations between the people of India and the people of the People's Republic of China. The Government of India had emphatically protested against such articles being published in areas where the press has been officially controlled and requested that steps be taken to stop such deliberately hostile propaganda against India.

The Indian attitude towards the revolt in Tibet and granting of political asylum to the Dalai Lama further hardened the attitude of the Chinese Government towards India. No doubts, the Government of India officially conveyed to the Chinese her attitude towards the Tibetan issue by maintaining that it was latter's internal affairs but what irritated the Chinese most was the sympathies expressed by the Indian Government and people with the Tibetan people. Their prime allegation that India was interfering in the internal affairs of China was without any concrete facts. It seemed both China and India had over reacted towards the Tibetan issue. After the Tibetan revolt, the Sino-Indian relations reached at the lowest ebb and the border violations by

the Chinese troops increased.

III. The Sino-Indian War of 1962

The Chinese tried to settle the boundary dispute by attacking over India in October 1962. After the Tibetan revolt the tension continued to build up. In the voluminous correspondence that has been exchanged between India and China over the border question, the Government of India has repeatedly emphasized the need for a peaceful settlement of the dispute and has also suggested various measures and alternatives. In April-May 1958 at the initiative of the Indian Government talks were held between the two countries on the question of Barahoti which the Chinese claimed as part of their territory. It was the suggestion of the Government of India that pending a settlement of the dispute in this sector neither side should send armed or civilian personnel into this area. The Chinese accepted one part of the suggestion. They refused to agree not to send civilian personnel. The result was, the talks ended without producing any settlement. Once again on 16 November 1959, the Government of India in the sincere hope of the settlement of the border issue with China, proposed that both the countries should withdraw their armed forces from the Ladakh area. India should withdraw her troops to the line which the Chinese claimed as their boundary and subsequently the Chinese were asked to withdraw behind the traditional and customary boundary alignment shown on the Indian maps. The spirit behind the proposal was to eliminate the risk of border clashes but there was no positive response from the Chinese side.

The suggestion was once again renewed on 14 May 1962 by the Government of India and offered major concession to China by allowing the Chinese to use the Aksai Chin Road for civilian traffic. The road has been constructed on the Indian territory by the Chinese engineers. But once again the Chinese did not show any interest in the Indian offer.

The Chinese were not ready to accept anything less than they were claiming. India suggested on 22 August 1962 that discussions be held between the two Governments for the restoration of *status quo* of the boundary in the Ladakh region which had been altered by force during the past five years by China. Interestingly while notes for finalisation of dates for talks were still being exchanged Chinese troops on 8 September 1962 marched across the