

The London School of Economics and Political Science

**Defining Independence in Cold War Asia: Sino-Indian Relations,
1949-1962**

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Declaration

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Abstract

In the early hours of 20 October 1962, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) launched a series of devastating assaults on Indian posts stretched along thousands of miles of mountainous border. The attack drew a line under several years of acrimony over the border and an even longer period of uncertainty and ambiguity regarding each sides' respective claims. However, the Sino-Indian War was far more than just a territorial scrap, bloody as it was. It was widely perceived as a Chinese attack on Nehruvian non-alignment, a peculiar foreign policy posture that he had developed to counter the Cold War. By rejecting Nehru so firmly, Beijing was demonstrating a clear turn from the moderation it had pursued in tandem with the Soviets to engage non-socialist Asia through the mid-1950s. Mao's attack on India was then a firm rejection of both Delhi's moderation and Soviet partnership and a major turning point in the history of the Cold War and Asia.

This thesis adds to the existing histories of the war by exploring Sino-Indian relations from 1949 when the two Asian giants cautiously swapped ambassadors. The ambiguous relationship between Beijing and Delhi is examined from the perspective of Nehru's ambitious overall foreign policy agenda, rather than just a narrow focus on the border and Tibet. The deterioration of ties between Delhi and Beijing is often characterised as the result of conflicting territorial and indeed imperial ambitions. But it is also true to say that from early in the 1950s there was a remarkable effort at collaboration and accommodation of their respective ambitions. Simultaneously, collaboration was always underpinned by an acute sense of competition for influence in Asia, in particular over the appropriate model of development for the region. In particular, this thesis gives far greater emphasis on Beijing's function within the dynamics of Sino-Indian relations, and shows how vital were the ideological shifts within the Chinese leadership. The ideologically framed judgements about Indian economic development policies had a major impact on how Beijing assessed the ongoing feasibility of its entire experiment with a moderate foreign policy in general and cooperation with Delhi specifically. By illustrating how these understandings of India also affected Chinese views of the Soviet leadership's competence, this thesis also makes an important

contribution to the historiography of the Sino-Soviet split. Ultimately, relations collapsed with Delhi not just because of hard territorial interests, but because Mao came to believe that the continued deferral of revolutionary goals was leaving the field clear for reactionary elements in China, India and beyond

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Abbreviations

AAC	Asian African Conference
CCP	Communist Party of China
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
CMFA	Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CoGS	Chief of General Staff
Cominform	Communist Information Bureau
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPSU	Communist Party of Soviet Union
CYNP	Chen Yi Chronology
CYWX	Chen Yun Selected Documents
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
FLN	Algerian National Liberation Front
FYP	Five Year Plan
GMD	<i>Guomindang</i> (Chinese Nationalist Party)
IB	Intelligence Bureau (India)
ICC	International Control Commission
HBBR	Henderson-Brooks Bhagat Report
JGYLMZDWG	Collected Documents of Mao Zedong since the founding of the PRC
JGYLMZDJSWG	Collected Military Documents of Mao Zedong since the founding of the PRC
JNSW	Jawaharlal Nehru Selected Works
JNLCM	Jawaharlal Nehru Letters to Chief Ministers
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs (India)
MZDWJ	Collected Documents of Mao Zedong
MZDWJWX	Selected Diplomatic Documents of Mao Zedong
MZDXZGZWX	Selected Tibet Work Documents of Mao Zedong
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NEFA	North-East Frontier Administration
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew, United Kingdom
RSS	<i>Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh</i>
TASS	Soviet News Agency
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSEC	United Nations Social and Economic Council
YFHY	Chinese documents on the Bandung Conference
ZELNP	Zhou Enlai Chronology
ZELJSWX	Selected Militart Documents of Zhou Enlai

Introduction

On the morning of 19 October 1962, one day before the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) attacked Indian forces at various positions along their massive Himalayan border, Beijing's ambassador to Pakistan had sought a meeting in Islamabad. Pakistan's leadership was due to discuss the Sino-Indian border problem, and Beijing wanted to be sure its interests were considered. After emphasising that Islamabad's official desire was that the conflict be contained, Pakistan's Secretary of Foreign Affairs said that in their hearts they felt, 'India deserved to be taught a lesson, [we] hope China will hit India hard, and wear India down with a long-term struggle'. The Pakistanis then provided evidence of the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru's, hypocrisy. Nehru had 'all along been spreading a monstrous lie, on the surface opposing imperialism and colonialism, conducting a "neutral" policy, and strenuously opposing military alliances and agreements etc'. But, the Pakistani revealed, they had proof of a secret military understanding between India and the US agreed back in 1951, and they asked the Chinese to circulate the evidence amongst Afro-Asian neutral countries.¹

A few weeks later, in November 1962, TN Kaul, Delhi's Ambassador to Moscow, met several times with Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The friendly meetings followed China's initial attack on Indian border positions and continued after the attack was renewed in the middle of November. At one meeting, the Soviet leader assured Kaul that Moscow would revive a deal to supply Delhi with MiG fighters, held up temporarily in deference to Chinese sensitivities. Khrushchev coyly explained that the end

¹ 'Ding dashi yu Ba waishi mishu tan Zhongyin bianjing chongtu deng wenti,' 20 October 1962, *Bajisitan xielu Yindu tong meiguo zao yi qianding mimi xieding*, CMFA 105-01111-01, 1-4

of the 'Caribbean crisis' provided new possibilities with regard to the supply of military material. As their conversation wound down, Khrushchev asked Kaul, 'I hear Mr ambassador, you are arresting a whole range of communists in your country?' Kaul's answer provoked loud laughter from the Russian, 'They are all Stalinists.'²

These encounters highlighted how the 1962 war was a turning point in both the post-war history of Asia and the Third World, and also in the history of the Cold War. The war ended the possibility of Sino-Indian international cooperation. The first wave of decolonisation after World War Two had seen an unprecedented extension of the European nation-state system to Asia and the concomitant enlargement of the United Nations. The partnership of Beijing and Delhi had symbolised the potential power of broad collective action across Asia and the Third World. China and India's subsequent collapse into enmity reflected the challenges to Third World unity given differing national interests, ideologies and Cold War pressures. This history reverberates in the 21st Century within debates about the possibilities for cooperation between China and India, and amongst the emerging economies of the world, not least because India remains deeply scarred by the 1962 war. Furthermore, the enduring relationship between Islamabad and Beijing, indicative of a profound underlying pragmatism in 1962, continues to disturb Indian security experts today.

The war with India was also a major brick in the wall Mao constructed between Moscow and Beijing. India had been an important factor for the Sino-Soviet relationship since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, simultaneously an object of common action and yet also a source of varying degrees of competition. In a Pan-Asianist fog, Nehru had initially predicted that Beijing's Asian character would dilute its commitment to Moscow and radical politics. While Beijing's very positive relations with Delhi in the mid-1950s seemed to Nehru a product of his initiative, it had in fact been part of a shared Sino-Soviet project to engage moderate Asia. As Nehru had suspected however, there had always been a certain ambiguity about Beijing, and

² 'Some notes made by Kaul in 1962 on Khrushchev,' *1966-1992, articles on Indo-Soviet Relations by TN Kaul*, TN Kaul I, II & III Instalments, Subject File 11, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), 17

especially Mao's, willingness to tolerate Moscow's pre-eminence, and starting from 1958 the Chairman began to actively steer his country away from the USSR's influence. The 1962 attack on India was part of a shift to irrevocably, and publicly, sever ties with Moscow. This shift was a major step towards the acute isolation that Mao forged in the 1960s to preserve China's revolutionary virtue. The ensuing period of self-destructive narcissism would destabilise the PRC and its hyper-radical dogmatism would leave a legacy of international distrust. India for its part would maintain the banner of non-alignment while gradually shifting to what became a longstanding prioritisation of relations with Moscow. Before underlining the contributions this thesis will make, I turn below to the relevant literature that has influenced the course of my research.

The history of Sino-Indian relations in the 20th Century has been dominated by the war of 1962 and the Tibet and border crises that preceded it. Befitting the stature of the topic - the discord between the two most populous countries in the world - this historiography has played a uniquely important role in the most dramatic shift to occur in the international system of the Cold War. The Grand sire of China-India War studies, Anglo-Australian journalist and academic, Neville Maxwell, author of the pioneering and still controversial *India's China War*, received a special telegram in 1972 from China.³ Zhou Enlai, China's Premier and pre-eminent diplomat, wrote to thank Maxwell for the impact his book had on Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's Assistant for National Security Affairs. Zhou told Maxwell that Kissinger had told him, 'Reading that book showed me I could do business with you people.'⁴

The initial phase in the literature, overwhelmingly written in Indian ink, does not portray the Chinese as people with whom one ought to do business. These original accounts of Chinese betrayal, aggression and revolutionary aggrandisement were stained by Cold War paranoia and barely balanced by reference to India's shameful military collapse and some limited criticism of

³ Maxwell, Neville. *India's China War*. London: Cape, 1970

⁴ Chowdhury, Debasish Roy. 'Neville Maxwell Interview: The Full Transcript.' *South China Morning Post*, 31 March, 2014.

Indian diplomatic naiveté.⁵ Even before the war, many already regarded the growing hostility towards India as an inevitable evolution from China's conquest of Tibet.⁶ Subsequently, Chinese aggression towards the Tibetans and the 'invasion' of India were connected even more stridently.⁷ Military accounts from the mid-1960s were more introspective, but maintained the basic assumption of China's unreasonable belligerence. A bickering tone between different authors also included more direct criticisms of the Government of India's role, including Nehru's close adviser, the Defence Minister, VK Krishna Menon, and even the Prime Minister himself.⁸ Early Western portrayals of the war also inclined to Cold War, but a revisionist perspective soon emerged to prod Kissinger towards his more pragmatic view of Beijing.⁹

Maxwell's coming was heralded by Alistair Lamb's studies of the disputed borders which tempered the impression of Beijing's belligerence by suggesting that China had a fair historical case.¹⁰ But it was Maxwell's critical analysis that dismissed Indian innocence and condemned Nehru's personal role. Maxwell benefitted from his access to the still classified, post hoc military report into the war, the Henderson-Brooks Bhagat Report (HBBR). From the outset in 1950, Maxwell argued, Nehru took an unconditional and unilateral stance on his conception of India's territorial integrity, despite the patent ambiguity and arbitrary character of the territorial inheritance from British India. Early policy towards Tibet was similarly provocative. Desirous of cooperative and sustainable relations with the PRC, Delhi moved to concede China's rights in Tibet in 1954, but the continuation of a firm

⁵ *China Invades India: The Story of Invasion against the Background of Chinese History and Sino-Indian Relations*, Bombay, 1964

⁶ Jain, Girilal. *Panchsheela and After : A Re-Appraisal of Sino-Indian Relations in the Context of the Tibetan Insurrection*. London: Asia Publishing House, 1960.

⁷ Maitra, Nikhil. *Rape of Tibet: A Companion Volume to Chinese Propaganda and Aggression on India*. Calcutta: Biswas, 1963.

⁸ Dalvi, J.P. *Himalayan Blunder: The Curtain-Raiser to the Sino-Indian War of 1962*. Bombay: Thacker, 1969; BM Kaul, *The Untold Story*. Allied, 1967; Khera, S. S. *India's Defence Problem*. New Delhi, 1968; Rao, Pattadakal Venkanna Raghavendra. *Defence without Drift*. Bombay, 1970.

⁹ Fisher, Margaret W., Leo E. Rose and R. A. Huttenback. *Himalayan Battleground: Sino-Indian Rivalry in Ladakh*. Pall Mall Press. 1963;

¹⁰ For example, Lamb, Alastair. *The China-India Border: The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries*. Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs by Oxford U.P, 1964

and fixed view of the border made confrontation with Beijing inevitable. Therefore, the border dispute that eventually arose was not the result of intrinsic Chinese hostility and expansionism, but the simple Chinese desire to have a fair and mutual definition of the boundary. India's arrogant, foolhardy and persistent effort to impose its own conception of the border, encapsulated by the 'Forward Policy' formulated in late 1961, finally provoked Beijing into launching a punitive military strike against Indian bully tactics. The drawbacks of Maxwell's account were firstly that his imbalance of sources meant that his analysis of Beijing's behaviour was severely limited. Secondly, his very detailed study of Delhi's policy was very much focused on the questions of the border and Tibet. So, the Chinese perspective is largely missing, and Beijing's reasonable attitude is largely inferred from its behaviour, and Nehru's action is not really framed by his wider international, or domestic concerns. Nevertheless, just as Maxwell's portrayal of Chinese pragmatism contributed to the Sino-American political rapprochement, so it also heralded more sympathetic studies of China's international policy. Alan Whiting, for one, challenged the caricature of an incorrigibly irredentist and aggressive China, emphasising an insecurity borne of isolation and fear.¹¹ Meanwhile, many in India have also dismissed the idea of Nehru's naiveté and continued the criticism of his policy as unreasonable, provocative and having masked a deep distrust of China.¹²

Post-revisionist accounts have provided a more sympathetic explanation of Nehru's apparently self-defeating policy by highlighting its more practical aspects and giving a wider perspective on Sino-Indian conflict. However, Beijing's role is still under-explored and the concern to show where Nehru was more reasonable on Tibet and the border meant his broader policy remains peripheral. A more complex picture of Nehru has emerged in which realist, pragmatic concerns have been intertwined with his undoubted ethical approach. Srinath Raghvan emphasised Nehru's self-awareness of his inheritance from his 'Master' Gandhi, while Steven Hoffman has described the Indian Prime Minister as a 'pragmatic idealist'. But both show that Nehru's border policy was

¹¹ Whiting, Allen S. *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975.

¹² Deshingkar, Giri. 'The Nehru Years Revisited', *Across the Himalayan Gap: An Indian Quest for Understanding China*, Tan Chung, ed., New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1998; Noorani, A.G. "Nehru's China Policy." *Frontline*, 4 August 2000.

fashioned to give Delhi time to consolidate its control, and furthermore the Indians' willingness to compromise survived the major loss of trust that occurred in 1959. They suggest it was Chinese hostility that hardened Nehru's attitude after 1960 and led to the rash 'Forward Policy'. Raghavan embossed this account by starting his analysis in 1950.¹³ None of these really attempted to place Tibet, the border and China within Nehru's broader foreign policy. Ramachandra Guha has made some contribution in this direction by explaining Delhi's apparent obstinacy after 1959 as the result of being trapped by public opinion, a non-aligned policy, and suspicion of the US.¹⁴ Elsewhere, he has argued that Asian sentiment blinded Nehru to the force of Beijing's ideology and attachment to Tibet.¹⁵ Conversely, John Garver, has zoomed out to propose a broad geopolitical confrontation between resurgent Asian nationalisms in their overlapping 'spheres of perceived national greatness' across the Himalayas and beyond.¹⁶ But as with the other accounts Nehru's peculiar international agenda seems largely absent.

While this literature has partially restored Nehru's reputation, fundamental gaps in the history remain. Chiefly, China's perspective is still under-appreciated. However, there is also very little attempt to place the border, Tibet and China policy within the frame of Nehru's broadest international concerns. Hoffman was limited by his narrow temporal lens and Raghavan's focus was international crisis management. Even Garver repeated the accusation of Nehru's most ardent critics that he got nothing in return for the 1954 agreement with Beijing on Tibet, when in fact Nehru regarded the agreement as of massive international value. The role of Nehru's Asian sentiment

¹³ Raghavan, Srinath. 'Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute, 1948-60: A Reappraisal', *Economic and Political Weekly* (2006): 3882-92; Raghavan, Srinath. *War and Peace in Modern India*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; Hoffmann, Steven A. 'Rethinking the Linkage between Tibet and the China-India Border Conflict: A Realist Approach', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 3 (2006), 176; Hoffman, Steven A. *India and the China Crisis*. Berkeley: California University Press, 1990

¹⁴ Guha, Ramachandra, *India after Gandhi : The History of the World's Largest Democracy*, London: Macmillan, 2007, 330

¹⁵ Guha, 2007, 154; Ramachandra Guha, 'The War That Killed Nehru', essay based on the Ingalls Lecture delivered at the Harvard-Yenching Institute on 29 March 2011.

¹⁶ Garver, John W. *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001, 10

seems to have been misunderstood. Guha and Garver's contradictory claims about the impact of shared Asian nationalism on Sino-Indian relations are each partly right. However, they overlook the crucial influence this had over Nehru's relative views of Beijing and Moscow. While Hoffman claims that Nehru always had a more positive view of the Soviets than the Chinese, it is very clear that his enthusiasm for Asian fraternity led him early on to the profound expectation that Mao and his colleagues would be less radical and more amenable to engagement with non-socialist actors than Moscow. These accounts barely explore how China fit into Nehru's hugely ambitious international agenda from an early stage.

There is a significant literature on Nehru's foreign policy in general which has evolved to now combine, like Hoffman and Raghavan, an emphasis on both practical and idealist motivations. Certainly, there have been accounts that characterise Nehru's policy as fundamentally realist, describing non-alignment as a balance of power posture.¹⁷ Others have identified the evolution of a realist policy to embrace Moscow and Beijing after 1954 in order to balance against Pakistan's military arrangements with the US.¹⁸ Benjamin Zachariah's biography of Nehru has also portrayed non-alignment in nationalist and realist terms, arguing it was a very active demonstration of autonomy within the Cold War.¹⁹ Meanwhile, others have continued to emphasise the idealism of Nehruvian foreign policy, evident in his early trust in the UN as an impartial global court, or else his persistent faith in the power of Indian diplomacy to persuade.²⁰ However, following new assessments of Gandhian politics as a form of realism, it might now be redundant to try and

¹⁷ Rana, A.P. 'The Intellectual Dimensions of India's Nonalignment', *Journal of Asian Studies* 28, no. 2 (1969): 299-312;

¹⁸ Nayar, Baldev Raj & Paul, T.V. *India in the World Order: Searching for Major-Power Status*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Mastny, Vojtech. 'The Soviet Union's Partnership with India', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 3 (2010): 50-90.

¹⁹ Zachariah, Benjamin. *Nehru*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

²⁰ Mukherjee, Mithi. "'A World of Illusion": The Legacy of Empire in India's Foreign Relations, 1947–62', *The International History Review* 32, no. 2 (2010): 253-71; Kennedy, Andrew Bingham. *The International Ambitions of Mao and Nehru: National Efficacy Beliefs and the Making of Foreign Policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

disentangle practical and moral motivations.²¹ Sunil Khilnani's study of Nehru's politics highlights the unmistakable interweaving of Nehruvian ideals, syncretic nationalism and hard interest within his foreign policy. For Khilnani, Nehru's interest in China emerged from his enthusiasm for a shared Asian heritage and non-alignment he believed was the assertion of hard won independence. In addition, the normative language used both satisfied a sense of civilisational stature and was a tool to project influence.²²

Two recent and specific accounts of Indian foreign policy develop Khilnani's view of Nehru's politics to explicitly merge realist and idealist factors. They also point to the exemplary function of Nehru's foreign policy, the effort to pioneer a moral paradigm for others to emulate. Sinderpal Singh sees Nehru's early pan-Asian thinking and non-alignment as driven by both idealism and realism. Singh claims foreign policy initiatives based on these influences were not only attempts to achieve a self-interested leadership position in the wider region, but also genuine assertions of certain ideals.²³ Manu Bhagavan's account places the whole of Nehruvian foreign policy within a broad, idealist campaign to construct an international regime of human rights at the UN. Bhagavan highlights the exemplary aspect of this campaign, a *satyagraha* type effort to inspire other states to transform themselves by linking India's own constitution to nascent rules on international human rights. But, despite the grand idealism of the project, Bhagavan insists that it was conceived of in practical terms by the Indians involved. He cites Vijayalakshmi Pandit's claim, shortly after the 1962 war, that non-alignment was a realist approach in the long run, as only by considering others' views and avoiding confrontation can international stability be sustained. This in fact was Gandhi's practical

²¹ Guha, Ramachandra. 'Why Gandhi Matters', IDEAS Centre LSE, London: 2011; Mantena, Karuna. 'Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Nonviolence', *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (2012): 455-70.

²² Khilnani, Sunil. *The Idea of India*. London: Penguin, 2003.

²³ Singh, Sinderpal. 'From Delhi to Bandung: Nehru, "Indian-Ness" and "Pan-Asian-Ness"', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2011): 51-64.

doctrine of means over ends applied to international affairs.²⁴ What is now needed is an account reconciling this ambitious international agenda with Nehru's specific approach towards Beijing.

While India's side of the story has grown in nuance Chinese views are often under-appreciated, missing or dismissed. A particular shortfall is the failure to consider the peculiar impact of Beijing's ideology on its India policy not just during the years of crisis but indeed from the beginning of the relationship. In fact, significant writers have dismissed Chinese threat perceptions exactly because they were framed by its ideology. Raghavan writes that in 1959 Beijing's ideology conjured a 'sinister tableau' of Indian intentions.²⁵ John Garver's analysis of Beijing's decision for war in 1962 rejected the Chinese perception that India was a threat to Tibet's stability, as a case of psychological 'projection', shifting the blame away from the CCP.²⁶ But neither of these considered the implications of this revival of ideological concerns. Chinese scholarship has not filled this gap. Some simply echoed Maxwell and portrayed Beijing as reacting to Indian provocations and have not explored how views within the PRC influenced the dynamics of Sino-Indian relations.²⁷ Others have emphasised international factors and even the role of 'imperialism' in destabilising the partnership that had developed with Delhi, again ignoring changes within China.²⁸ One insider, a senior CCP official in Lhasa in the 1950s, blames India's imperial attitude towards Tibet for almost all problems, barely reflecting on the shifts within Beijing's politics.²⁹ Some international relations

²⁴ Bhagavan, Manu Belur. *India and the Quest for One World: The Peacemakers*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 95, 128-9, 137

²⁵ Raghavan, *War and Peace*, 2010, 251

²⁶ Garver, John. 'China's Decision for War with India in 1962', *New Approaches to the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy*, Alastair Iain Johnston & Robert S Ross (ed.s), Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.

²⁷ Liu, Xuecheng. *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*. Lanham, MD: Lanham, MD : University Press of America, 1994; Wang, Hongwei. *Ximalaiyashan Qingxu: Zhongyin Guanxi Yanjiu*. Beijing, 1997;

²⁸ Shang, Quanyu. 'Lengzhan Yu Diyuan Zhengzhi Dui Zhongyin "Xiongdì" Qingyi De Shanghai', In *Zhongyin Datong: Lixiang Yu Shixian*, edited by Tan Zhong. Ningxia: Ningxia People's Publishing House, 2007; Zhang, Minqiu, *Zhongyin Guanxi Yanjiu, 1947-2003*. Beijing, 2004.

²⁹ Yang, Gongsu, *Cangsang jiushinian: yige wajiao teshi de huiyi*, Hainan, China: Hainan Publishing, 1999

theorists have concluded the PRC followed a consistently realist and pragmatic approach, but the narrow focus on crisis moments and the need to align with theory mean Beijing's ideology was often overlooked.³⁰ Two historians have looked at Beijing's overall border policy and largely reiterate the image of a practical, restrained attitude. This claim, as with the theorists', overlooks Beijing's ability early in the 50s to be as duplicitous over the border as India was. However, they do critically highlight the ideology underlying Mao's sense of himself as a benign hegemon bargaining away territory to serve the wider revolutionary cause.³¹ So China's impact on the Sino-Indian relationship from 1949 is under-explored and where Beijing's attitude has been analysed the function of its ideological world-view has not been fully considered.

The wider historiography on the PRC's early foreign policy suggests that better incorporating Beijing's ideology into analysis of Sino-Indian relations will bear fruit. The central debate in this literature revolves around the balance between ideational and nationalist or security concerns. The power of Chinese nationalism is undisputed and has been a crucial variable within Beijing's shifting engagement with the outside world. Michael Hunt has shown that this produced a complex tension between the desire for autonomous isolation and cosmopolitan dependency.³² Chen Jian has explicitly blended ideology and nationalism and demonstrated the critical importance of the concept of the PRC as a nation of liberated people, who have 'stood up' against both international and domestic oppressors, thus making the 'continuous revolution' crucial to the CCP's ongoing nationalist and Marxist legitimacy.³³ Discussion of the Sino-Soviet relationship especially continues to centre around the dichotomy of nationalism and ideology. The most recent account asserts the

³⁰ Fravel, M. Taylor. *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008; Hyer, Eric. *The Pragmatic Dragon: China's Grand Strategy and Boundary Settlements*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015.

³¹ Zhihua Shen, Julia Lovell. 'Undesired Outcomes: China's Approach to Border Disputes During the Early Cold War', *Cold War History* 15, no. 1 (2015): 89-111.

³² Hunt, Michael H. *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

³³ Chen, Jian. *Mao's China and the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001; Other scholars have shown that the early CCP long imagined a future Chinese state defined by its class characteristics, see Meisner, Maurice J. *Li Ta-Chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967.

primacy of national interest factors in the birth and death of the Sino-Soviet alliance.³⁴ However, many others have regarded ideology *per se*, or else competition for authority over ideology, as the root cause of the Sino-Soviet split.³⁵ And indeed, Jeremy Friedman's account of the post-split Sino-Soviet competition within the Third World in the 1960s, suggests that the struggle to define the path to world revolution was central to Moscow and Beijing's estrangement.³⁶ Therefore, any serious analysis of Beijing's relations with Delhi in the 1950s and the war needs to rigorously consider the role of the CCP's ideology.

There are threads in the literature which give India a more important place within Beijing's foreign policy than implied by narrower studies on Sino-Indian relations. For example, discussion of the splintering of the Sino-Soviet alliance often makes the Sino-India border dispute from 1959 a central factor.³⁷ Two Indian authors have regarded the Chinese 1962 attack on India as a direct attempt to derail Moscow's foreign policy.³⁸ Niu Jun's account of the oscillations in Beijing's foreign policy and attitude to Moscow between 1959-1962 also gives India a central role.³⁹ What is under-appreciated is the way in which Sino-Soviet views of India diverged earlier, and underpinned more

³⁴ Shen, Zhihua, and Xia, Yafeng, *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Partnership, 1945-1959: A New History*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015; Other accounts had already emphasised national interest, see Radchenko, Sergey. *Two Suns in the Heavens : The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2009

³⁵ Luthi, Lorenz M. *The Sino-Soviet Split : Cold War in the Communist World*. Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 2008; Li, Danhui, and Yafeng Xia. 'Competing for Leadership: Split or Détente in the Sino-Soviet Bloc, 1959–1961', *The International History Review* 30, no. 3 (2008): 545-74; Xia, Danhui Li and Yafeng. 'Jockeying for Leadership: Mao and the Sino-Soviet Split, October 1961-July 1964', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16, no. 1 (Winter 2014 2014).

³⁶ Friedman, Jeremy Scott. *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Split and the Third World*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

³⁷ Chen, Jian. 'The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 3 (2006): 54-101; Westad, Odd Arne. 'Introduction', *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance*, edited by Odd Arne Westad; and Westad, 'The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the United States', *Brothers in Arms*, 1998.

³⁸ Bhattacharjea, Mira Sinha. 'Mao Zedong's Vision: China, the World and India', In *Across the Himalayan Gap: A Quest for Understanding China*, edited by Tan Chung. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1998; Guha, Ramachandra. 'The War That Killed Nehru,' essay based on the Ingalls Lecture delivered at the Harvard- Yenching Institute on 29 March 2011

³⁹ Niu, Jun. '1962: The Eve of the Left Turn in China's Foreign Policy', *Cold War International History Project*, Working Paper No. 48 (2005).

profoundly than realised, the fracturing of the alliance. Liu Xiaoyuan has recently indicated the importance of India to the radicalising world view of officials in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CMFA) in the second half of the 1950s, an important prefiguring of the future ideological disputes with Moscow.⁴⁰ There is also a neglected, older literature on the competition between Moscow and Beijing for influence over the CPI in the 1950s, which although problematic, highlights the importance of Beijing's ideology for its India policy.⁴¹ So, there is good reason to try and place Sino-Indian relations within the context not only of Beijing's ideology throughout the 1950s but also to examine how the PRC's often tense alliance with Moscow influenced the relationship with India.

India's central place in debates on the nature of the PRC's moderate turn after the Korean War also justifies placing Chinese attitudes to Delhi more broadly within Beijing's overall foreign policy. Argument continues over whether this was a genuine shift to inter-state diplomacy or whether the cooling of support for overseas revolutionary activity was simply a tactical expedience. Most agree however that Beijing regarded Delhi as the gateway to a broader diplomatic engagement with non-socialist Asia. Some Chinese historians stress both the sincerity of Beijing's moderate approach and rhetoric of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (*Panchsheel*) and the Asian identity that was asserted to complement this new posture, suggesting that this also implied a minor push for independence from Moscow.⁴² One historian has emphasised that it was shared security concerns that drew China and India into a fruitful partnership in the mid-1950s.⁴³ However, others have

⁴⁰ Liu, Xiaoyuan. 'Friend or Foe: India as Perceived by Beijing's Foreign Policy Analysts in the 1950s', *China Review* 15, no. 1 (2015): 117-43.

⁴¹ Ray, Hemen. *Peking and the Indian Communists : The Strategy and Tactics of the Ccp toward the Indian Communist Movement in the Evolution of Sino-Indian and Sino-Soviet Conflicts*, Bombay: Jaico Publishing, 1980; Fic, Victor M., *Peaceful Transition to Communism in India: Strategy of the Communist Party*, Bombay, 1969.

⁴² Niu, Jun, 'Chongjian "zhongjian didai": Zhongguo yazhou zhengce de qiyuan (1945-1955) ['Rebuilding the "Intermediate Zone": The Origins of China's Asia policy, 1945-1955], *Lengzhan yu Zhongguo waijiao zhengce* [The Cold War and China's Foreign Policy], 238-55, (Beijing: Jiuzhou Chubanshe, 2012); Shu, Zhangguang. 'Constructing "Peaceful Coexistence": China's Diplomacy toward the Geneva and Bandung Conferences, 1954– 55', *Cold War History* 7, no. 4 (2007): 509-28.

⁴³ Khan, Sulmaan Wasif, 'Cold War Co- Operation: New Chinese Evidence on Jawaharlal Nehru's 1954 Visit to Beijing', *Cold War History* 11, no. 2 (2011): 197-222.

explicitly emphasised the tactical nature of this turn and argued that it was underpinned by the consistent prioritisation of class factors. Chen Jian, for one, explained that Beijing was ideologically incapable of applying *Panchsheel* to relations with the imperialist US, though it could guide relations with the USSR.⁴⁴ Yang Kuisong showed that the revived 'intermediate zone' concept was moulded by the ideology of class struggle and that Mao always thought in terms of 'supra-national class relations and benefits'.⁴⁵ There are also some historians who have drawn attention to an even earlier turn towards India, one explicitly arguing that this was justified on ideological grounds.⁴⁶ This claim suggests that the debate over the sincerity of the moderate turn is misplaced and that Beijing's ideology clearly did not preclude pragmatic engagement with the non-socialist world. But none of this literature addresses the ways in which the ideological compromises that were necessary, at least in public, for cooperation with India actually influenced Mao to shift back to a more radical position, when he decided that these implied too many risks for Tibet, China and the Socialist Bloc.

So this thesis will explore more fully the place China occupied in Nehru's overall policy and also study more closely the impact of Beijing's concerns. However, it will also draw on new trends in the study of international history. The concern to 'de-centre' and globalise the Cold War affords the opportunity to place the periphery within the main focus of study.⁴⁷ Of course, the PRC and India were two of the most central of the mass of states jostling to assert a role within the confines of the

⁴⁴ Chen, Jian. 'China and the Bandung Conference', In *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*, edited by Amitav Acharya See Seng Tan, 132-59, Singapore: National University Singapore Press, 2008.

⁴⁵ Kuisong, Yang. 'The Theory and Implementation of the People's Republic of China's Revolutionary Diplomacy', *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 3, no. 2 (2009): 131-6; See also, Kuisong, Yang. 'Mao Zedong and the Indochina Wars', In *Behind the Bamboo Curtain: China, Vietnam, and the World Beyond Asia*, edited by Priscilla Roberts. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006;

⁴⁶ Bhattacharjea, Mira Sinha. 'Mao Zedong's Vision: China, the World and India.' In *Across the Himalayan Gap: A Quest for Understanding China*, edited by Tan Chung. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1998, 489; Liao Xinwen, 'Ershi shiji wushi niandai Mao Zedong deng dapo xifang fengsuo he baowei de juece licheng,' *Dang de wenxian*, 4 (2008)

⁴⁷ Westad, O. A. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005;

bi-polar system. Delhi and Beijing's awareness of their value as critical swing states in the Cold War had a major influence on how they viewed each other. Tony Smith has argued that 'pericentric' states not only attempted to overcome, moderate and challenge the logic of the Cold War, but in fact were most successful in their efforts to expand, intensify and prolong it.⁴⁸ This framework suggests how profound the tension between the PRC and India became when these two subsidiary powers found themselves in stark opposition in terms of their efforts to blunt or sharpen Moscow's appetite for Cold War. De-centring also permits the historian to unearth the impact of individuals or groups that may, in the language of South Asian studies, be considered subalterns. Important new histories have shown how the Cold War was experienced, fought, and exploited by surprising local actors.⁴⁹ Hajimu Masuda has argued for the profound role of public opinion in creating an imagined Cold War, rather than that an objective global confrontation created this widespread common mood.⁵⁰ Such perspectives suggest new insight might be derived from considering the impact of Indian public opinion more closely. While, the public's hostility and opposition to concessions to China after 1959 was undoubtedly tinged by anti-communist paranoia, Indian diplomats then, and historians since, have dismissed Chinese sensitivity to the media storm and public uproar and only emphasised the constraint placed on Nehru.⁵¹ What is missing is a sympathetic discussion of how the Chinese perceived this popular excitement to be a threat.

⁴⁸ Smith, T. 'New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War', *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 4 (2000): 567-91

⁴⁹ Lanza, Jadigwa E. Pieper Mooney & Fabio, ed. *De-Centering Cold War History: Local and Global Change*. Oxford: Routledge, 2013

⁵⁰ Masuda, Hajimu. *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World*. Cambridge, Massachusetts : Harvard University Press, 2014.

⁵¹ Bhutani, Sudarshan. *A Clash of Political Cultures : Sino-India Relations, 1957-1962*. New Delhi: Lotus Collection, 2004.

Methodologies drawn purely from Cold War history do not exhaust the new tools available for working with the history of Sino-Indian relations. One important way in which the Cold War's peripheries became central was through the major historical process referred to as decolonisation. The importance of composite approaches reconciling Cold War and anti-colonial or post-colonial themes is suggested by Odd Arne Westad and Noam Chomsky who have both described a common Asian view of the superpower contest as the continued intrusion of colonial domination.⁵² Indeed, the Cold War could only become global because of the proliferation of new nation-states and aspirants to statehood in Asia and Africa through the 1950s and 60s. The history of Sino-Indian relations in this period might then benefit from insights derived from debates about the nature of Asian nationalism. A key question is how innovative and indigenous Asian nationalisms are and whether they can avoid the conflicts of Europe. If Asian nationalism is simply the rejection of European imperialism's claim to superior civilisation as the justification for its rule, then collaboration might be possible.⁵³ But if it is true that, for instance, Indian nationalism is less a product of indigenous innovation and more a consequence of the colonial context in which it emerged, then not only is the nationalist assertion of a unique modernity challenged but so too is the possibility of intra-Asian cooperation.⁵⁴ Hence, the importance of efforts to intellectually 'provincialise' Europe.⁵⁵ By displacing the intellectual hegemony of Europe, Asian nationalists claim their civilisational right to self-government, and propose a new form of nation-state less prone to

⁵² Westad, O. A. 'The Cold War and the International History of the Twentieth Century', In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, 1-19. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Chomsky, Noam. *World Orders, Old and New*, London: Pluto Press, 1994, 5, 74

⁵³ Duara, Prasenjit. 'The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism', *Journal of World History* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 99-130

⁵⁴ Chatterjee, Partha. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* London: Zed for the United Nations University, 1986. ; Goswami, Manu. *Producing India from Colonial Economy to National Space*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004

⁵⁵ Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, N. J. ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008.

European style contention. Such concerns meant that it was in no way ordained that the new states would meekly accept their place in the existing international structure.⁵⁶

The broader quandaries facing independent Asia in the post-war world enriches an understanding of how India and the PRC perceived each other. Mark Mazower showed how Indian leaders initially challenged the absolute sovereignty implied by the nation-state system.⁵⁷ The highly confused historiography on subsequent Third World efforts to collectively resist the Cold War system has obscured the picture of Beijing and Delhi's overlapping and ultimately conflicting interactions with these efforts. All too many accounts of the Afro-Asian Conference (AAC) at Bandung in 1955 have suggested that this was the origin of the Non-Aligned Movement, established in Belgrade in 1961.⁵⁸ Only very recently have scholars rebuked this woeful error showing how riven by Cold War alignment Bandung was, no matter how much participants shared anti-colonial sentiments.⁵⁹ Itty Abraham demonstrated that Nehru, having accepted the nation-state system was trying to encourage the PRC, at Bandung and through the mid-1950s, to follow suit.⁶⁰ Nehru's vision of Asian independence in the international system through the practice of non-alignment was rejected

⁵⁶ John Kelly & Martha Kaplan. "My Ambition Is Much Higher Than Independence": US Power, the UN World, the Nation-State, and Their Critics', In *Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then*, edited by Prasenjit Duara, London: Routledge, 2004; see also, Abraham, Itty. 'Prolegomena to Non-Alignment', In *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War : Delhi, Bandung, Belgrade*, edited by Harald Fischer-Tiné Nataša Mišković, and Nada Boškovička, eds., London: Routledge, 2014.

⁵⁷ Mazower, Mark. *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009

⁵⁸ Bradley, Mark Philip. 'Decolonization, the Global South, and the Cold War, 1919–1962', In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Vol. 1*, edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.), 464-85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Duara, Prasenjit, ed. *Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then*, Rewriting Histories. London: Routledge, 2004, p.3; Prasad, Vijay. *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*. New York: New Press, 2007.

⁵⁹ Vitalis, Robert. 'The Midnight Ride of Kwame Nkrumah and Other Fables of Bandung (Bandung)', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 4, no. 2 (2013): 261-88; Lawrence, Mark Atwood. 'The Rise and Fall of Non-Alignment', In *The Cold War in the Third World*, edited by Robert J. MacMahon, 139-55. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013

⁶⁰ Abraham, Itty. 'Bandung and State Formation in Post Colonial Asia', In *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*, edited by See Seng and Amitav Acharya Tan. Singapore: National University Singapore Press, 2008.

by the majority of participants at Bandung, and so he moved to find a narrower circle of like-minded resisters.⁶¹ But Nehru's insistence on the possibility of non-alignment, as his answer to the threat of Cold War domination, not only disrupted relations with the US,⁶² but also the PRC, as its underlying definition of itself as a nation of liberated people re-emerged, and Beijing sought to encourage the Afro-Asian world to a more revolutionary stance.⁶³ So Sino-Indian relations can be usefully understood as both a clash of visions for Asia, but also the collision of decolonisation and the Cold War.

The intersection of approaches related to displacing Europe's intellectual hegemony with the growing body of literature on economic development as an historical process provides another completely novel perspective on Sino-Indian relations. Historians of the Cold War increasingly place economic development at the heart of that global contest.⁶⁴ Furthermore, many studies place Third World states, like India, at the centre of the developmental battle.⁶⁵ In India's case, the literature has long shown the importance of economic development to Delhi's sense of the state's independence, unity and political legitimacy,⁶⁶ and it has also long been noted that economic

⁶¹ Abraham, Itty. 'Prolegomena to Non-Alignment', In *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War : Delhi, Bandung, Belgrade*, edited by Harald Fischer-Tiné Nataša Mišković, and Nada Boškowska. London: Routledge, 2014.

⁶² On Indian relations with the US see, Brands, H. W., *India and the United States: The Cold Peace*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990; McMahon, Robert J., *The Cold War on the Periphery : The United States, India, and Pakistan, 1947-1965*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993; McMahon, Robert J., 'U.S. Policy toward South Asia and Tibet During the Early Cold War', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 3 (2006): 131-44; Merrill, Dennis. 'Indo-American Relations, 1947-50: A Missed Opportunity in Asia', *Diplomatic History* 11, no. 3 (1987): 203-26;

⁶³ Lawrence, 'The Rise and Fall of Non-Alignment', 2013; Latham, 'The Cold War in the Third World', 2010

⁶⁴ Maier, Charles S. 'The World Economy and the Cold War in the Middle of the Twentieth Century', Chap. 3 In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War.*, Vol.1, edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Latham, Michael E. *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011.

⁶⁵ Engerman, David C. 'The Romance of Economic Development and New Histories of the Cold War', *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 1 (2004): 23-54; Cullather, Nick. *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010.

⁶⁶ Zachariah, Nehru, 2004; Khilnani, Sunil. *The Idea of India*. London: Penguin, 2003.

policy was at the heart of Nehru's foreign policy.⁶⁷ The link lies in the mirror image that Nehru's domestic policy formed of his non-aligned international policy. Francine Frankel argued that Nehru's development model sought to merge Soviet planning and social progress with the democratic, pluralist politics that he desired for India.⁶⁸ Although India's rural development programmes are now regarded as more the product of transnational exchanges than being purely indigenous in origin, nevertheless, it remains clear that Delhi regarded these as having very particular domestic political value.⁶⁹ One local inspiration for rural development seems to have been the Indian state's encounter with CPI programmes while suppressing the Telengana insurrection.⁷⁰ The latest literature now shows how India's development experiments even exercised a profound influence over Moscow, thus inverting assumptions about influence flowing from Cold War centres to the periphery.⁷¹ The importance of economic development and the politics surrounding it has been well attested by historians of Mao's foreign policy. Chen Jian has shown the clear links between Mao's action in the international sphere with his domestic policies. And Mao's evolving attitude towards development from the mid-1950s was at the heart of his

⁶⁷ Nizami, Taufiq Ahmad. *The Communist Party and India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, 1971.

⁶⁸ Frankel, Francine R. *India's Political Economy 1947-2004 : The Gradual Revolution*, Oxford University Press.

⁶⁹ For an example of an early account see, Pande, V.P. *Village Community Projects in India: Origin, Development and Problems*. New York: Asia Publishing House, 1967. More recent studies include, Sackley, Nicole. 'Village Models: Etawah, India, and the Making and Remaking of Development in the Early Cold War', *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 4 (2013): 749-78; Sinha, Subir. 'Lineages of the Developmentalist State: Transnationality and Village India, 1900–1965', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 1 (2008): 57-90; For their political value, see Thorner, Alice. 'Nehru, Albert Mayer, and Origins of Community Projects', *Economic and Political Weekly* 16, no. 4 (1981): 117-20.

⁷⁰ Sherman, Taylor C. 'The Integration of the Princely State of Hyderabad and the Making of the Postcolonial State in India, 1948-56', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 44, no. 4 (2007), 505

⁷¹ Engerman, David C. 'Learning from the East: Soviet Experts and India in the Era of Competitive Coexistence', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 33, no. 2 (2013): 227-38.

changing view of the USSR, which ultimately contributed to the split with Moscow.⁷² These perspectives can now be deployed to examine how the concept of development powered the dynamics of Sino-Indian relations in the 1950s.

Although Delhi and Beijing's relations have been considered in light of their competing imperial ambitions, the collaborative perspective remains under-explored. Whether we use John Darwin's definitions of empire or apply the concept of 'internal colonialism', Sino-Indian efforts to tie their peripheral zones, inherited respectively from the Qing Empire via the Republic of China or British India, were undoubtedly imperial schemes.⁷³ Nehru's own view that the conflict with Beijing emerged as each 'filled out their borders' indicated the competitive nature of these projects.⁷⁴ While accounts like Garver's rightly illustrate this contest as a source of distrust, the very real imperial cooperation that occurred has been overlooked. Furthermore, the consensus in the narrower historiography on Tibet is that India was not materially aiding the Tibetan rebels before 1962.⁷⁵ In fact, major histories of modern Tibet highlight a degree of real accommodation that existed between Tibetans and the CCP in the 1950s, even after the 1959 rebellion.⁷⁶ This Tibetan-

⁷² Shu, Guang Zhang. 'The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the Cold War in Asia, 1954–1962', In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.), 353-75. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Shen, Zhihua, *Chuzai shizi lukou de xuanze: 1956-57nian de Zhongguo* [Decision at the Crossroads: China in 1956-57], (Guangdong: renmin, 2013)

⁷³ Darwin, John. *After Tamerlane : The Global History of Empire*. London: Allen Lane, 2007, 491; Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed : An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009, 3

⁷⁴ Ramachandra Guha, 'The War That Killed Nehru', essay based on the Ingalls Lecture delivered at the Harvard- Yenching Institute on 29 March 2011.

⁷⁵ Knaus, John Kenneth. *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival*. 1st ed. ed. New York: New York : Public Affairs, 1999; Goldstein, Melvyn C. *A History of Modern Tibet. Volume 3, the Storm Clouds Descend, 1955-1957*. Berkeley University of California Press, 2014; Chen, Jian. "The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 3 (2006): 54-101.

⁷⁶ Tsering, Shakya. *The Dragon in the Land of Snows : A History of Modern Tibet since 1947*. *History of Modern Tibet since 1947*. London: Pimlico, 1999; Goldstein, Melvyn C. *A History of Modern Tibet. Volume 1, the Demise of the Lamaist State, 1913-1951*, Berkeley, Calif.; University of California Press, 1989; Goldstein, Melvyn C. *A History of Modern Tibet Vol. 2, the Calm before the Storm, 1951-1955*, Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press, 2007; Goldstein, Melvyn C. *A History of Modern Tibet. Volume 3, the Storm Clouds Descend, 1955-1957*, Berkeley University of California Press, 2014.

CCP cooperation suggests that there was a degree of Indian collaboration with Beijing's presence in Tibet. It is clear that Tibet was a central factor within Beijing and Delhi's respective attitudes towards each other.⁷⁷ But what needs to be better understood is the blend of contest and cooperation that existed, not just regarding Tibet, but their respective imperial interests more broadly. If India was not aiding the Tibetan rebels then why was Beijing so suspicious? It has been made clear that, although the CCP had some success in consolidating Tibet, ultimately it was the radical social transformation of some Tibetan areas that provoked pan-Tibetan resistance.⁷⁸ This in turn undermined Sino-Indian relations. Some accounts imply that it was the contrasting methods of integrating the peripheral zones that led to disputes between Beijing and Delhi. Wang Lixiong, a Chinese dissident intellectual, has argued that the key problem for the PRC's troubled integration of Tibet was national sovereignty. If a more indirect, traditional form of rule, what he calls 'Oriental Diplomacy' had been maintained by Beijing, Tibetan stability would have been better assured.⁷⁹ But in contrast with Delhi, Beijing could not accept this. While Nehru believed that tribal peoples must preserve their traditional lifestyles, the CCP preferred revolutionary integration of imperial territories.⁸⁰ Furthermore, complete integration of Tibet was critical to the CCP's claims to legitimacy.⁸¹ As a result it seems misguided to have expected Beijing to maintain indirect rule, or 'empire-lite' in Tibet, or anywhere else.⁸² So, the complex mix of collaboration and conflict between

⁷⁷ Topgyal, Tsering. 'Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute', *China Report* 47, no. 115 (2011)

⁷⁸ see Goldstein, 2014

⁷⁹ Lixiong, Wang. 'Reflections on Tibet.' *New Left Review*, Issue 14, March-April 2002, 82; See also, Wang Lixiong & Tsering Shakya, *The Struggle for Tibet*. London: Verso, 2006

⁸⁰ Guha, Ramachandra, *Savaging the Civilized: Verrier Elwin, His Tribals, and India*, University of Chicago Press, 1999; Howland, Douglas. 'The Dialectics of Chauvinism: Minority Nationalities and Territorial Sovereignty in Mao Zedong's New Democracy', *Modern China* 37, no. 170, 29 September 2011; Westad, Odd Arne, *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750*, London: Bodley Head, 2012, 317

⁸¹ Chen, Jian. 'The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 3 (2006): 54-101.

⁸² Khan, Sulmaan Wasif. *Muslim, Trader, Nomad, Spy: China's Cold War and the People of the Tibetan Borderlands*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Khan suggests that CCP rule in Tibet in the 1950s was initially an attempt to govern by 'empire-lite', until this proved insufficient to consolidate the region.

Chinese and Indian imperial practice and how this impacted their diplomatic relationship must be re-examined. As with Sino-Indian relations in general, the impact of Beijing's peculiar ideological approach is missing from studies of the interaction between their imperial projects.

The first major contribution that this thesis makes is to place Beijing and its ideology at the heart of the story. The critical dynamic in Sino-Indian relations through the 1950s was the effort by the CCP leadership to reconcile itself to a worldview prioritising the nation and suppressing therefore its ideological understanding of class confrontation as the vital force of history. Like Douglas MacDonald, this thesis abjure's the pejorative treatment of ideology.⁸³ Instead, it will show how important Beijing's ideology was to relations with India, and in turn how central was India to shifts in Beijing's worldview through this period, with profound consequences especially for relations with Moscow. So the argument follows those who have already emphasised Beijing's reservations about inter-state diplomacy. At the same, while Beijing's actions need more foregrounding, not everything was about ideas. For instance, the decision by Chinese leaders to match Indian silence about the border guaranteed future trouble. But Beijing's ideology was the crucial variable. The decision, with Soviet support, to shelve revolutionary rhetoric and engage non-socialist Asia and India under the *Panchsheel* rubric was a vital step. But the underlying utopian visions meant this inter-state diplomacy and related compromise in Tibet were always fragile. However, the particular importance of Beijing's ideology was the way this framed perceptions of India's domestic conditions, confirming the PRC's radical instincts. Beijing's understanding of, and most vitally its response to, the links between intensifying class confrontation in India, media and public hostility towards China, and an Indian threat to Tibet and the border only makes sense from a worldview based on transnational class antagonism. The resulting diplomacy as struggle profoundly disrupted relations with India. The re-definition of the Indian state as an object of class struggle then severely strained relations with Moscow, and underlay the negative trajectory in Chinese perceptions of the

⁸³ Macdonald, Douglas J. 'Formal Ideologies in the Cold War: Toward a Framework for Empirical Analysis.' In *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory*, Odd Arne Westad (ed.), London: Routledge, 2000, 181

Soviets from incompetence, to weakness, to betrayal to outright enmity. As Nehru came to be viewed as an active opponent of historical progress through his sham non-alignment and delusory domestic politics, Moscow's endorsement of him looked ever more like pure treachery. Most crucially of all, suddenly, confrontation with India was of great practical use within the frame of Mao's ideology. It would intensify the class struggle in India and maybe trigger revolution and it would expose Soviet hostility to Beijing discrediting Moscow's claims to leadership of the socialist camp.

This thesis also makes a major contribution to the debate on the nature of Jawaharlal Nehru's foreign policy by placing his China policy within a much broader political project. For Nehru, as for Mao, ideals often defined the national interest. Nehru's attempt to socialise the PRC by supporting its case at the UN and accepting its rights in Tibet all aimed at socialising Beijing to the international system. In other words to accept the nation state rather than class as the operating principle of foreign policy. If the PRC could also thereby ease its dependence on Moscow the overall tension of the Cold War would be reduced and Delhi's widest interest served. Nehru believed positive relations with China were an exemplary demonstration of the feasibility of non-alignment, and had the practical effect of buttressing his domestic development agenda and diminishing security concerns regarding Tibet and the border. Nehru thought that China's encounters with colonial power made it more sympathetic to the independence imperative underlying non-alignment, and more inclined to moderation. Hence, the 1954 agreement with China on Tibet was welcomed most of all for its international value, and the apparent turn towards the Socialist Bloc following the US move towards Pakistan was more a result of this consistent agenda than a response to the changed power balance in South Asia. The reversal of Nehru's assessment of Moscow and Beijing's relative moderation in the latter half of the 1950s did not fundamentally affect his formal approach to China because of his commitment to non-alignment. In fact, as conflict grew, Nehru appealed to Beijing to protect relations in the interests of preserving Indian non-alignment. Even though Nehru realised that Beijing had replaced Moscow as the more radical communist power he failed to see that the Chinese had come to see non-alignment as an

ideological affront, but even more fatefully Nehru believed that the manifest virtue of non-alignment meant India was beyond suspicion. This combined with Nehru's belief that limited wars had become virtually unthinkable in the nuclear age to handicap Indian strategic thinking once Sino-Indian relations became securitised after the failure to resolve the border in 1959-60. Nehru's long-term failure to craft a Tibet policy that genuinely reassured Beijing of India's disinterest and his consistent public assertions that the border was settled also provoked both Beijing and his own population constraining his own ability to compromise once relations collapsed.

This thesis also argues that Sino-Indian relations between 1949-62 was not just a Cold War story but also crucially a story of the rise of Asia within the context of that global confrontation. Both Mao and Nehru were sceptical of the European nation-state system which their new states were expected to join. Furthermore, both were protagonists in the project Chakrabarty describes as the provincialisation of Europe. 'Mao Zedong Thought', international class struggle, Nehru's syncretic development policy and non-alignment were all products of intellectual resistance against the constraints of European ideas and underpinned the emphasis that Delhi and Beijing each placed on their political relations. Both pushed their respective ideals as hard as they did because these were imagined to be intimate expressions of a unique Chinese or Indian position in the world and the route to achieve the grandest national goals, indicating how limited is the conceptual division of ideology and nationalism, or idealism and realism. Beijing's attitude towards *Panchsheel* illustrated this merger: for ideological reasons the Five Principles could not be applied to the USA, but simultaneously, Beijing showed that it could consider adhering to this framework for relations with the USSR revealing its underlying resistance of Moscow's authority despite the rationale of an international socialist hierarchy. Similarly, Nehru's commitment to non-alignment was no doubt linked to his conviction that this was a contribution to world peace, but, in addition, to retreat from this policy would be to retreat from the nationalist idea of India as exceptional with a unique historical contribution to make. The final consequence for Sino-Indian relations of the interplay of Asian nationalism and Cold War forces, emerged in the shape of a pericentric encounter between India's profound attempt to use non-alignment to dismantle the logic of the Cold War and Beijing's

counter-effort to assert the unavoidable reality and benefits of confrontation. Delhi and Beijing collided as they each sought to challenge in very different ways the intellectual hegemony of the Cold War system.

A fourth contribution made by this thesis is to show that the interwoven links between Delhi and Beijing's imperial projects were as much examples of ambiguous cooperation as of straightforward contest. On independence, Delhi and Beijing were faced with the challenge of how to integrate coveted zones into the nation-state but also how to manage competing claims and interests. The collaborative nature of what followed has been far less remarked upon than the conflictual elements. Nehru believed that Asian states ought to assist each other with the consolidation of their new territories, and he quickly cooperated with Burma to that end. In his effort to socialise Beijing, Nehru tried to fashion an imperial concord in which both would agree to a system of local autonomy and limited central sovereignty across Tibet and the Himalayas. Beijing acquiesced in this to some extent and was happy to seek Indian assistance for the stabilisation of Tibet. However, besides the conventional clash over territory and borders, the possibility of sustaining this understanding was foiled by the intrinsically different and ideological attitudes towards consolidating state control over peripheral zones. Again then Beijing's ideology was crucial to the shifts in relations with Delhi. Initially these differences performed an important function in convincing Beijing that Delhi was unreliable and that moderate compromise with it was dangerous. Then, as the Chinese leadership's faith in the power of revolutionary social change as a nation-building tool revived, Nehru's notion of an imperial compromise and zone of limited sovereignty across the Himalayas became simply unworkable.

Finally, this thesis will argue that economic development has been a totally overlooked but crucial element of Sino-Indian relations in this period critically impacting mutual perceptions. Nehru believed that a shared thirst for economic advance provided ground for Beijing and Delhi to develop diplomatic relations and overcome their apparent ideological differences. He was also convinced that relations with communist China were justified by the opportunity that this afforded to

learn from its development experiments. However, very soon Nehru also contracted an acute sense of being in a contest with China to provide a developmental model for Asian modernity. One consequence was that Delhi tried to actively promote its own programmes in order to compete with China. Another result was an anxious Nehru put undue pressure on his own planning bureaucracy to match China, ironically at a time when Chinese planning itself was in turmoil. When Sino-Indian relations turned hostile, a key element of Nehru's dismay, which underpinned his efforts to salvage an understanding with Beijing, was his conviction that a rupture would empower his domestic opponents' attacks, not only on non-alignment, but also against his hybrid development model. Meanwhile, Beijing's attitude towards India was also fundamentally moulded by perceptions of Delhi's development policies. In fact, well before relations began to corrode, Chinese analysts were forecasting trouble based on their assessments of the Indian Government's failure to overcome reactionary opposition to progressive domestic reform. Furthermore, these perceptions of India's misguided development experiment contributed to the increasingly negative assessment of Moscow whose indulgence of India's dubious economic model served only to underline the corruption at the heart of the capital of global revolution. It was analysis of India's economic policy that led Beijing to re-define Nehru's government as profoundly hostile to the Indian people and to China.

These arguments are supported by extensive research in the major Chinese and Indian archives of diplomatic documents. Much of my material from the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs's archive (CMFA) has not been used before for the study of the history of Sino-Indian relations. The majority of these documents are communications between senior diplomats in Beijing and abroad recording discussions with foreign counterparts. Besides simply revealing hitherto unknown episodes the main value of these files is to show how Beijing justified its actions. Beijing's handling of relations with India at various times of crisis has thus become much clearer. Documents containing communications between CCP officials in Lhasa and Beijing have also illuminated how India's attitude towards Tibet was viewed. Official analyses of Indian politics and economy have also been given an unprecedented insight into Beijing's changing ideological understanding of India. Chinese

documents also shed light on Nehru's diplomacy not revealed in the Indian material. Shen Zhihua's unpublished collection of Soviet documents (translated into Chinese) on the acute phase of Sino-Indian conflict from 1959 has also added to a grasp of Moscow's function within this dynamic.

Documents used from the Ministry of External Affairs available in the National Archives of India have included the regular embassy reports from key overseas capitals. The reports from Beijing and Moscow have been especially useful in building up a picture of Delhi's shifting view of the Sino-Soviet alliance through the 1950s. Papers accessed in the Nehru Library have perhaps been even more valuable. Collections of key diplomatic figures such as Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Subimal Dutt, TN Kaul, KPS Menon, RK Nehru and Apa Pant *inter alia* have all been consulted. In particular Pandit's files for the early 1950s have provided a firm base for establishing the foundations of Nehru's approach to China. The Apa Pant papers covering his time when he was P.O. in Sikkim and tasked with monitoring events in Tibet, are a crucial counterpoint to Pandit showing the more ambiguous side of Delhi's attitude towards Tibet. The still expanding collection of *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* and the complete *Jawaharlal Nehru Letters to Chief Ministers* provide an unparalleled and under-utilised resource for the study of all facets of Nehru's politics. Both are useful for way they allow the comparative study of Nehru's diplomatic and domestic concerns, putting his attitude towards China in a wider frame. The *Selected Works* peculiar value is that they sometimes allow analysis of the differences in Nehru's public rhetoric and private views. Neville Maxwell's recent partial release of the Indian military's study of the 1962 war, the still classified *Henderson-Brooks Bhagat Report*, permitted the novel opportunity to reconsider his conclusions within a broader documentary context. Finally, various memoirs of Indian diplomats have afforded additional insight into thinking within Delhi at key moments. The Public Record Office in Kew has also revealed documents covering conversations between London and Delhi that have given great insight into Indian attitudes towards Beijing in the early 1950s.

Chapter one of the thesis discusses Delhi and Beijing's respective dilemmas related to the prospect and process of diplomatic recognition. On the one hand, India and the PRC seemed to be

arraigned against each other due to Beijing's proximity to the USSR and positive view of the Communist Party of India's violent insurrection against the Indian state. Yet this deep suspicion, and mutual ignorance, was overcome for reasons that related, on either side, to profoundly important imperatives for both the Indian and Chinese leaders. Nehru believed the emergence of the PRC reflected the general rise of Asia, of which Indian independence was also a part. Furthermore, Nehru believed that, internationally, communism was a threat countered better through engagement rather than isolation. Beijing believed it could use diplomatic relations with India to secure certain immediate interests. But, in addition, and despite the central value placed on the new alliance with Moscow, a diplomatic relationship with India served to provide something of a balance to over-dependence on the Soviets.

Chapter two explores this ambiguous relationship in face of the challenges posed by the Korean War and Tibet. The Korean War tested Nehru's conviction that China could be socialised and that the UN could be a source of impartial justice. Indian and Chinese differences over the political future of Tibet also strained relations. Delhi attempted to reassure Beijing of its disinterest in Tibet, but was unable to eliminate all provocations. Beijing, for its part, sought to win Indian assistance for the stabilisation of the region. Meanwhile, both avoided frank discussion of the border, in order to consolidate their position in the border zones, and also to derive international benefits from a more stable relationship. Beijing in fact moved to secure a major breakthrough in Sino-Soviet relations with India. The real cooperation that developed was shown by India's supportive attitude regarding the US sponsored Japanese Peace Treaty and a flurry of cultural and other exchanges. But the ambiguities underlying much of the positive rhetoric were significant. The Socialist Bloc still hoped its Indian class allies in the CPI would overthrow the Congress Government one day, even while Moscow and Beijing themselves disagreed over the CPI's tactics. Simultaneously, Nehru's friendly policy disguised the hope that a less obdurate PRC would loosen its commitment to the Sino-Soviet relationship. Both Delhi and Beijing also perceived the other as making significant challenges to their domestic legitimacy. Most profoundly, closer contact with the Chinese led the

Indians to reassess the PRC's Asian character, its potential moderation and therefore the possibility of drawing Beijing away from Moscow to defuse the Cold War.

Chapter three covers the period of China's moderate turn after the end of the Korean War until the reappraisal of Beijing's international priorities caused by the Hungarian crisis of 1956. Nehru credited his own policy for the positive Sino-Soviet interest in non-socialist Asia, and contrasted this with an increasingly aggressive US attitude. But this period also saw a subtle shift in the balance between Moscow, Beijing and Delhi. The new emphasis on inter-state rather than party relations threatened the logic of Beijing's relations with Moscow. Furthermore, Nehru's assumption that the PRC was the more moderate partner was also increasingly challenged. A new level of Indo-Soviet economic relations developed, and Nehru's sense of a contest with Beijing intensified. And while Beijing welcomed increased Soviet aid, Mao grew wary of over-dependence and the implications of Soviet support of non-socialist development in Asia. The Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet left many crucial issues unresolved. The agreement included the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, implying absolute respect for sovereignty and non-interference, but specific sovereign boundaries were not made clear. Nehru's insistence on Tibetan autonomy, admittedly Beijing encouraged Delhi to expect this, and also his notion that Beijing in return would respect Delhi's primacy over Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, contradicted *Panchsheel's* expression of absolute sovereignty. For Mao, partnership with India served stability in Tibet, and similarly, moderation in Tibet served the partnership with India. This equation was linked to the international meaning of *Panchsheel*, which bolstered Beijing's projection of a new moderate image in Asia. However, differences over the applicability of the Five Principles disrupted the Sino-Soviet-Indian triangle. Delhi thought they should be universal. Beijing disagreed with Moscow that these could be applied to the US, while Moscow rejected their relevance to the Socialist Bloc. Although the crises in Eastern Europe in 1956 led Mao to uphold the principle of a Socialist hierarchy, he continued to resist Delhi and Moscow's attitude to the US, presaging future friction.

Chapter four explores the growing tension after 1956 between two world-views: one privileging the political dynamism of class conflict, and the other the centrality of the nation to historical progress. Mao's increased tendency to assess international and domestic politics from a class perspective brought a new pungency to Beijing's analysis of the politics of Indian economic development. This came to be seen as an important barometer for the possibility of continued cooperation with Delhi, and also a crucial exhibit in the disagreement with Moscow over the feasibility of Khrushchev's 1956 ideological innovation of 'peaceful evolution'. The intensification of political confrontation within India in 1958 was then welcomed by Mao as proof of his ideological convictions. Nehru found himself trying to contain this polarisation, as crucial to his rejection of the logic of the Cold War as his international policy of non-alignment. Mao also increasingly espoused a confrontational rhetoric in the international sphere, encouraging national liberation movements to radical action, while India's international posture appeared more and more conservative. Growing instability in Tibet gradually exposed the unsustainable ambiguity of Delhi and Beijing's approach to the border in 1958, but before rebellion broke out in Lhasa in March 1959, the possibility of a national compromise remained. But Mao's decision to fully switch to class politics to deal with Tibet, and test the loyalties of the Indian Government and Nehru, completely disrupted relations with India, and Moscow. Mao did not want a break with Delhi *per se*, he only wanted to identify and confront his class enemies in India. The Indian Government however only interpreted this as a shocking show of hostility from Beijing.

In Chapter five the course of Sino-Indian relations is traced until 20 October 1962, when the PLA launched its massive attack at points thousands of miles apart on the border. By re-examining the standard assumption that the Government of India pursued an irrational, reckless and obstinate border policy a new assessment of that final decision for war by Chairman Mao becomes necessary. While Delhi's diplomacy was to a great extent driven by a profound distrust of Beijing, Nehru was not at all fixed on confrontation and he pursued a parallel private diplomacy to salvage relations. Meanwhile, Chinese diplomacy only further provoked Indian distrust, because it aimed at exacerbating what was perceived as a brewing revolutionary situation within India. In addition,

Beijing's sense that India was both collaborating with world imperialism and encouraging the USSR to do so also, made it a dangerous enemy. India meanwhile regarded Beijing as the major threat to the possibilities of detente that had been emerging between the superpowers. There was also a spiralling imperial dilemma between China and India as each responded to the other's more assertive position in Tibet and the region more broadly, and China found new common ground with important Indian neighbours in opposing Indian chauvinism. In this context of imperial anxiety, Delhi pursued its Forward Policy on the border to prevent further transformation of the status quo and gain new leverage both with Beijing and the Indian public. But this cautious approach foundered in the summer of 1962 not on public opinion but on a new hostile mood in Beijing closely linked to the perception of intensifying class confrontation in India.

Chapter One – Dilemmas of Diplomatic Recognition

Introduction

In April, 1950 the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India formally agreed to an exchange of Ambassadors and established diplomatic relations. The process, while slow and subject to delays, had been surprisingly smooth. In many ways a gulf stood between them. Beijing had aligned with Moscow and signed a treaty granting major aid and military guarantees. Beijing's new allies had been hurling abuse at the Indian Government since 1947, disparaging Indian independence as sham, and encouraging India's communists to rebel. The Chinese communists had joined in and also offered rhetorical support to the Communist Party of India (CPI). Simultaneously, Nehru had only recently visited the world capital of imperialism, Washington, DC, and had swapped British rule for a close relationship with London via the Commonwealth. Not only was Nehru currently crushing a communist uprising in South India, but in 1947 he had tried to recognise Tibet as an independent state.

Against this backdrop, Indian and Chinese leaders put aside the various risks they imagined lurking behind a diplomatic relationship with the other, and moved to exchange embassies. Why and how they did this revealed fundamental characteristics of the way in which they perceived the international system, and each other. Strikingly, given the apparent antagonisms, both Delhi and Beijing decided that, on balance, critical interests would be served by establishing diplomatic relations with the other. Furthermore, in very important ways Indian and Chinese leaders both imagined that their new state's independence of action would be increased.

Nehru did not share the widespread view of international communism as a threatening monolith. His positive view of Asian nationalism inclined him to discount fears that the PRC was simply Moscow's vassal. In fact, he regarded the PRC as potentially a pillar of Asia's resurgence. Nehru was no fan of communism, but he disagreed with the US about how to respond to it in the international sphere. Firstly, Asian independence movements had to be supported wholeheartedly, to forestall their corruption into communism. Secondly, communist China should be soothed through engagement not embittered by isolation. India was anyway too fragile to allow an unfriendly relationship with its large neighbour, Nehru believed

While Mao and other leaders regarded the USSR as the fulcrum of their foreign relations and the indispensable guide for domestic development in critical fields, Delhi offered a slight counter-balance in a number of ways. Mao's CCP had a history of independence from the CPSU and in particular, during the civil war, had developed its own strategic view of international politics, the 'intermediate zone', which placed China and Asia in the frontline against US imperialism, not the USSR. That Stalin's 'two-camps' theory had now displaced the language of Mao's 'intermediate zone' cannot have meant the basic independence of thought had gone.⁸⁴ The Chairman's resistance of Stalin's total dominance was shown by the way in which Beijing tried to use talks with India to pressure Stalin into signing a favourable treaty. In addition, there was some tension regarding revolution in Asia. Like Moscow, Beijing recognised that India's huge population had massive revolutionary potential, so diplomatic relations would improve the CCP's influence.

The process of establishing diplomatic relations revealed dramatically different approaches to diplomacy. Beijing used the actual negotiations to support immediate needs related to Tibet, the ongoing confrontation with the *Guomindang* (GMD), and the desire to display loyalty to the Socialist Bloc and demonstrate a differentiated view of the UK and India. Delhi sought no *quid pro*

⁸⁴ Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjian didai"', 240-2

quo as Beijing did. India was driven by a broader desire for a system of international justice under the United Nations, which, it was believed, recognition of the PRC as the successor to the Republic of China, would assist with. Therefore, when China's skepticism of India was confirmed by evidence of its subversive activity in Xinjiang, Beijing still considered that it had got something out of India. India, for its part over-estimated its ability to breach the gulf of ideology and find common ground on the issue of economic development and universal justice.

Nehru did not grasp the different conception of national independence prevailing in Beijing and Delhi. The PRC's founding had symbolised that the 'Chinese people have stood up'. Modern India and China each have problematic historical narratives based on the nation-state. Both of these included a sense of colonial oppression that provided common ground, but the Chinese nation was an oppressed class, not simply an oppressed nation.⁸⁵ This difference overrode the common anti-colonial identity because class analysis dominated not just the PRC's domestic but also its international politics. It was an insurmountable obstacle for leaders in Delhi, who were sincerely regarded as class enemies in Beijing. Nehru's insistence on viewing international politics from the perspective of Asian nationalism, and assumption of sympathy on national grounds, blinded him to Beijing's class antipathy.

Recognition - the view from Delhi

The PRC was more enthusiastic than India about establishing diplomatic relations.⁸⁶ There was a significant delay between the PRC's first proposal to India of mutual recognition, on 2 October 1949, and India issuing a formal agreement. India's ambassador in Nanjing, KM Panikkar, had lost

⁸⁵ Duara, Prasenjit. *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, 77

⁸⁶ The limited historiography on the founding of Sino-Indian diplomatic relations suggests it was India that first requested relations in December 1949, see Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjian didai"', 247

his diplomatic status once the Communists arrived, but he received the 2 October note. In his memoir, Panikkar writes that, Nehru replied two days later in 'friendly terms, indicating that there would be early recognition and exchange of representatives.' In the meantime, Panikkar returned to India believing he could not be present until relations were formally established, which he thought would take two to three months.⁸⁷ However, it was only three months later, on the 30 December, that India formally agreed to begin the process. Nehru wrote that Zhou had 'conveyed the desire of your Government to establish diplomatic relations with India on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual interests and mutual respect for territorial and sovereign rights.' Nehru declared that his Government had 'decided that they should accord recognition to the PRC' and that they wished to 'enter into diplomatic relations with your Government.'⁸⁸ The Indian delay requires explanation.

Existing ties to the *Guomindang* (GMD) Government naturally created a dilemma in Delhi. Partly the Indian Government faced the dilemma of when to transfer relations between competing sides in an ongoing civil war. Delhi was cautious while it appeared that the GMD would fight from the South-West as they had in the war, and Panikkar himself advised waiting until GMD authority 'ceased to function'.⁸⁹ Appreciation of Jiang Jieshi's support for the Indian freedom struggle compounded Indian discomfort.⁹⁰

Furthermore, the spectre of communism in Asia loomed over Indian calculations. Delhi shared Anglo-American concerns about the spread of communism and the effect of the CCP's victory. On 11 November, British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin reported to London on American talks with

⁸⁷ Panikkar, KM. *In Two China's: Memoirs of a diplomat*, London, 1955, 61

⁸⁸ 'Letter from Nehru to Zhou via Indian Representative in Nanjing, 30/12/1949', 105-00007-02, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hereafter *CMFA*, 5

⁸⁹ Panikkar, 1955, 67

⁹⁰ Guha, Ramachandra *India after Gandhi : The History of the World's Largest Democracy*, London: Macmillan, 2007, 167

Nehru in the US, 'when Pandit Nehru arrived in the United States he was ready for precipitate action with regard to the recognition of the Chinese Communist Government but in later conversations with the State Department he showed signs of cooling and had evidently been giving consideration to the effect on Burma.' Bevin went on that, 'The situation in Burma too was causing grave concern and I was worried at the possible repercussions in Burma when recognition of the Chinese Communist Government was announced.'⁹¹ Not only did Nehru sympathise with the West's anxiety about the communist threat to Asian stability, but he even turned down Malay requests to help coordinate against the restoration of British control.⁹²

Concerned as the Indians may have been for the influence of communism in South East Asia, it was the insurgency in South India that added to Delhi's hesitation to recognise the PRC.⁹³ The Communist Party of India (CPI) had flopped in the final stage of India's independence struggle and Congress had been able to dismiss them as anti-national. But overseas support made the insurgency a threat. Indeed, CPI leaders corresponded warmly with Mao in 1949 warning him that Nehru was a hostile figure similar to Jiang Jieshi.⁹⁴ Since 1947 and the foundation of the Cominform the Soviets had turned against India's National Congress.⁹⁵ Some evidence even suggests that Moscow ferried instructions to various Asian parties to launch insurrections in 1948.⁹⁶ But China's rhetorical support at least was clear. In late 1949, Liu Shaoqi had announced 'a call for all workers and proletariats from Indochina, Burma, India, Indonesia, and Malaysia to publicly fight against imperialist [*sic*] through armed conflict.'⁹⁷ Such language and evidence of

⁹¹ 'From Mr. Bevin to Mr. Attlee, reporting discussions in Paris with M. Schuman and Mr. Acheson on the recognition of Communist China, Paris 11th November, 1949', Sir O. Harvey (Paris) to Mr. Attlee No. 285 Saving [F 16978/1023/10], Documents on British Policy Overseas, hereafter *DBPC*

⁹² Zachariah, Benjamin. *Nehru*. London: Routledge, 2004, 159;

⁹³ Sherman, 'The Integration of the Princely State of Hyderabad', 509-11

⁹⁴ Nizami, Taufiq Ahmad. *The Communist Party and India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, 1971, 146, 227, 85

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 76, 145

⁹⁶ Cavoski, Jovan. "Overstepping the Balkan Boundaries: The Lesser Known History of Yugoslavia's Early Relations with Asian Countries (New Evidence from Yugoslav/Serbian Archives)." *Cold War History* 11, no. 4 (November 2011), 568

⁹⁷ Kuisong, Yang. "The Theory and Implementation', 136-7

Chinese infiltration, led India's Intelligence Bureau (IB), under Director BM Mullik, to increase its vigilance regarding Chinese communism.⁹⁸ Mullik, a powerful figure close to Nehru, would continue to act on an underlying distrust of China up to the 1962 war, monitoring Chinese subversion and activity within India and at the border.

Beside the danger Chinese communism posed to Asia and India, Delhi was also concerned that the PRC would threaten Tibet's *de facto* independence. Bevin had written that, 'the position of Tibet was one of great concern to India...Pandit Nehru would welcome unilateral declarations of interest in Tibet by the Great Powers.'⁹⁹ It seemed that Nehru hoped the powers could endorse Tibet's ongoing separation from China. The invitation given to a Tibetan delegation to attend the 1947 Asian Relations Conference in Delhi sponsored by Nehru showed that Tibet was regarded as an independent entity.¹⁰⁰ John Garver regards Tibet, and other areas of Asia, as 'conflicting spheres of perceived national greatness', zones central to India and China's nationalists' sense of their historical glory. India and China would rather exclude each other from these areas, in order to add lustre to their own image.¹⁰¹ With a dynamic new regime in Beijing, Nehru wondered whether the recent separation of Tibet, a symbol of India's cultural radiance, could be maintained; and it was another reason to hesitate before welcoming the PRC onto the world stage.

However, despite concerns over communism and Tibet, Nehru's sense of Asian renewal meant he saw the PRC quite positively and dismissed fears of a monolithic international communism. At the end of 1948 Nehru wrote, 'It is natural that the Soviet Union should rejoice at the victory of the Communists in China. But from reliable sources, it appears that the Soviets have thus far not given

⁹⁸ Mullik, BN. *My Years with Nehru: The Chinese Betrayal*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971, 104

⁹⁹ DBPC, Mr. Bevin to Mr. Attlee, 11th November, 1949

¹⁰⁰ Guha, 2007, 154

¹⁰¹ Garver, John. *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian rivalry in the twentieth century*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001, 10

any direct help to the Chinese Communists.¹⁰² In December he added, 'The Chinese Communists appear to pursue a line of their own to some extent and do not blindly imitate the Soviet Communists.'¹⁰³ In April 1949, as a CCP victory appeared inevitable, Nehru pondered the future of communist states: 'Will they function like Yugoslavia, that is to say, will their policy generally, though communist, be governed by nationalist considerations also or will this policy be entirely subordinated to Soviet policy?'¹⁰⁴ Nehru's faith in the CCP's desire to resist Moscow was shown by an effort to establish a channel to Yan'an in October 1948 to discuss future relations.¹⁰⁵ Nehru's own nationalism meant he privileged the PRC with the same motive force, expecting it to form a bulwark against colonialism and a pillar in Asia's revival.

For Nehru, China's independence was important in isolation but even more so because it belonged to the decolonising trend he sought to encourage. Nehru strove to support all new post-colonial states because this was the basis of international justice and stability. This support was partly due to Nehru's visceral attachment to Asian solidarity, but also because that solidarity provided a surer defence of India's own independence. So it was that India supported the PRC despite its communism. Nehru's less ambiguous support for Sukarno's attempts to unshackle Indonesia from Dutch control, illustrated by the January 1949 conference in Delhi to support Indonesian nationalism, made clear his sense of the relationship between Asian independence and international peace:

We meet today, because the freedom of a sister country of ours has been imperilled and a dying colonialism of the past has raised its head again and challenged all the forces that are

¹⁰² 'Letter 34, 16 November 1948', Parthasarathi, G, ed., *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers, 1947-1964*, hereafter *JNLCM*, Vol. 1, 1947-1949, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1985, 221

¹⁰³ 'Letter 36, 23 December 1948', *JNLCM*, Vol.1, 249

¹⁰⁴ 'Letter 45, 1 April 1949', *JNLCM*, Vol.1, 311

¹⁰⁵ 'Regarding India's representative in Nanjing *Yisimai'er's* desire to come to the Liberated Areas, 15th October 1948', 105-00007-01, *CFMA*

struggling to build up a new structure of the world... The United Nations – symbol of One World that has become the ideal of men of thought and goodwill – has been flouted, and its expressed will set at nought. If this challenge is not met effectively, then indeed the consequences will affect not merely Indonesia but Asia and the entire world. That would represent the triumph of the forces of destruction and disintegration and the certain sequel would be ceaseless conflict and world disorder.¹⁰⁶

The profound significance of resistance against colonialism made friendship with new Asian states critical, even if they were communist. In December, Nehru wrote, 'With the Republic of Indonesia, we have been in the most intimate contact for the past three years. I look forward to this friendly cooperation with the Indonesia State as of high importance, not only for our respective countries, but for Asia.'¹⁰⁷ So Nehru gave forthright support to Indonesia. But he also set aside his ambivalence regarding China because of this larger interest, against the instincts of conservatives like his deputy Vallabhbhai Patel and head of the Foreign Service GS Bajpai.¹⁰⁸ Thus, on 31 December, a day after writing to Zhou in response to the call for the establishment of relations, he wrote to his Chief Ministers: 'The problem of China has troubled us greatly. The position now is that practically the whole of continental China is under the new regime, which is predominantly communist. China has a strong centralised government and no country can ignore it for long. After full thought and frequent consultations with other countries, we have decided to recognise this new Government of China, as from today.'¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ 'Crisis in Indonesia, Presidential speech delivered in New Delhi inaugurating the eighteen-nation Conference on Indonesia, 20 January 1949', *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, hereafter *JNS*, Volume 1, September 1946 - May 1949, Calcutta, 1958, 325

¹⁰⁷ 'Letter 62, 15 December 1949', *JNLCM*, Vol.1, 503

¹⁰⁸ See Raghavan, 2010, 233.

¹⁰⁹ 'Letter 64, 31 December 1949', *JNLCM*, Vol.1, 516

Nehru was anti-communist but he insisted on his own approach to the problem. Early in 1949 Delhi had rejected various proposals for an anti-communist alliance in East Asia.¹¹⁰ Instead, Nehru believed that by supporting the goals of Asian nationalist movements, such as Indonesia, the communist threat could be defanged. In late 1948 Nehru had explained his support for Sukarno in these terms.¹¹¹ Nehru was not going to submit his convictions to external influence when he regarded foreign policy as the mark of an independent state. He once asked: 'What does independence consist of? It consists fundamentally and basically of foreign relations. That is the test of independence. All else is local autonomy.'¹¹² In light of this belief Nehru was always likely to pursue his own approach to countering the international threat of communism.

Therefore, Nehru fundamentally disagreed with the US approach to communist China. His October 1949 trip to the US was not a success. Acheson called Nehru 'one of the most difficult men with whom I have ever had to deal', and Nehru thought Truman and Acheson 'mediocre' and 'equally mediocre'. Nehru severely critiqued US support for France in Indochina and hostility towards Russia. He argued China should not be helped to develop, or else it would only draw closer to the USSR.¹¹³ While Acheson pleaded with India to delay recognition of the PRC, Nehru defended the moderation of China's revolution, claiming it was simply 'agrarian'.¹¹⁴ Just as support for Indonesian nationalism would defuse the communist threat there, so the PRC should be encouraged to join the community of nations as a contented partner. Unlike the Americans, Nehru set aside his fears about communism in the belief that a respected China could support international stability. Nehru's anti-colonialism prevailed over the Cold War mind-set, privileging the value of any individual state's potential contribution to world peace when fully independent over fear of what disruption they might cause by their communism.

¹¹⁰ Panikkar, 1955, 72; See also, Mabon, David W. "Elusive Agreements: The Pacific Pact Proposals of 1949-1951." *Pacific Historical Review* 57, no. 2 (1988): 147-77.

¹¹¹ 'Letter 34, 16 November 1948', *JNLCM*, Vol.1, 221

¹¹² Brands, 1990, 34

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 51

¹¹⁴ Merrill, Dennis. 'Indo-American Relations', 203-26.

India's leaders also sought a cooperative relationship with China because they did not want to complicate the wider security challenges they already faced. The British withdrawal from India had not immediately delivered a brood of Balkanised squabbling states, as many continued to predict in 1949. However there was a feeling of contingency to the new Indian state, described by a major historian as 'an unnatural nation'.¹¹⁵ Balkanised it was not, but the British had bequeathed India a bitter, resentful and divided twin. Contesting the legacies of the British parent, Pakistan had challenged India by encouraging princely states such as Hyderabad and Junagadh to resist incorporation and also by confronting India over control of the strategically vital Kashmir. Furthermore, the rioting and mob murder of partition had left open wounds which kept popular feeling in each country at a sensitive peak, not least because a significant minority population remained on both sides of the borders, a ready scapegoat or cause of fear. That this tension undermined India's security is obvious simply by considering Kashmir, but the Bengal border crisis that began in February 1950, while India was engaged in establishing relations with China, further underlined the vulnerability.¹¹⁶

Despite the independence mind-set that existed in India, coordination with Western policy was obvious. American and British appeals for delay in recognising the PRC had clearly had some effect. Nehru generally welcomed constructive relations with London and had explained within India that cooperation with the Commonwealth was essential to forestall India's isolation.¹¹⁷ British views on how to respond to the PRC were fairly close to Delhi. London was thinking in late November about recognising the PRC and Bevin thought the UK would have to work with India to

¹¹⁵ Guha, 2007, i

¹¹⁶ Raghavan, 2010, chapter 10

¹¹⁷ 'A New Type of Association, Speech in Constituent Assembly in moving that the decision to continue on the Commonwealth be ratified,' New Delhi, May 16 1949, *JNSW*, Vol.1, 274

minimise any damage in SE Asia.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, even before the formal emergence of the PRC, Panikkar had discussed with British and Commonwealth diplomats in China the possibilities of using economic development aid to blunt the communist threat in the region.¹¹⁹ So Western views clearly influenced the timing of Delhi's recognition of the PRC.

The Anglo-American position on Tibet also influenced Nehru. He found Washington and London had no appetite for a forceful defence of Tibet's independence and preferred to leave this to India's own purview. Bevin had said in November, '...it would be India's responsibility to safeguard the status quo in Tibet as far as this could be done by a unilateral declaration.'¹²⁰ So, Nehru returned to India very clear that they faced the Tibet question alone. He indicated to his Chief Ministers that India's ambitions had softened:

Our policy has been rather vague about Tibet. It has been an inheritance from British days. We have recognised the autonomy of Tibet under some kind of vague suzerainty of China. Strictly speaking, in law, we cannot deny this suzerainty. We would like Tibet to be autonomous and to have direct dealings with us and we shall press for this. But it is clear that we cannot bring any effective pressure to change the course of events in Tibet.

Direct relations with the PRC would help Delhi 'press' for Tibetan autonomy, Nehru argued. In the meantime, he also made it clear that 'with the development of the China situation' Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim were going to have to accept Indian authority.¹²¹ As a result India did not support Tibet's campaign at the UN in late 1949.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Memorandum by Mr. Bevin on South-East Asia and the Far East: Conference of HM Representatives and Colonial Governors CP(49)244 [CAB 129/37], Cabinet paper on South-East Asia and the Far East: recommendations of a Conference of HM Representatives and Colonial Governors at Singapore, 26th November 1949, *DBPO*

¹¹⁹ Panikkar, 1955, 55

¹²⁰ Memorandum by Mr. Bevin on South-East Asia and the Far East, CP(49)244 [CAB 129/37], *DBPO*

¹²¹ 'Letter 60, 1 December 1949', *JNLCM*, Vol.1, 485-486

¹²² Sheng, Michael M. 'Mao, Tibet, and the Korean War', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 3 (2006): 15-33.

Unsurprisingly, Delhi hesitated for three months over abandoning an Asian ally in the Nanjing Government. Beijing seemed as hostile towards Delhi as Moscow and similarly supportive of India's own insurgent communists, at a time when communism was spreading through Asia. Nehru also paused in order to ascertain if some move could be made to buttress Tibet's separation from the PRC. But Nehru's broadest international goals led him to argue with the US not to isolate Beijing. Sympathy for the CCP's nationalism meant he foresaw its moderation and disinclined him to perceive a monolithic communist threat. Nehru imagined the PRC could contribute to an Asian firewall against renewed colonialism. London also largely agreed on a policy of cautious engagement of the PRC. In addition, India faced myriad security problems in 1949-50 and wanted to ensure a friendly neighbourhood. The West's lack of interest in Tibet led Nehru to accept Beijing's broad claims while defending Lhasa's autonomy and maximising Indian security interests in the north.

Recognition - the view from Beijing

India was not first priority for PRC foreign policy. On the very day that Zhou wrote to Nehru requesting diplomatic relations, the PRC in fact established the same with the USSR.¹²³ The CCP had been lobbying Moscow to consolidate relations since 1948.¹²⁴ And Mao, in frustration at Stalin's skepticism, had declared in summer 1949, while Liu Shaoqi was in Moscow, that his future state would 'lean to one side' in the emerging Cold War.¹²⁵ Mao had decided that the USSR was to be the anchor of his foreign policy and a guide to the inexperienced CCP leadership on domestic

¹²³ Liao Xinwen, *'Ershi shiji wushi niandai Mao Zedong deng dapo xifang fengsuo he baowei de juece licheng'*, Dangde Wenxian, No.4, 2008, 14

¹²⁴ Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), Bulletin No. 6/7, Winter 1995, ed. James Hershberg, Part 1, *Stalin's Conversations, Talks with Mao Zedong, December 1949-January 1950, and with Zhou Enlai, August-September 1952, with commentaries by Chen Jian, Vojtech Mastny, Odd Arne Westad, and Vladislav Zubok* http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin6-7_p1.pdf

¹²⁵ Westad, 2003, 262

policy. These decisions were the result of ideological affinity, unprecedented contacts in the civil war years, and the desire for security. In October 1949, Mao knew securing the relationship with Moscow required further negotiation to confirm Soviet material and security undertakings, and hopefully also to replace the 1945 Soviet treaty with Jiang Jieshi's Republic of China.¹²⁶ Mao also felt that an alliance with Moscow was important for domestic political reasons because it made clear that the possibility of an alternative form of development was not available.¹²⁷ This was a conscious choice, not forced upon China but the result of the ideologically framed interests of the new state. The US had after all offered the CCP aid in June 1949 in an attempt to lure it away from Moscow.¹²⁸ China's new leadership ignored the US, moved to cement ties with the Soviets and other 'fraternal' Socialist states, and then approached India and others in the hope of regular relations.

The Soviet orientation set the basic framework for the PRC's foreign policy and determined to a great extent Beijing's attitude towards India. Through 1947 various Soviet voices had condemned Nehru's Congress as an ally of imperialism and the CPI subsequently ended its recent policy of cooperation of cooperation.¹²⁹ In December, Zhukov dismissed neutralism as an 'imperialist device', confirming the Soviet turn against India and underlining Moscow's embrace of Cold War divisions.¹³⁰ Stalin simply viewed post-colonial powers like India as tools of the imperialists.¹³¹ Confirmation that the CCP shared this hostile view came in Mao's reply to the CPI leader, BT Ranadive's, congratulations on the foundation of the PRC:

¹²⁶*Ibid*, 311

¹²⁷ Shu, *The Sino-Soviet alliance and the Cold War in Asia, 1954-1962*, 353

¹²⁸ *'Ershi shiji'*, 14

¹²⁹ Nizami, 1971, 76, 146

¹³⁰ Ray, 1980, 4

¹³¹ Mastny, *The Soviet Union's Partnership with India*, 50-90

I firmly believe that relying on the brave Communist Party of India and the unity and struggle of all Indian patriots, India will certainly not remain long under the yoke of imperialism and its collaborators. Like free China, a free India will one day emerge in the Socialist and People's Democratic family; that day will end the imperialist rule in the history of mankind.¹³²

Despite the overall strategic agreement with the Soviets, Beijing's independent streak was indicated by tension with Moscow regarding the revolutionary management of Asia. Stalin had told Liu Shaoqi in the summer of 1949 that the CCP would be responsible for revolution in East and South East Asia, and this division of labour was somewhat confirmed by the Sino-Soviet treaty of 1950.¹³³ Mao viewed the world in terms of transnational class relations, and believed that the PRC had a duty to support class allies globally. Hence, he had responded extremely positively to Korean and Vietnamese requests for revolutionary aid.¹³⁴ However, by late 1949, Stalin had already gone cold on Beijing's role in Asia and began restraining the CCP's active encouragement of Ho Chi Minh's confrontation with France.¹³⁵ So there was some friction between Stalin's caution and Mao's revolutionary enthusiasm.

An implicit and low-level Sino-Soviet competition to influence Indian communism provided a further motive for the PRC to seek diplomatic relations and an embassy in Delhi. Given Mao's remark that the CPI's victory would 'end the imperialist rule in the history of mankind', Soviet and Chinese interest in India's revolution is no surprise. Naturally, the Soviet embassy in Delhi was providing guidance to Indian comrades.¹³⁶ The CPI's attitude towards the CPSU and CCP fluctuated through this period. While the Andhra Communists in South India were pursuing the Telengana insurgency,

¹³² Ray, 1980, 17

¹³³ Westad, 2003, 311; also see, Zubok, Vladislav, CWIHP, Bulletin 6/7, 26

¹³⁴ Yang, 'The Theory and Implementation', 135-6

¹³⁵ Westad, 2003, 317-8

¹³⁶ Guha, 2007, p.97

conducting land reform and building a liberated zone in Maoist style, the CPI central leadership endorsed the CCP by publishing Anne Louise Strong's positive account of the Chinese as a model for Asian revolution. However, Strong's arrest on espionage charges in 1949 suggested Moscow disagreed and the CPI leadership responded by criticising their Andhra colleagues' over-reliance on Chinese methods. Despite this, continued CCP success in the Chinese civil war obliged the Soviets to concede some credit to Mao, and after the Sino-Soviet treaty was signed the Cominform even began to promote the CCP model as applicable to India. An Andhra Communist, Rajeswara Rao became leader of the whole CPI in June 1950, to much enthusiasm from Beijing.¹³⁷ An embassy in India would allow the CCP to further develop relations with the CPI.

Mao's unequivocal priority was to achieve the security and support of an alliance with the Soviet Union. This was not just a question of hard interests, Beijing shared an ideology with Moscow, as evinced by the public skepticism of Nehru's Government. The CCP had replaced talk of an 'intermediate zone' with to Stalin's more Manichaeian language. Nevertheless, there were some tensions between Beijing and Moscow over Asia. Mao favoured a more confrontational approach by the Viet Minh for example and there was also an implicit contest to influence the CPI. However, relations with India made sense within the ideology shared by Moscow and Beijing. In March 1950, Zhou Enlai underlined to his staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the revolutionary and strategic importance of India: 'Being sent to India to work is a big task, if done well then there are 900 million people united together.'¹³⁸ As Yang Kuisong has pointed out, Mao's challenge was to use inter-state diplomacy for revolutionary ends.¹³⁹ Zhou's comment indicated that relations with India was both sensible diplomacy and good for revolution.

¹³⁷ Ray, 1980, 3-24

¹³⁸ 'Ershi shiji,' 15

¹³⁹ Yang, 'The Theory and Implementation of the People's Republic of China's Revolutionary Diplomacy', 135

The Diplomacy of Diplomatic Recognition

The process of establishing relations revealed both a difference in diplomatic methods and underlined certain central imperatives. Beijing's attitude to Delhi was partly framed by the ongoing security threat from the GMD on Taiwan, and the persistent fear that the US might intervene. Many parts of China, such as Hainan, Taiwan and Tibet had yet to be liberated and there were large GMD armies in Burma and Vietnam. Beijing expected imperialism to focus its attacks on the PRC as the socialist bloc's weakest link.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, Beijing very pragmatically gave Delhi certain preconditions for diplomatic relations related to its core interests. This also revealed a sense of superiority *vis-a-vis* this specific bilateral relationship. Delhi was required to sever relations with the GMD and clarify its voting in certain UN bodies that had appeared to imply continued recognition of the Republic of China. It was only after India confirmed the break with the GMD, on the 3 January, that Zhou allowed talks. And he still wanted the issue of India's UN voting cleared up.¹⁴¹ Thus, Beijing used diplomacy with Delhi to increase pressure on the GMD.

Mao's differentiated handling of India and the UK also served other practical aims. The Chairman regarded India and the UK's desire to establish relations with Beijing as beneficial to his plan to capture Tibet. Chinese officials had wanted to respond quickly to both British and Indian interest in negotiating diplomatic relations. But on 19 January 1950, Mao instead ordered his diplomats to advance the process with Delhi, but delay with the British.¹⁴² This was partly to make clear that Beijing was in no rush, and even with Delhi Mao favoured taking it slow. He pointed out that these states wanted to 'drill into China' and that US imperialism could then enter. Delay with India and differentiation of Indian personnel still in Beijing from Socialist diplomats also underscored Beijing's

¹⁴⁰ Westad, 2003, 297-301

¹⁴¹ CMFA, 105-00007-02, 11, 12, 38

¹⁴² Sheng, 'Mao, Tibet, and the Korean War', 25

policy of 'leaning to one side'.¹⁴³ The different pace of talks with the Indian and British was designed to differentiate those states. After all, in May Beijing would insist that the British expel all GMD remnants from Hong Kong.¹⁴⁴ A condition they did not impose on the Indians.

Delhi's very different unconditional engagement of Beijing reflected Nehru's attitude to international justice and sense of India's exemplary moral function in global politics.¹⁴⁵ India might have demanded the CCP disavow the CPI, or support India over Kashmir for example, but to do would be a bad example to the world. This sense of justice explained Nehru's particular support and respect for the UN, and submission of the Kashmir issue to arbitration there, and also his support for the PRC to take China's seat in the UNSC.¹⁴⁶ India's response to China's objection to its voting at the UN revealed the different attitude. Delhi simply explained that the UN body in question, the UNSEC, was not the correct forum for a political decision on China's representation, hence its abstention.¹⁴⁷ By emphasising correct procedure at the UN, India stressed the importance of the UN itself and thereby showed an exemplary commitment to the UN's success as an impartial forum. Support for a system of international justice did not mean that Nehru was entirely an idealist however, Nehru believed this served India's broadest interests, as did his support for Asian independence. Nehru's calls for non-alignment were also related to his pursuit of international justice. He had pointed to the problem the NATO alliance caused for the West in giving an impartial and just attention to the Indonesian problem. In March 1949 Nehru said, 'While, on the one hand, they wish to have Indonesian freedom, on the other, they are very anxious to have the Netherlands in their political grouping [and so acquiesce in Dutch colonialism].'¹⁴⁸ The logic of alliance systems confounded the principles of international justice, so Nehru believed.

¹⁴³ Niu, '*Chongjian "zhongjian didai"*', 248

¹⁴⁴ Westad, 2003, 315

¹⁴⁵ Mukherjee, Mithi, 'A World of Illusion', 253-271; Bhagavan, 2013, 104; Kennedy, 2012, 179-80, 208

¹⁴⁶ 'Note 8, 1 March 1950', *JNLCM, Vol. 2, 1950-52*, 1986, 43

¹⁴⁷ 'Handwritten note', undated, 105-00007-02, *CMFA*, 38

¹⁴⁸ 'Our Objectives, A Speech delivered at the Indian Council of World Affairs', 22 March 1949, New Delhi, *JNS, Vol.1*, 259

So for reasons fundamental to its foreign policy approach India placed no conditions on relations with China. However, Delhi's official reply to China, reflected a fundamental clash of worldview, one that privileged class, against another that privileged nation, as the basis of global politics.

Regarding Beijing's concern about GMD 'remnants' in India, Delhi stated it was 'not aware', though there may be 'individual Chinese who may have served or be in sympathy with Kuomintang'. Their presence did not equate to recognition of them as official GMD representatives however. The note added, 'They are enjoying ordinary rights of asylum under International Law.'¹⁴⁹ It was inconceivable that the PRC's socialist allies would offer such legal protection to Beijing's class enemies. Here lay a sharp difference in political culture that would cause problems in the late 1950s.¹⁵⁰ Deeply conscious that class confrontation spanned borders, Beijing would have seen this refusal to eject reactionary GMD personnel as reflecting a basic class sympathy on the part of the Indian Government.

Beijing accepted India's explanations, content that its immediate goals had been achieved, and on 1 April 1950 the appointment of Ambassadors was confirmed.¹⁵¹ But India was regarded with deep skepticism. Liu Shaoqi had scribbled a warning to his subordinates in the margin of an Indian telegram regarding talks: 'Britain wants India to come first and probe...we should be polite to India...and should invite Sen to Beijing...'¹⁵² Clearly, Beijing agreed with Moscow that the India was a tool of the West. But Mao's suspicion went further than this. He had written in 1949 that,

¹⁴⁹ 'Indian response to the "two issues" raised by Zhang in meeting of 22nd February', 1 March 1950, 105-00007-02, *CMFA*, 44

¹⁵⁰ Bhutani, Sudarshan. *A Clash of Political Cultures: Sino-Indian relations, 1957-1962*, New Delhi: Lotus Collection, 2004

¹⁵¹ 'Draft of oral statement in reply to the representative of the government of India relating to the questions on establishing diplomatic relations with India (unofficial translation)', in English, undated, 105-00007-02, *CMFA*, 50; 'Record of the negotiations on the establishment of diplomatic relations of China and India', 22 February 1950 - 1 April 1950, 105-00007-03, *CMFA*; 'Record of talks on 15th March, Zhang Hanfu and AK Sen', 15 March 1950, 105-00007-03, *CMFA*, 3; 'Record of talks on 1st April, Zhang Hanfu and AK Sen', 1 April 1950, 105-00007-03, *CMFAA*, 7

¹⁵² 'Nehru's letter dated 16th January to Zhou, transmitted on 17th January by AK Sen to Huang Hua in Nanjing to be forwarded to Beijing', 17 January 1950, 105-00007-02, *CMFA*, 22

'[u]nder the long-standing influence of British imperialism, the bourgeoisie of India, of whom Nehru is the representative, have learned the ways of the imperialists...and he shamelessly holds himself as the pillar of the anti-communist movement in Asia...'¹⁵³ The Chinese expected the Indians to behave like imperialists.

Beijing's scepticism of India was quickly confirmed. The North West Bureau reported to Beijing on the suspicious activities of Indian, and also Pakistani, officials in the Southern Xinjiang region around Kashgar. For example, one Indian official, under the guise of investigating the status of overseas Indians, took a fifty two day tour of Southern Xinjiang, when there were only about eighty such individuals existing, and it was really about gathering intelligence and registering any Kashmiris as Indian nationals. Although these officials had tried to ingratiate themselves once the PLA arrived, they had continued spreading rumours about US power and Soviet manipulation of the world, Japan having returned to the North East and the GMD's imminent return to the mainland.¹⁵⁴

Furthermore, Delhi failed to realise that approaches to economic development formed a gulf with Beijing, not a field of mutual exchange. For Beijing development was a class not a national issue, and alignment with the Soviets was crucial. Nehru regularly claimed that development was a common interest across Asia, implying this united Asians against the West's obsession with power politics.¹⁵⁵ Nehru explained his non-aligned policy to the US as providing the stability India needed to pursue economic development.¹⁵⁶ However, India underestimated China's different approach failing to see that Beijing conversely regarded alignment with Moscow as the pillar of its development strategy. When Panikkar first met Zhou, their discussion centred on economic

¹⁵³ Patterson, George N, *Peking versus Delhi*, London: Faber, 1963, 20

¹⁵⁴ 'Telegram from North West on the situation of the India and Pakistan consulates in Kashgar', 31 July 1950, 118-00332-04, *CMFA*, 1

¹⁵⁵ 'Meeting Ground of East and West, 8 March 1949', *JNS*, Vol.1, 233

¹⁵⁶ Brands, 1990, 36

problems. They agreed that they faced many similar rural problems. Zhou added: 'There is something else that is also similar, that is that the agricultural products of our two countries are controlled by imperialism.' They discussed India's system of landholding and its imposition by the British, a link between domestic reaction and foreign oppression that Zhou would have appreciated, and the limited success of reform efforts so far. The Chinese Premier must have thought a few CCP-style 'struggle meetings' would have sorted out the rural elites pretty quickly.¹⁵⁷ The discussion clarified for Zhou that India was a target for revolution, if not an enemy, under the current government. By contrast, Panikkar was encouraged by the apparent common interest in economic issues. He met Mao a few days later and his memoir notes: 'We talked about Asia in general and about the withdrawal of Europeans from the continent, but he said more than once that as long as European economic power was entrenched in Asia the freedom was not complete.'¹⁵⁸ Mao also, therefore, reinforced Panikkar's impression that India and China shared a common understanding of the importance of economic development for their mutual independence, entirely missing Beijing's overwhelming focus on the Soviet model.

Conclusion

The different ways that leaders in Beijing and Delhi conceived of their new state's national independence determined their key foreign policy priorities and had profound implications for their respective view of each other. The PRC was considered to be a nation of the Chinese people, liberated from their domestic and international oppressors and so combining Marxist ideology with nationalism. The Indian National Congress, and Nehru in particular, regarded the Republic of India

¹⁵⁷ 'Record of Talks on Premier Zhou Enlai's First Meeting and Learning From Indian Ambassador Panikkar', 17 May 1950, 105-00009-02, CMFA, 1

¹⁵⁸ Panikkar, 1955, 80

as the assertion of an historical Indian nation, whose identity, unity and natural ties to other Asian nations had been obscured by British oppression.¹⁵⁹

Chinese leaders' understanding of the PRC as being largely defined by its class identity meant that they looked for security, and development aid and guidance, from their natural allies amongst those states also defined in class terms. In other words, the Soviet Union, and the Socialist Bloc it led. Chinese leaders did not see any security or developmental benefits to be gained from relations with non-socialist Asian states, who were barely regarded as genuinely independent. Instead, they were the target of revolutionary activity. The Chinese view of the nation was similar to the skeptical dismissal of the possibility of a 'national interest' expressed by Chomsky and Howard Zinn.¹⁶⁰ Until class contradictions were eliminated, no national interest could emerge. To that end, Beijing looked to support class allies in Asia, such as in Vietnam and Korea, who were initiating wars of national and class liberation.

However, despite these class imperatives, the nonetheless powerful thread of nationalism that wove through the CCP's ideology drove it to resist total subordination to the international socialist hierarchy. Beijing's engagement with Delhi was therefore in various ways an assertion of independence. An embassy in India would give the CCP more capacity to promote its own image of Asian revolution to the Indian Communist Party. Despite the fundamental skepticism of the Indian Government, the Chinese were very careful to focus on common interests and language. The Chinese used the process of recognition to serve core immediate interests related to Beijing's confrontation with the GMD and fear of the US. Diplomatic relations with Delhi were also thought to blunt Indian opposition to a future Chinese move into Tibet. While Beijing took care, by its treatment of India, to underline the PRC's commitment to the Socialist Bloc, simultaneously, by

¹⁵⁹ Khilnani, 2003, 155-74

¹⁶⁰ Chomsky, 1994, 5; Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*, New York: Harper Collins, 1999, 9

differentiating India from the UK, the CCP also indicated that they retained a residual attachment to the theory of the 'intermediate zone'. This revealed an independent view of international politics very different to Stalin's 'two-camps' theory.

Nehru related Indian independence to a resurgence of Asian statehood. This Asian myopia, combined with Beijing's class allegiances, meant that Delhi placed a greater value on Sino-Indian relations than vice versa. Beijing had approached Delhi first, it was true, but this stemmed from an underlying confidence derived from the relationship with Moscow. Nehru's sense of the profound significance of relations with Beijing meant that he placed no conditions on the establishment of diplomatic ties, underlying this basic asymmetry.

Nehru's emphasis on nationalism as the driving force of history, and in particular on the reclamation of the nation across Asia, meant he was concerned with the justice of *inter-national* questions. Therefore, he was broadly motivated to support the UN's status as a body for supervising global justice. So Nehru explained his recognition of the PRC in terms of justice but also made it clear that he would uphold correct legal process at the UN, underlining his emphasis on the legitimacy of the UN. By contrast, Chinese leaders, with their skeptical view of the composition of many states in the international system, dominated by imperialism, looked to class rather than national justice.

Indian leaders, not least Nehru, were definitely anti-communist, fighting as they were the Telengana insurgency. But Nehru insisted that he had a superior approach to the problem of international communism than the containment theory prevailing in Washington DC. Panikkar returned to Beijing in May 1950 as the newly appointed Indian Ambassador to the PRC, convinced that his mission was to prove to Mao that neutrality was possible.¹⁶¹ The Indians hoped that they

¹⁶¹ Panikkar, 1955, 72

could thereby defuse China's apparent acceptance of the bi-polar confrontation that was freezing into place, and effect a change in Beijing's attitude towards India. Nehru assumed that an emphasis on a shared concern for development and Asia's history of external subjugation would foster trust between China and India. However, while Beijing undoubtedly saw benefits from diplomatic ties with India, it was very clear that engagement with India did nothing to persuade Beijing that sincere neutrality was feasible.

Chapter Two - Cold War in Asia, 1950-53

Introduction

On 26 August, 1950 Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Indian ambassador to the US, wrote to her brother, Jawaharlal Nehru, in Delhi. 'Bhai dear,' she said,

'One matter that is being cooked up in the State Department should be known to you. This is the unseating of China as a Permanent Member in the Security Council and of India being put in her place... Dulles seemed particularly anxious that a move in this direction should be started....'¹⁶²

Nehru's unequivocal response came within the week:

'In your letter you mention that the State Department is trying to unseat China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council and to put India in her place. So far as we are concerned, we are not going to countenance it... It would be a clear affront to China and it would mean some kind of a break between us and China... We shall go on pressing for China's admission in the UN and the Security Council. I suppose that a crisis will come during the next sessions of the General Assembly of the UN on this issue. The people's government of China is sending a full delegation there. If they fail to get in there will be trouble which might even result in the USSR and some other countries finally quitting the UN. That may please the State Department, but it would mean the end of the UN as we have known it. That would also mean a further drift towards war. India because of many factors, is

¹⁶² '24 August 1950', 1949-1951, *Letters to Jawaharlal Nehru from VL Pandit sent during her tenure as Indian Ambassador to the United States of America*, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit Papers 1st Installment, Subject File 59, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), 132

certainly entitled to a permanent seat in the security council. But we are not going in at the cost of China.¹⁶³

This exchange underlines the place of China and the UN in Nehru's foreign policy. Nehru's support for the PRC's entry to the UN was sustained even after the war of 1962. Any argument that relations in this period were inherently conflicted or that India was 'unfriendly' to the PRC must deal with this fact. Nehru's conviction that India should not seek advantage at the UN 'at the cost of China' arose from his concern for the legitimacy of the UN in general, which he felt was the forum for settling the frightening conflicts and injustices he observed. He also believed he could win the PRC's trust and prevent its alliance with Moscow from further petrifying the oppositional logic of the Cold War's competing camps.¹⁶⁴ These goals were at the heart of Nehru's early foreign policy when he sought to establish an alternative brand of diplomacy to the major actors in the emerging Cold War. Rhetorically disinterested, it was in fact conceived as in India's ultimate self-interest, because a more just international order would serve the nation's widest interests. The centrality of China in India's calculations, and China's responses to these, and how India itself responded to China's initiatives is the subject of this chapter. The broader backdrop is the spread of the Cold War into East Asia, and beyond, as the local Korean crisis became an international war and how China and India strove to mitigate the risks and take advantage of the opportunities they encountered as the international, regional and domestic contexts were each buffeted in turn.

Nehru placed China at the centre of a unique foreign policy driven by a sense of India's special mission to counter the logic of the Cold War. He rejected the notion that different political systems made distrust and conflict inevitable. Nehru's domestic policy also strove to navigate a 'third way'

¹⁶³ '30 August 1950', 1949, 1950-51, *Letters received by VL Pandit as Ambassador to Washington from Jawaharlal Nehru concerning India's relations with US, Pakistan and other countries and developments at home*, Pandit 1, 60, NMML,137,

¹⁶⁴ Harder, Anton. 'Not at the Cost of China: New Evidence Regarding US Proposals to Nehru for Joining the United Nations Security Council', *Cold War International History Project Working Paper*, no. 76 (March 2015)

between the extremes of American capitalism and Soviet socialism, and Delhi's foreign policy sought to allow it to learn from Soviet, US and Chinese domestic development.¹⁶⁵ Nehru believed a shared Asian perspective would help the PRC and India overcome Cold War divisions. He held that alliances were fundamentally destabilizing and that having the UN serve as a forum for conflict resolution was the only rational approach to international affairs. Indian attempts to win China's faith were maintained throughout the disruption of the latter's takeover of Tibet, and the Korean crisis itself was seen as an opportunity for India to play a mediatory role earning all parties' trust.

China was initially highly sceptical of India on ideological and strategic grounds, but gradually began to see advantages in closer relations. India remained an object of revolutionary interest nevertheless and Chinese suspicion never disappeared, partly because it consistently displayed suspicious behaviour. This included India's reluctance to fully acquiesce in China's restoration of control over Tibet and its ties to the West. The problem of Tibet was also that India was a status quo power while the CCP was committed to upturning old international agreements. However, more than anything else, a fundamental discrepancy over the definition of state interests and political methods would forever leave a gulf of misunderstanding between Indian and Chinese leaders. In fact, part of Nehru's motivation for confounding the Cold War to pursue close ties with communist China was down to his basic understanding of politics. Nehru was influenced by his years of work and success under Gandhi's tutelage. He fundamentally objected to the notion of inherent conflict and furthermore he believed that moral methods produce moral outcomes. Nehru's counterparts in Beijing, however, fundamentally believed that conflict was not only intrinsic to politics but welcome, as it was only through conflict that progress could be achieved

Korea

¹⁶⁵ Francine Frankel, *India's Political Economy 1947-2004*, (2nd ed., Oxford, 2005), 3

The outbreak of the Korean War provided a prism for observing Nehru's China policy in action. The Indian Prime Minister's response to the escalating Korea crisis was refracted through his dual concern for the UN and PRC. For Nehru, a PRC presence in the UN would buttress the legitimacy of that body and help to socialise the revolutionary Chinese state. A vital premise of the Nehruvian approach was that international communism should not be considered a simple monolith. Many regarded North Korea's invasion of the South as a simple case of that monolith's aggression.¹⁶⁶ But Nehru recognised that the war threatened to strengthen Soviet influence over the PRC and subvert his effort to integrate the PRC into the international system. As a result, while his response to the war was framed as a defence of the legitimacy of the UN, Nehru also tried to restrain Beijing in Korea by suggesting that this would encourage support for its case at the UN. But Nehru's policy collided with China's most intimate interests that took precedence over membership within an organisation that remained something of a novelty. Furthermore, the US's apparent hijacking of the UN only further diminished its appeal in Chinese eyes. Even when Delhi's perception of the UN's legitimacy was challenged by its extension of the War into the North, Beijing eschewed the common ground with India. To Chinese leaders, events simply confirmed the US's implacable hostility and they chose to use the confrontation to pursue geopolitical interests, regime stability and consolidation of its ideological alliance, rather than cultivate Nehru in Delhi and his vague appeals to international structures.

Nehru's response to the outbreak of war in Korea in June 1950 demonstrated the centrality of China to his solution for Cold War confrontation and his commitment to the sanctity of the United Nations (UN). At that moment, India was a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which was absent the USSR in protest at the GMD's continued presence. India supported the Council's vote on 25 June to condemn North Korean aggression against the South. Nehru said to 'surrender' to such aggression might lead to the 'collapse of the United Nations

¹⁶⁶ Zachariah, Benjamin, *Nehru*, London and New York: Routledge, 2004, 201

structure'.¹⁶⁷ On 27 June, India reluctantly supported a second resolution 'to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security'. Nehru explained India's hesitation was because its initial inclination was to abjure responsibility and keep aloof.¹⁶⁸ Delhi's difficulty was increased because the US linked Korea to Asia broadly and increased its support for the Philippines, France in Indochina and appeared to commit itself to defend the GMD on Taiwan. Nehru disclaimed the impression that India had aligned in any way, however, and maintained there was no change to India's China policy.¹⁶⁹ In fact, Nehru reiterated his opposition to isolating the PRC:

'If there is a possibility of resolving this conflict, it can only be done, we feel, by bringing in the People's Republic of China into the United Nations. We have been trying to do so for some time and have pressed our viewpoint on other countries with some success... If the new China comes into the United Nations and the Security Council, then the USSR will come back to them also and the internal disruption of the United Nations will be prevented. If the United Nations goes, then there is no other way left to maintain world peace.'¹⁷⁰

For Nehru the most important factor in international affairs was the credibility of the UN and this could only be maintained with the PRC in China's seat.

Nehru's prioritisation of the UN's legitimacy led him to pursue a solution that would combine restoration of the UN's authority, respect for the PRC and multilateral discussion of the Korean problem. On the 1 July Panikkar asked for China's support for a strategy of 'localizing' the Korean conflict. He suggested that if the Soviets and Chinese just gave him verbal agreement to the idea that full discussion of the crisis could take place in the Security Council, once the PRC was

¹⁶⁷ 'Note 18', 2 July 1950, *JNLCM*, Vol. 2, 120

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 118; see Barnes, Robert. "Branding an Aggressor: The Commonwealth, the United Nations and Chinese Intervention in the Korean War, November 1950-January 1951," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 2 (2010), 235

¹⁶⁹ 'Note 18', 2 July 1950, *JNLCM*, Vol. 2, 120

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 124

readmitted and the Soviets returned, then India could persuade others, and, he added, Delhi already had British and Egyptian support for the plan.¹⁷¹

Delhi did not realise the extent of the gulf with Beijing. For instance, the Chinese leadership had endorsed the North's initial military action south of the UN's artificial division of Korea.¹⁷²

Furthermore, Beijing was encouraging Kim Il-Sung's further advance south. The Chinese were fully aware that the US was blocking their entry to the UN. Panikkar himself felt that Beijing was more worried about Taiwan than Korea.¹⁷³ Mao even saw the crisis as an opportunity for international and domestic mobilisation to consolidate his regime, an abhorrent idea to Nehru.¹⁷⁴ The Chinese solution was also distasteful. Shen Jian, the first representative of the PRC to arrive in Delhi, had told Bajpai and Menon on 17 July that 'problems in Korea ought to be resolved by the Korean people'.¹⁷⁵ India could not agree to this as the North's invasion was in contravention of the UN settlement dividing Korea. Of course, this was also disingenuous on the part of the Chinese as they and the Soviets were supporting the North's aggression. Nor did Nehru realise how little he had won in Beijing from his advocacy for the PRC's right to the Chinese seat in the UNSC. Mao was in no hurry to claim China's privileges at the UN.¹⁷⁶

India's rejection of the third UNSC resolution on Korea on 7 July, calling for a unified command of UN forces under the United States, left Delhi sitting between the belligerent camps. India had now established a public distance from the West, as the UK had voted with the US. Privately, American

¹⁷¹ Zhou Enlai zongli, Zhang Hanfu fuwaizhang jiu chaoxian wenti ji huifu wo zai lianheguo xiwei wenti yu yindu dashi pannijia de tanhua jilu, 1-18 July 1950, CMFA 105-00009-01(1)

¹⁷² See Shen, Zhihua and Li Danhui *After Leaning to One Side: China and Its Allies in the Cold War*, (Washington, DC, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011), 24-31

¹⁷³ Panikkar, 103

¹⁷⁴ Zai zhongyang renmin zhengfu weiyuanhui dibaci huiyi shang de jianghua, 29 June 1950, JGYLMZDWG, Vol.1, 423

¹⁷⁵ Shen Jian yu yindu meinong waijiao cizhang, bajiepai mishuzhang tanhua zhaiyao, 17 July 1950, CMFA 105-00072-01

¹⁷⁶ 'Guanyu huifu Zhonghua renmin gongheguo zai lianheguo ji anlihui de hefa quanli zhi lianheguo dian', 19 January 1950, Mao Zedong Wenji (MZDWJ), Vol.6, (Beijing: Renmin, 2009), 42

language regarding Korea had increasingly alarmed the Indians.¹⁷⁷ Fundamental differences with the US had become clear and China policy was at the heart of this. Nehru was no communist but believed that integration of and engagement with the PRC was key and that meant bringing it into the UN. The US tendency to see international communism as a monolith meant it had no sympathy for Nehru's approach.¹⁷⁸

Important intelligence from leading Indian diplomats reinforced Nehru's faith in Delhi's ability to counter the growing polarisation. Pandit wrote in late July that Acheson had always emphasised to her the 'moral tone' that Indian support at the UN had given to the action in Korea, and that Indian influence in Asia was welcomed.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, her communications with various nationalist Chinese in the US confirmed how corrupt Jiang Jieshi's clique were and that many Chinese in the US supported Nehru's policy of replacing the GMD in the UN with Beijing. Such individuals had told her that Mao would foremost remain a nationalist and resist Soviet leadership.¹⁸⁰

Meanwhile, Panikkar consistently channeled moderate impressions of the PRC back to Delhi, justifying cautious engagement. In June, Panikkar wrote to Delhi emphasising that 'new' China had had a genuine social revolution and desired 'undisturbed peace' to focus, like India, on development. Its domestic programme was not communist but moderate, he claimed.¹⁸¹ Nehru relied on these impressions in July, when explaining how his Korea policy must be understood in terms of support for the UN and the PRC's rights, and he circulated the reports from Beijing.¹⁸² Panikkar's reporting of his awe for Chinese development efforts and the popular enthusiasm

¹⁷⁷ '13 July 1950', Pandit 1, 59, *NMML*, 112

¹⁷⁸ Brands, H. W., *India and the United States: The Cold Peace*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), 49-54,

¹⁷⁹ '20 July 1950', Pandit 1, 59, *NMML* 115

¹⁸⁰ '27 July 1950', Pandit 1, 59, *NMML*, 122

¹⁸¹ 'Panikkar to KPS Menon, Foreign Secretary, MEA', 15 June 1950, 770 CJK/50 1950 MEA Subject No. 1-22, NAI

¹⁸² 'Note 18', 2 July 1950, *JNLCM*, Vol.2, 131

behind this seemed to bolster Nehru's desire for friendly relations.¹⁸³ Nehru had bemoaned India's lack of such spirit only the month before.¹⁸⁴ In international terms, Panikkar also emphasised reasons to regard Beijing as susceptible to moderation. He explained that China's attitude was 'dominated by the fear of America directly intervening against her'. He did not expect the Chinese to intervene in Korea. Simultaneously, his reports did not dwell on evidence of Chinese aggression, such as its threatening military deployments near Hong Kong and Indochina. Even his remarks about Russian becoming 'a common diplomatic language', and that Port Arthur was becoming a 'major Sino-Soviet naval base' were likely just to intensify Nehru's sense of mission.¹⁸⁵

So in September Delhi continued to act on the premise that integrating the PRC into the UN and international system was the key to eliminating tensions. To this end Delhi urged Beijing to project a moderate image in order to rally support for its case. Panikkar and the Burmese ambassador jointly warned the Chinese not to alienate 'neutral opinion' and the Burmese suggested sending good-will missions to South East Asia. They pointed out that China had won the UN's agreement to investigate the question of US bombing of Manchuria, so Beijing ought to temper its propaganda to 'draw world opinion'.¹⁸⁶ Panikkar urged a skeptical Zhou to consider that a more conciliatory tone would aid India's efforts regarding China's UN seat.¹⁸⁷

Nehru's moderate centre in international affairs eroded as the Korean conflict escalated. Even before the Inchon Landings on 12 September he already thought the US position on the PRC, Taiwan and Korea was absurd. Nehru felt that US isolation was increasing, while China had begun

¹⁸³ '15 June, 1950, Panikkar to KPS Menon', NAI, MEA, File No. 770 CJK/50 1950 MEA, Subject No. 1-22, Attached note: *People's Liberation Army on the Production Front*

¹⁸⁴ 'Note 14', 17 May 1950, *JNLCM*

¹⁸⁵ 'Untitled letter to KPS Menon, signed Panikkar', 1 September 1950', NAI, 770 CJK/50 1950 MEA Subject No 1-22

¹⁸⁶ Panikar, KM, *In Two China's: Memoirs of a Diplomat*, London, 1955, 107

¹⁸⁷ 'Zhou Enlai he Pannijia tanhua jilu', 9 September 1950, *Zhou Enlai Zongli, Zhang Hanfu fuwaizhang jiu Chaoxian wenti ji huifu wo zai lianheguo xiwei wenti yu yindu dashi pannijia de tanhua jilu*, CMFA 105-00091-01(1)

to realise India was friendly. Nehru thought the UK agreed with India on China's entry to the UN.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless the UK backed the US on Korea. Hence, after Inchon, as the US destroyed North Korean forces south of the 38th Parallel, Nehru found his efforts to find a reasonable peace thwarted by the Cold War's harsh logic. He was already resigned to opposing the US over the China question at the UN.¹⁸⁹ His hopes for Chinese restraint now also ebbed. Beijing sent General Nie Rongzhen to Panikkar to deliver a message of defiance for the US. The General said, 'They may even drop atom bombs on us. What then? They may kill a few million people. Without sacrifice a nation's independence cannot be upheld.'¹⁹⁰ On 26 September Panikkar revised his earlier view and told Delhi he expected the Chinese to intervene in Korea if the US crossed the 38th parallel.¹⁹¹ Nehru wrote to Zhou urging patience. To respond to US aggression would damage the growing support for the PRC's entry to the UN. Korea could be settled easily, Nehru said, once the PRC joined the UNSC.¹⁹²

Delhi interpreted China's use of India as a diplomatic channel to be a sign of growing trust, but failed to see the persistent gulf between them. No incident captured this better than the welcome lunch that the new Chinese Ambassador to India, Yuan Zhongxian had with the Indian President, Rajendra Prasad. The lunch took place three days after Inchon, while the US was busy crushing China's ally, North Korea. Prasad suddenly announced to Yuan, as they walked to the dining room, that US Supreme Court Judge William Orville Douglas, on holiday in India, would be joining them, adding that the judge disliked US policy towards China. Over lunch Yuan felt ignored until Douglas said he hoped they would see the US hold a ceremony of diplomatic welcome for a PRC representative one day. The Chinese Ambassador was so discomfited, dining with the 'national official' of an 'enemy country', that he barely ate, though no one noticed. The awkwardly amateur

¹⁸⁸ '12 September 1950', Pandit 1, 60, NMML, 141

¹⁸⁹ '19 September 1950', Pandit 1, 60, NMML

¹⁹⁰ Panikkar, 108

¹⁹¹ 'Zhou he Pannijia tanhuajilu', 3 October 1950, CMFA, 105-00009-01(1), 13-4

¹⁹² 'Nehru's personal telegram to Zhou delivered by Ambassador Panikkar on 29 September, 1950, morning', CMFA 105-00009-01(1), 20

diplomacy reached an exquisite pitch after lunch when they adjourned to an anteroom. Trying to leave to avoid further embarrassment, the ambassador was caught in a pincer by the judge and President, and found himself perched on a small bench with them. Yuan sat in silence as they made anodyne observations about world peace. Only the intervention of his colleague Shen Jian prevented the Americans from being included in the official photos.¹⁹³

Who concocted this scheme is unclear, though Nehru had at least planned to meet Douglas in Delhi.¹⁹⁴ While, the Chinese would not have distinguished between a 'national official' and the US Government, the Indians would have viewed him as a private citizen. This was the chasm across which Nehru was trying to reach. Nehru and Panikkar considered it their task to lead China beyond this narrow world view, but their faith that they could do so was perhaps also a type of ignorance about the nature of the beast they were dealing with. Many Indian scholars would, rather sanctimoniously, attribute the failures of Sino-Indian relations to incompatible world-views.¹⁹⁵ But this rather casual attempt to mediate between China and the US indicated that many on the Indian side underestimated the differences that existed.

The limits of Indian influence were laid bare by the US disregard of Indian warnings about China. The US ignored a message on 2 October that China would intervene in Korea if US forces crossed the 38th Parallel. Panikkar told Zhou that he had pre-empted this and already passed the warning to the US.¹⁹⁶ However, MacArthur had been told on 27 September to destroy all North Korean forces, implying freedom to go north, and the British had continued to support the US at the UN providing cover for such a move. Attempts to placate China by offering a neutral commission to

¹⁹³ *Wo zhu Yindu Dashi Yuan Zhongxian xiang Yindu Zongtong tijiao guoshu de qingkuang*, 18 September-9 October 1950, CMFA, 105-0008-03(1), 1-5

¹⁹⁴ '19 September 1950', Pandit 1, 60, NMML

¹⁹⁵ For example, Bhutani, Sudarshan. *A Clash of Political Cultures : Sino-India Relations, 1957-1962*, New Delhi: Lotus Collection, 2004

¹⁹⁶ '*Zhou he Pannijia tanhua jilu*', 3 October, 1am, CMFA 105-00009-01(1), 13-14

investigate the bombing of Manchuria failed.¹⁹⁷ On 5 October, Zhang Hanfu demanded the Security Council condemn US aggression.¹⁹⁸ The Chinese simply saw the UN as a tool for US aggression and rejected its entire legitimacy, even while the Indians were desperately trying to preserve this and still felt the US, though possibly guilty of infringements of China's sovereignty in Manchuria, was still legitimately leading UN resistance to North Korean aggression. Beijing rejected US and Indian proposals of 7 October for talks in Delhi, refusing to submit to aggression and allow the Americans to negotiate from a position of strength.¹⁹⁹

The US military's entry into North Korea on 9 October was a turning point in Sino-Indian relations. Delhi did attempt to help the US and UK and persuade China that this was no threat to its security. But India's view that US action had lost legitimacy implied an opportunity for China to cultivate India. Panikkar agreed with the Chinese that the US could not be trusted and said MacArthur was a 'madman.' Zhang told him, 'US imperialism itself is crazy'. The Indian tried to encourage Zhang saying the action would receive little support in Asia and that the weather would surely slow down the advance. Zhang was not interested in the degree of Asian support and said the weather was irrelevant, 'The weather cannot solve anything, peace needs the people's struggle, war needs the people to stand and fight.'²⁰⁰

Chinese lack of faith in diplomacy was abundantly clear, and little effort was made to improve relations with India. The reality was that Delhi and Beijing were operating on the basis of almost irreconcilable world-views. Nehru's priority was to harmonise international differences. Therefore, his key goals were to secure the UN as a body to arbitrate disputes peacefully. He wanted the PRC quickly brought into the UN in order to cement that organisation's legitimacy and alleviate the

¹⁹⁷ Stueck, 91-9

¹⁹⁸ 'Zhou he Pannijia tanhua jilu', 5 October 1950, CMFA 105-00009-01(1), 17

¹⁹⁹ *Waijiaobu dianshi wo zhu Yindu shiguan guanyu Meiguo zhu Yindu dashi yu Yuan Zhongxian dashi wumian shi*, 8 October 1950 CMFA 105-00072-10,

²⁰⁰ 'Zhou he Pannijia tanhua jilu', 10 October 1950, CMFA 105-00009-01(1), 26

CCP's intrinsic suspicions of the world. Integrating China to the international system would ease its dependence on Moscow and obstruct the polarisation of global politics. But despite the basic sympathy in Delhi for China the Korean War had expanded the void between them. Chinese leaders did not share Nehru's UN concern because that body now appeared to be utterly illegitimate. The US's whole response in Korea and across the region, had confirmed the CCP's perception that it was an implacable enemy. Furthermore, while the US's advance into North Korea was intensely threatening to Beijing, it also presented a massive opportunity to rally all patriotic Chinese to the CCP's banner, give a major boost to the regime's consolidation and reassure Moscow of China's loyalty to the Socialist Bloc. These goals vastly outweighed any of Nehru's appeals, and prompted Beijing to escalate the war in turn, hubristically marching South in a repeat of MacArthur's northern advance.²⁰¹ Nehru's attempts to placate Beijing looked like naiveté at best, or worse, confirmed that in reality, India under the Congress collaborated with imperialism. Meanwhile, Nehru's blandishments about Tibet, another concern of vital ideological and strategic importance for Mao and his colleagues, only confirmed Beijing's suspicions.

Tibet

The problem of Tibet added to the conflict of interests between Delhi and Beijing, complicating Nehru's efforts to reassure China that India could be a trusted partner. The possibility for China to cultivate India, which had been created by US aggression in advancing into North Korea, was further undermined by the fact that Beijing launched a long-planned military campaign against the Tibetans just a day or two prior to MacArthur's crossing of the 38th parallel. India would again frame its response in terms of the PRC's case for China's UNSC seat, urging that military action against the Tibetans damaged Beijing's standing. So Indian policy towards Tibet was partly tailored towards Delhi's policies of cementing the UN, socialising the PRC, and minimising distraction from the crisis in Korea. Accommodation of China with regard to Tibet was therefore not simply because

²⁰¹ Hajimu, Masuda. 'The Korean War through the Prism of Chinese Society: Public Reactions and the Shaping of Reality in the Communist State, October-December 1950.' *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 3 (2012): 3-38; also see 'Author's Response,' H-Diplo Roundtable Review, *Shen Zhihua, Mao, Stalin and the Korean War: Trilateral Communist Relations in the 1950s*. Translated by Neil Silver. London and New York: Routledge 2012, 27

of India's perceived relative military weakness, as some have argued.²⁰² But, Nehru's policy of reassuring Beijing that India had no ambitions in Tibet did aim to reduce China's military presence in the region and along India's borders. However, Chinese suspicions of India with regard to Tibet were not as paranoid as often suggested.²⁰³ Transformation and total military control of Tibet were fundamental CCP goals. Chinese fears were justified by the ambiguous and provocative implications of Indian policy for Beijing's sovereignty in Tibet. The language regarding Tibet clashed, with Nehru using the term suzerainty and autonomy, while Beijing thought he acknowledged its full sovereignty. A further ambiguity was created by Delhi and Beijing's common deferral of frank talks on their overlapping interests in the Himalayas, Tibet and the border while embarking on state-building projects in these areas.

Tibet was a critical region for the CCP, which was seeking to restore the outlines of the massive, multi-ethnic Qing Empire. Control and integration of Tibet would be a key test of the CCP's ability to win over non-Han minorities. The Soviets provided a valuable guide in this field having converted the old Russian Empire into the USSR. The CCP wanted to secure the various minority peoples' integration to the PRC through revolutionary methods, by conducting social revolution. Moscow agreed with this approach but urged caution nonetheless.²⁰⁴ A clash existed therefore between India's expectation that Tibet be somewhat apart from the PRC and Beijing's underlying goal to consolidate former Qing territory within the new nation-state by revolutionary means. Furthermore, it seemed that the new Indian state maintained a policy of interference which echoed the humiliating intrusion into Tibet by British India. Delhi had given brazen support to Tibetan separation in 1947 by inviting Lhasa to the Asian Relations Conference. The CCP saw Indian and British influence behind the expulsion of all Han from Lhasa in July 1949 and Tibetan resistance of

²⁰² Kennedy, Andrew Bingham. *The International Ambitions of Mao and Nehru : National Efficacy Beliefs and the Making of Foreign Policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 218-24

²⁰³ Maitra, 1963, 38; See also, Garver, 'China's Decision for War with India in 1962,' 2005

²⁰⁴ Westad, 2012, 315-7

the PLA entering Qinghai and Gansu.²⁰⁵ The ease with which Stalin had formalised Outer Mongolia's severance from China possibly also enhanced Mao's anxiety about Tibet.

Independent India's policy towards Tibet was ambiguous and provocative. The desire to get on with Beijing created an imperative to accommodate it on Tibet. However, although the idea of Tibetan independence was dropped once Panikkar returned to China, Delhi clung to the ambition of limiting Chinese influence in that region.²⁰⁶ The equivocal character of the concession to China's interests was very clear. Nehru said on 16 November 1949 that, 'In a vague sense we have accepted the fact of Chinese suzerainty [over Tibet]. How far it goes one does not know.' Suzerainty was an old-fashioned term implying a degree of autonomy and something much less than absolute Chinese sovereignty. Nehru would continue to emphasise that India's policy was support for Tibetan autonomy within Chinese suzerainty throughout 1950, despite Zhou having rejected any limits on Chinese sovereignty.²⁰⁷ Bajpai told the British that Delhi preferred to 'retain Tibet as a buffer' and did not want to see 'any increase in Chinese and still less Chinese Communist influence there'. However, Bajpai recognised India could not help the Lama 'regime' resist long-run 'infiltration' and lacked the 'military resources' to defend Tibet.²⁰⁸ Delhi's appeal that Beijing settle its relationship with Lhasa peacefully means was also driven by India's own security needs. Nehru wanted Beijing placated in order that the PLA's presence would be limited and so threaten India less directly.²⁰⁹ Nehru was keen to minimise defence spending in order to boost investment elsewhere so an un-militarised Tibet was crucial.²¹⁰

²⁰⁵ Shakya, 8; Westad, 2003, 302

²⁰⁶ Shakya, 24; See also, Panikkar, 102

²⁰⁷ 'Cable to KM Panikkar, 19 August 1950', *JNSW*, Vol.15, 431 & fn. 22 August 1950; also see, 'Cable to KM Panikkar, 2 September 1950, *JNSW*, Vol. 15, 433

²⁰⁸ Shakya, 24

²⁰⁹ 'Note 22', 18 August 1950, *JNLCM*, Vol.2, 163

²¹⁰ 'Note 36', 18 December 1950, *JNLCM*, Vol.2, 286

Confused thinking in Delhi about Tibet's relationship with the rest of China produced confused and contradictory policy. In January 1950 Bajpai discouraged the British from supporting the Tibetans at the UN and KPS Menon said India must not encourage British scheming as it would only confirm Chinese claims about imperialist interference in Tibet.²¹¹ However, at the same time India was still supplying arms to Tibet in 1950.²¹² Hence, Nehru's efforts to reassure Beijing were hamstrung both in theory and in practice, and the sincerity of Nehru's reassurances was quite undermined.

While India struggled to modify its Tibet policy, Mao's commitment to a military approach and the utter transformation of Tibet, contradicted Indian prioritisation of Tibetan autonomy. In November 1949, the Chairman had written to General Peng Dehuai, '[we should] strive to solve the Tibet question by the fall or winter of next year...it is impossible to solve the Tibet question without sending in military forces.'²¹³ On 2 January 1950 Mao wrote to his colleagues from Moscow, 'We must occupy Tibet, and transform it into a People's Democratic Tibet.' The military and transformative intention were clear: the CCP 'ought to strive to begin militarily entering Tibet by the middle of May, and occupy all of Tibet before October'. Negotiations with Lhasa were not mentioned.²¹⁴ Stalin offered air support and told Mao, 'It is good that you are preparing to attack. The Tibetans need to be subdued.'²¹⁵ Mao's statement that Tibet must be remade as a 'People's Democratic Tibet' indicated that he wished to govern the region as per the rest of China and that any long-term Indian expectations of moderating China's impact on Tibet were misguided. This was important to Mao because the recent history of humiliation demanded 'new' China be a strong unitary state, and the claim that the Chinese people had stood up required the liberation of all oppressed classes. Revolutionary ideology thus served the restoration of the Chinese empire.

²¹¹ Shakya, 19

²¹² *Ibid*, 13

²¹³ Sheng, Michael, 'Mao, Tibet and the Korean War', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 8:3 (2006), 18

²¹⁴ 'You Xinanju danfu jinjun Xizang he jingying Xizang de renwu', 2 January 1950, *MZDWJ*, Vol. 6, 36

²¹⁵ Sheng, 'Mao, Tibet and the Korean War', 19

Indian attempts to reassure Beijing were also undermined by the action of other parties. Isolated diplomatically, Lhasa sent a declaration of independence to Beijing and a delegation left for Delhi hoping to travel on for talks with the Chinese in Singapore or Hong Kong. The British, however, withdrew the visas for these places on May 6th, leaving the Tibetans in limbo in India. The Chinese made accusations of imperialist meddling. This charge was compounded when the Tibetans decided they preferred talks in Delhi.²¹⁶ That this was British not Indian meddling is clear from an entry in KPS Menon's diary which blamed the UK for blocking the Tibetan delegation's departure from India.²¹⁷ In August, the US bolstered Tibetan confidence by assuring them that they would support Tibet if China invaded.²¹⁸ So, no matter how much Delhi tried to alleviate Beijing's suspicions, it certainly looked as if powerful actors were impeding Chinese ambitions.

In May, Beijing began to combine military and diplomatic pressure on Lhasa. Chinese radio made a first public threat of force to liberate Tibet on 6 May and ten days later Beijing Radio accused India and the US of arming the Tibetans. In late May a PLA force captured the Tibetan town of Dengpo, within Lhasa-administered territory.²¹⁹ Then on 27 May conditions for talks were sent to Lhasa, the gist being that if sovereignty was conceded all else could be discussed.²²⁰ The fact that this first threat of force came on the same day that the British cancelled the Tibetan visas suggests the threat was not a response to British meddling, but emerged from an existing calculus. External threats were not the main drivers of Beijing's Tibet policy but a useful justification for it. In January, Mao had wanted the PLA to begin entering Tibet by mid-May, and have all Tibet occupied by October. But now diplomacy was being emphasised as well, despite the external interference.

²¹⁶ Shakya, 29-30

²¹⁷ KPS Menon Diary, KPS Menon Papers, Subject no.32, Diary: 1951, *NMML*; also see Shakya, 29

²¹⁸ Shakya, 21

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 37

²²⁰ Zhang Guoxing, 'Mao Zedong yu heping jiefang Xizang', *Dangshi yanjiu ziliao*, 2003: 2, 22

Growing unease led Nehru to increasingly desperate efforts to dissuade the Chinese from military action and also play down the dangers within India. On 7 June the Tibetan delegation in Delhi told the Indians that the PLA had entered eastern Tibet.²²¹ Nehru however reported uncritically to his Chief Ministers in early July that Panikkar believed Beijing 'stood for friendship with India, and would respect the autonomy of Tibet'.²²² Privately, Delhi continued to try and reassure China that it was not interfering. When Bajpai and Menon met Shen Jian on 17 July, they said they hoped China and Tibet could negotiate and denied reports that India had blocked the Tibetan delegation's departure.²²³ By late July Indian officials certainly were increasingly worried that China's claim on Tibet implied a wider threat to India's interests in the Himalayas, and in particular Bhutan.²²⁴ However, in August, while Indian diplomats continued to assure the Chinese they had no desire to get involved, Nehru had to admit that 'Tibet is also no longer secure and there are rumours of a Chinese invasion of it.'²²⁵

Delhi's Tibet policy continued to blur sovereignty and autonomy but now introduced a hint of imperial compromise. On 12 August, Panikkar told Zhang he had heard military action had begun against Tibet and that India was worried that 'military action would lead to a stirring up of the border tribes'.²²⁶ Panikkar implied an imperial compromise and an agreement not to arouse the wild clans separating their territories. Delhi had pursued similar cooperation with Rangoon to discipline minority ethnic and geographically peripheral groups dissenting from the nation-state project. For example, Nehru had given moral support to Rangoon in 1949 in their suppression of the Karens,

²²¹ Shakya, 30

²²² 'Letter 18,' 2 July 1950, *JNLCM*, Vol.2, 118

²²³ *Shen Jian yu yindu meinong waijiao cizhang, bajiepai mishuzhang tanhua zhaiyao*, 17 July 1950, *CMFA* 105-00072-01

²²⁴ 'To Cumming-Bruce, New Delhi', 17 May 1950, FO371/84250, *PRO*

²²⁵ 'Note 22', 18 August 1950, *JNLCM*, Vol.2, 167; 'Zhuyin dashiguan zhi Beijing', 5 August 1950, *Waijiaobu jiu Yindu Ganshe wo jiefang Xizang shi tong wo zhu Yindu dashiguan de laiwang dianji yinfang laizhao de fuben*, 5 August - 1 November 1950, *CMFA*, 105-00011-01(1), 1

²²⁶ 'Zhang Hanfu yu Pannijia tanhua jilu', 12 August 1950, *Guanyu Yindu ganshe wo jiefang Xizang de shuotie ji wofang dafu wenjian*, 12 August - 20 August 1950, *CMFA*, 105-00010-01(1), 1

and had tried to persuade the UK to unblock financial assistance for Burma to assist this campaign.²²⁷ The Indians also announced they had only commercial interests in Tibet, derived from a 1906 treaty and would like to settle any 'misunderstanding' with China.²²⁸ India's reference to old treaty rights was provocative to the the CCP, whose revolutionary Chinese nationalism viewed such 'unequal treaties' as the great humiliating legacy of imperialism.

In late August, Beijing altered its plans and decided it was only necessary for the moment to seize the outer region of Chamdo by October, and then the rest of Tibet could be secured the following year.²²⁹ Mao told Deng he foresaw 'a few tough battles' in the Chamdo campaign. Approving plans to occupy Chamdo, Mao said this would 'benefit the struggle to transform the politics of Tibet and enter Lhasa next year'. That Mao was now fully pursuing a strategy combining diplomacy and force was clear: 'Britain originally did not want the Tibetan delegation to come to Beijing, but now they allow them. If we can occupy Chamdo in October, this might spur the Tibetan delegation to come to Beijing for talks, to achieve a peaceful solution (of course there are other possibilities).' The Tibetans were to be bullied into coming for talks.²³⁰

Despite India's muddled policy on Tibet, it was a crucial factor behind Mao's modified plan for Tibet. Some scholars suggest Mao always stressed diplomacy, but such explanations ignore Mao's early, exclusively military emphasis, and later continuing use of military pressure.²³¹ More credibly, the switch in Mao's approach was due to the logistical difficulties of a march into Tibet combined with the growing commitment in the Korea region.²³² However, the Chinese belief that Panikkar

²²⁷ 'To Thakin Nu, 1 July 1949', *JNSW*, Vol. 12, 406

²²⁸ 'Zhang Hanfu yu Pannijia tanhua jilu', 12 August 1950, 105-00010-01(1), 1

²²⁹ Sheng, 'Mao, Tibet and the Korean War', 20

²³⁰ Zhang, 'Mao Zedong yu heping jiefang Xizang', 23-24

²³¹ For example, *ibid*

²³² See Sheng 'Mao, Tibet and the Korean War'

had given India's recognition to Beijing's sovereignty in Tibet on 12 August was also an important factor.²³³ Beijing did not realise Panikkar had exceeded Nehru's instructions.²³⁴ On 23 August Mao approved plans for the occupation of Chamdo in the context of this apparent shift in Delhi: 'Now India has already issued a declaration acknowledging that Tibet is Chinese territory, it [India] only hopes that it will be peacefully solved without resort to arms.'²³⁵ Indian acknowledgement of China's primacy in Tibet meant the urgency of military action receded in Mao's mind, a major point for Beijing given the military constraints they were working under.

The apparent concession on Tibet allowed Mao to be more accommodating about Delhi's concerns. The Chairman explained that they should now consider more closely Indian fears and work to assuage those just as much as Tibetan anxieties:

*'We are now carrying out the plan of striving for the Tibetan delegation to come to Beijing and of reducing the fears of Nehru. After we have occupied Chamdo only leave 3,000 troops there for the winter, this year we will not enter Lhasa, and also disperse the main force back to Ganzi, so that in the eyes of the Tibetans they may feel we are adopting a measure that shows our benevolent intentions.'*²³⁶

In the context of the growing crisis in Korea, Mao was more wary of generating additional hostility towards the PRC.

The fruits of a pacific approach to Tibet quickly became clear. On 26 August the Indians delivered an *aide-memoire* to the Chinese which expressed the familiar hope that military action could be avoided and that Tibetan autonomy and the Indo-Tibetan borders, unspecified, could be preserved.

²³³ 'Indian Government written statement on Tibet, in English', 12 August 1950, CMFA, 105-00010-01(1), 7

²³⁴ For example, 'Cable to KM Panikkar', 19 August 1950, *JNSW*, Vol. 15, Part 1, 431

²³⁵ Zhang, 'Mao Zedong yu heping jiefang Xizang', 23-24

²³⁶ *Ibid*

But in return the Indians offered to restrain Nepal's military support for Tibet, a point about which Zhou had previously expressed concern.²³⁷ Mao had no intention of barracking his troops however, but he was happy to use India to deliver his threats. On 29 August Mao told Zhou, 'Please pay attention to the timing of the attack on Changdu. Please consider having someone in the Foreign Ministry leak to the Indian Ambassador [the timing of the operation] and our hope that a Tibetan delegation will arrive in Beijing in mid-September to negotiate.' So Mao manipulated Delhi to pressure the Tibetans into coming for negotiations.²³⁸

The Indians chose not to highlight the contradictions in Beijing's policy. Panikkar met Qiao Guanhua on 31 August and heard that China was happy India had no 'wild ambitions' for Tibet. Qiao said Beijing hoped to use peaceful means to 'expel the remnants of the GMD reactionaries' from Tibet'.²³⁹ Talk of GMD forces in Tibet was an utter charade. Mao's own assessments of the military requirements for entering Tibet never mentioned these, because they did not exist. In January, he had only factored in the 'scattered' 6,000 Tibetan troops when he decided to reduce the size of his army assigned to the Tibet campaign. As with talk of peaceful measures this was simply diplomatic cover for military action. Qiao stressed that the Tibetan delegation in India had been invited to Beijing to discuss a peaceful solution and that once China's ambassador, arrived in Delhi he would discuss this with the Tibetans. However, because the ambassador was delayed, and the PLA already had a plan to begin operations in West Xikang, Shen Jian would begin talks with the Tibetans in Delhi. Qiao asked that Delhi do everything it could to help the Tibetans on their trip to Hong Kong. ²⁴⁰ So talks could begin in Delhi but the military would already have begun operations.

²³⁷ 'Government of India Aide Memoire to China,' 22 August 1950, *Guanyu Yindu ganshe wo jiefang Xizang de beiwanglu ji wo duici de dafu*, 26 August - 30 October 1950, CMFA, 105-00010-02(1), 8; See also, Panikkar, 105.

²³⁸ Sheng, 'Mao, Tibet and the Korean War,' 22

²³⁹ 'Qiao Guanhua yu Pannijia tanhuaajilu', 31 August 1950, CMFA, 105-00010-02(1), 11

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 17

The Tibetans continued to resist pressure to come for negotiations in Beijing and so on 7 October the PLA was ordered to cross the Driчу River [Yangtze] into the *de facto* Lhasa-controlled territory of Chamdo.²⁴¹ Mao wrote to his diplomats in Delhi that PLA would shortly fully occupy Chamdo, but a peaceful solution remained possible. He said, '[i]f Tibet is willing to talk then the delegation need to quickly come to Beijing.'²⁴² Crossing the Driчу two days before the US crossed the 38th parallel in Korea indicated on the one hand the independence of Mao's tactics in Tibet; in other words that Mao's move against Tibet was not caused by US escalation in Korea. But Mao was also demonstrating that he was not intimidated by the broader array of pressure being applied by the US in Manchuria, Taiwan and Indochina.

Beijing used Delhi's confusion over the geography of Tibet to deflect its concern about the military action. To some extent, Delhi was keen to have the rumours denied, in order to preserve Nehru's friendly China policy. Hence, on 16 October Indian diplomats asked if the Chinese could confirm that press reports of an invasion of Tibet were 'malicious propaganda'.²⁴³ The Chinese confirmed there was no invasion of Tibet, and explained they had only moved into Chamdo, as they had warned Panikkar they would do.²⁴⁴ Indian diplomats were unsure whether Chamdo was Tibet, and wanted clarification because the Indian government was denying the rumours. The Chinese realised that maps used in India showed Chamdo as within Tibet, rather than the old Qing province of West Xikang, hence the Indian belief that Tibet was being invaded.²⁴⁵ The reality is that 'Tibet' was conceived in various ways by the different parties. The Tibetans had a more maximal vision, and older maps from 1914 included Chamdo and Kham (now Western Sichuan). One Tibetan map showed what Tibetan officials considered *de facto* Lhasa-controlled territory between 1918 and 1950, which included Chamdo, and a small part of Kham. However, a GMD map from 1914

²⁴¹ Shakya, 42-3

²⁴² 'Mao zhuxi zhi Yuan Zhongxian', 12 October 1950, CMFA 105-00011-01(1), 7

²⁴³ Shakya, 47

²⁴⁴ 'AK Seng yu Chen Fusizhang tanhua jilu', 16 October 1950, 2pm, CMFA 105-00010-02(1), 19

²⁴⁵ 'Zhuyindu dashi Yuan Zhongxian yu Meinong tanhua jilu', 16 October 1950, CMFA 105-00011-01(1), 11

showed Chamdo and Kham as outside Tibet. Hence, when the PLA entered Chamdo in 1950 it was viewed as an invasion by the Tibetans, and therefore the Indians also, while the Chinese believed this was part of the Qing province of Xikang, and so did not count as Tibet.²⁴⁶

Insensitivity to the ethnic, cultural and religious ties across the sub-divisions of Chinese administration would persistently disrupt Beijing's Tibet policy in the 1950s. Mao chauvinistically assumed that the borders between China and Tibet should be based on the old Qing administrative divisions, irrespective of ethnic realities on the ground.²⁴⁷ Thus CCP action ignored ethnic sentiments and provoked reactions across the Tibetan plateau, and in India where there was much sympathy for Tibetans. That the Tibetans themselves had a different conception of what the boundaries of Tibet should be was evinced by their requests in 1947 and 1949 that India return certain territories.²⁴⁸ Also Lhasa would ask the CCP in 1952 to return to Lhasa the formal administration of Chamdo and other areas.²⁴⁹ Melvyn Goldstein has written that Beijing's differentiation of 'political' and 'ethnographic' Tibet was a major cause of instability amongst Tibetans broadly, as it failed to realise that action against ethnic Tibetans anywhere would have repercussions within 'Tibet'.²⁵⁰ This would become most obvious later in the 1950s once CCP reforms began in outer Tibet but at this point military action against Chamdo alarmed both Lhasa and Delhi.

²⁴⁶ These contrasting maps can be seen in Shakya, 1999, p.xiii-xiix; see Appendix for maps

²⁴⁷ 'Jiefang xinan diqu de zuozhan fangzhen', 19 October 1949, *MZDWJ*, Vol.6, 6, speaking of liberating the South West of China Mao referred to Kang as just another Chinese province, but it was ethnically Tibetan. He was chauvinistically unaware of Tibetan national aspirations

²⁴⁸ Shakya, 23

²⁴⁹ 'Yu Dalai Lama deng tanhua jilu', *Zhonggong zhongyang jiu tongyi Yindu zai Lasa she lingshiguan shi yu Xizang difang zhengfu de laiwangdian*, 26 February 14 September 1952, *CMFA* 105-00025-05, 13

²⁵⁰ see Chen, 'The Tibetan Rebellion', 56 and 68, he highlights Goldstein's use of this distinction; See also, Wang, Lixiong, 'Reflections on Tibet.' *New Left Review*, Issue 14, March-April 2002, 85-6

India's priority remained the legitimacy of the UN however, just as it did within the context of the Korean crisis, but its language about Tibet was often provocative. On 16 October, KPS Menon in Delhi, argued that China must not damage its case at the UN by giving the world the impression that it was threatening Tibet into negotiations.²⁵¹ Menon repeated this argument on the 18th and then said, provocatively, that India only wanted to maintain its previous relations and see that Tibet's 'autonomy within the framework of China's sovereignty' be maintained. He denied there was any external interference in Tibet that justified a military intervention. Negotiations for a peaceful settlement should be the goal as military action created opportunities for those countries 'who are not friendly to China'.²⁵² A few days later, Panikkar cynically recommended that China delay its action in Tibet until after the UN vote on PRC membership. Zhang replied that Tibet and the UN were separate issues. The PRC leadership at this point prioritised the quick consolidation of control over Tibet and cared not a whit that this obstructed one of India's major foreign policy goals, namely securing the PRC's UN admission to prevent the further polarization of world politics.²⁵³

By the time Delhi had clarified the geography of Chamdo and Tibet Mao had achieved his immediate goals for Tibet. On 24 October, the Indians asked that China limit the use of the military to West Xikang, to facilitate honest talks, although they had already heard the PLA had gone beyond Xikang.²⁵⁴ Indeed it had. Zhou updated ambassador Yuan on the 25th that the PLA had 'liberated' Chamdo by the 19th and on the 21st 3,000 enemy troops were destroyed. The PLA, Zhou said, had now entered Tibet.²⁵⁵ The Tibetan delegation had now left for Beijing.²⁵⁶ Also, although Beijing did not know this, the US had decided that real assistance to Tibet was now a

²⁵¹ 'Zhuyindu dashi Yuan Zhongxian yu Meinong tanhua jilu', 16 October 1950, CMFA 105-00011-01(1), 11

²⁵² 'An "unofficial note" about Tibet given to the Chinese Embassy,' 18 October 1950, CMFA, 105-00011-01(1), 14

²⁵³ 'Pannijia dashi yu Zhang Hanfu tanhua jilu', 21 October, 11am, CMFA, 105-00010-02(1), 28

²⁵⁴ AK Sen yu Chen Fusizhang tanhua jilu', 24 October 1950, CMFA, 105-00010-02(1), 35

²⁵⁵ 'Zhou Enlai zhi Yuan dashi', 25 October 1950, CMFA 105-00011-01(1), 31

²⁵⁶ Shakya, 45

dead issue.²⁵⁷ This was the harvest Beijing gathered in from military action in the Tibetan border lands. The cost was Indian good will. Nehru told his sister he felt 'hurt' and betrayed over the developments between China and Tibet.²⁵⁸

India lodged a formal protest with China on 28 October regretting that it had not been informed of the PLA's instructions to enter Tibet. Delhi argued genuine negotiations were impossible while one side feared 'duress' and an invasion at this time of international tension was 'deplorable' and in no one's interest.²⁵⁹ China's sharp response was deliberately offensive. Zhang told Panikkar China was shocked at use of the word 'invasion' and said in fact there was evidence of foreign intervention in Tibet and deliberate delay of Tibet's delegation. Panikkar repeated that India's concern was the international situation and unrest among 'border tribes.'²⁶⁰ A Chinese note reiterated that the Tibet and UN issues were unrelated, thus squashing India's argument for restraint. It concluded that if India viewed the situation as 'deplorable' then it must be influenced by outside forces.²⁶¹

This slur on Indian independence was an insult to Delhi's leadership which believed its foreign policy to be the manifestation of its autonomy. In reply, India said it had urged Tibet to join talks with Beijing and had always prioritised global tensions. Delhi had thought China wanted a peaceful settlement, hence its shock at the military action. Now, India would no longer be able to 'advise the Tibetan delegation to proceed to Peking' it was announced. In other words, India withdrew cooperation over Tibet. Delhi thought it sounded reasonable by saying that its interest was always in reconciling the 'legitimate Tibetan claim to autonomy within the framework of Chinese

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 23

²⁵⁸ '27 October 1950', Pandit 1, 60, *NMML*, 160

²⁵⁹ 'Letter from Government of India to Zhou,' 28 October 1950, *CMFA* 105-00010-02(1), 48

²⁶⁰ 'Zhang yu Pannijia dashi tanhua jilu', 30 October 1950, 11am, *CMFA* 105-00010-02(1), 44

²⁶¹ 'English translation of Chinese Government note to India on 30 October', *CMFA* 105-00010-02(1), 53

suzerainty.' Having used the word sovereignty on 16 October, the switch back to suzerainty added to the provocation. Beijing rejected the idea that Tibet had anything to do with international tension, as it was simply a domestic issue.²⁶²

There was now major disquiet within India regarding India's China policy. Nehru's only equal in the Congress, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, condemned Beijing's 'perfidy' and called for an end to support for the PRC at the UN, a build up of the military and an alliance with Burma to deter China. He concluded that Beijing's cancellation of Tibetan autonomy meant it could not be trusted.²⁶³ On 16 November questions were asked in Parliament about frontier defence.²⁶⁴ Figures in the Indian Home Ministry were very concerned about a Sino-Soviet plot to take over Asia starting with Tibet and discussed this with the British, who themselves had just published a new strategic consideration of Bhutan and the Himalayas.²⁶⁵

However, Nehru had no intention of changing course because he regarded Beijing's 'foolish' behaviour as proving his view that it was isolation and fear that drove it to extreme measures. Nehru's priority remained the socialisation, integration and pacification of the PRC. He rejected an offer of US 'help' regarding Tibet as fundamentally damaging to 'our cause'.²⁶⁶ Nor was Nehru swayed by the PLA's entry of Korea or Panikkar's description of the 'war psychosis' in China.²⁶⁷ Therefore, as the Chinese were reassured, no formal support was given to the Tibetan campaign

²⁶² 'Government of India letter to China', 1 November 1950, *Guanyu Yindu ganshe wo jiefang Xizang de laizhao ji wo zhi fuzhao*, 1 November - 16 November 1950 CMFA, 105-00010-03(1), 5

²⁶³ 'Sardar to Jawaharlal Nehru', November 7 1950, *Select Correspondence of Sardar Patel, 1945-1950, Volume 2*, Shankar, V (ed.), Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing, 1977, 320; Also see Guha, 2007, 167

²⁶⁴ 'Question for Parliament of India', 16 November 1950, 13(52)-NEF/50 MEA, NAI, 1

²⁶⁵ 'Special Report No.72: Bhutan', 14 October 1950; 'Note', 16 November 1950; & 'To Mr SJL Oliver, Foreign Office', 6 November 1959, Calcutta Special Report No.71: (To be read as Supplement to Special Report No.64 on Assam)', 7 October 1950, South East Asia Department, India and Pakistan, FO371/84250, PRO

²⁶⁶ '1 November 1950', Pandit 1, 60, NMML 162

²⁶⁷ 'War Psychosis in China'; and, 'Attached Letter', 1 November 1950, 770 CJK/50 1950 MEA, Subject number 1-22, NAI

at the UN.²⁶⁸ India's representative in New York was instructed that Korea remained the priority, and so nothing should be done to 'embitter' Beijing.²⁶⁹ Nehru believed the conflict in Korea and 'bombing of Manchurian towns' had created in China a temper of 'fear and apprehension and resentment against those real or fancied enemies, and this had led possibly to a change in policy [in Tibet] or to a speeding up of what might have taken much longer to develop.'²⁷⁰ Nehru was wrong of course. As seen above, Mao had always intended to send the PLA into Tibet, and only slowed down his plans due to logistical challenges and India's recognition of Chinese rights.

Nehru's understanding of the function of fear in international relations underpinned his non-alignment and China policy. He believed fear beget fear, and alliances only added to the sum of insecurity in the international system. So, despite intelligence showing the PLA advancing through Tibet towards Assam and Bhutan, and Patel's call for an alliance with Burma to deter Chinese adventurism, Nehru maintained his principle of non-alignment.²⁷¹ India's ambassador in Burma, MA Rauf, told Nehru the 'main spring' of Burmese politics was fear of China.²⁷² Nehru's response was to downplay the Chinese threat, although he added they might impress on Beijing that any attack on Burma would be 'deeply resented'. He preferred a treaty of friendship with Rangoon because a military alliance make China 'distrust India', and undermine therefore Delhi's influence over Beijing.²⁷³

Nehru did make some concessions to Patel's approach however. One element of Delhi's appeal for restraint in Tibet had been that they ought collectively avoid action that destabilised the Himalayan

²⁶⁸ Shakya, 58; '*Pannijia yu Zhang Hanfu tanhua jilu*', 23 November 1950, CMFA 105-0009-01(1), 31

²⁶⁹ Shakya, 58

²⁷⁰ 'Note 31', 1 November 1950, JNLCM Vol. 2, 236

²⁷¹ '21 December 1950, Foreign Office, SJL Olver to G Sherriff', South East Asia Department, India and Pakistan, FO371/84250, *PRO*

²⁷² 'Letter to Nehru from Rauf, Rangoon', 25 December, 1950, MA Rauf, Correspondence, J Nehru, *NMML*, 2

²⁷³ 'Prime Minister, Secret no. 2077 -PM, New Delhi, December 30, 1950', MA Rauf Correspondence, J Nehru, *NMML*, 4,

region. Nehru had warned Panikkar of the negative consequences for 'our border States' of a Chinese invasion of Tibet.²⁷⁴ But once the PLA entered Tibet Delhi moved to cement its influence. Nehru wrote in December to the Chief Ministers that Indian defence included Bhutan and Sikkim as 'protected states', and even Nepal, despite its independence. In fact, on 5 December, after China's military ambitions in Tibet became clear, Indian signed the treaty converting Sikkim into a protectorate.²⁷⁵

Nehru's desire to continue to placate Beijing was made easier by China's rapid return to a more friendly tone. This occurred despite hard evidence of Indian subversion in Tibet and was because Beijing wanted to focus on its major enemy, the US. In mid-November, a Chinese note coolly explained that the Indians were confused about autonomy and sovereignty and that friendship depended on recognition of China's territorial integrity. But no mention was made of two Indian spies apprehended during the Chamdo campaign, nor any other recent subversive activities by India.²⁷⁶ Instead, on 23 November, Zhang announced to Indian diplomats that relations remained friendly despite recent disturbances. He explained that Beijing's chief concern was 'armed intervention' by the US in Korea and Taiwan.²⁷⁷ China's desire to placate India was made abundantly clear by Beijing's effort to defuse an incident in Lhasa in which in-cautious local CCP officials had forced an entry of India's mission in January 1951. Although Beijing was clear that they were in the right (in principle), as the mission was a product of an unequal treaty, they nevertheless made great efforts to soothe Indian outrage.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ 'Cable to KM Panikkar', 19 August 1950, *JNSW*, Vol. 15, 1, 431

²⁷⁵ 'Note 36', 18 December 1950, *JNLCM*, Vol.2, 293

²⁷⁶ '*Zhou Enlai zhi Yuan dashi*', 25 October 1950, *CMFA* 105-00011-01(1), 31; 'Note from Chinese Foreign Ministry to all Embassies regarding representations made between India and China on the Tibet issue', 24 November 1950, *Guanyu Yindu ganshe wo jiefang Xizang shi de waijiao tongbao*, *CMFA* 105-00011-02(1)

²⁷⁷ '*Pannijia yu Zhang Hanfu tanhua jilu*', 23 November 1950, *CMFA* 105-0009-01(1), 31

²⁷⁸ *Guanyu zai Qinghaisheng dangtousi fuhuo yinduji baowuyuan suonanduoyi he suonanpengcuo an*, *CMFA* 105-00096-01

While Beijing was resolute in its ambition to control and transform Tibet, Delhi's views were ambiguous and contradicted Chinese goals. India prioritised the socialisation of the PRC and did not want to provoke it needlessly over Tibet, aware it was too weak to do so anyway. But having dropped support for Tibet's independence, Delhi still wanted to maintain some influence and limit the CCP's impact. This aim was at odds with Mao's ultimate ambitions. Furthermore, the attempts to reassure Beijing were undermined by India's inability to project total disinterest and by actions of the Tibetans and the intermittent support they received from the West. Obligated to slow down the seizure of Tibet, Mao also came to see advantages in reassuring Delhi about Beijing's limited plans. The Indians seemed to have conceded China's sovereignty and had begun cooperating to urge the Tibetans to negotiate. But, as a result, Delhi was doubly shocked by the PLA action in the Tibetan borderlands. Delhi reacted as it had to the Korea crisis pleading with Beijing to consider how aggression damaged its case for China's seat at the UN. But again Beijing had little sympathy for Nehru's grand visions when critical interests were at stake. Nehru came under huge pressure to change his China policy and Delhi did move to tighten its influence over the Himalayan border states. However, the logic of Nehru's foreign policy rejected any major change. He believed Chinese aggression was caused by fear and isolation and he did not want India to compound this. To oppose Beijing over Tibet would be to lose India's 'ameliorating influence' over China.²⁷⁹ Even though the Chinese soon showed how limited was that influence, ignoring Delhi's appeals and marching across Korea's 38th parallel, Nehru refused to give up his view. He dismissed calls to 'brand China an aggressor' and blamed the US for scuppering Indian efforts to encourage Beijing to talks.²⁸⁰

The border problem

²⁷⁹ Shakya, 60; Also see, 18 January 1951', Pandit 1, 59, *NMML*

²⁸⁰ Chen, Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001, 91-96; Barnes, 'Branding an Aggressor'; 'Note 38', 1 February 1951, *JNLCM*, Vol.2, 311

In March 1951, the Indians tried to realise a return on their cooperation over Tibet and proposed an understanding on the Sino-Indian border. Zhou had asked Delhi to encourage the Dalai Lama to stay in Tibet to aid its 'peaceful' liberation and stabilise Sino-Indian relations.²⁸¹ The Indians said they would help with the Dalai Lama. In Beijing, TN Kaul explained that Nehru wanted China to confirm the border in return: 'The China-India border ought to follow the McMahon Line, in this way then there can occur no problems. But China has some maps, including some published in 1950, which take certain parts of India and draw them within Tibet's borders'. Kaul added that this would deny the UK or US the opportunity to foment trouble.²⁸²

Beijing made no response because it wanted first to consolidate its position in Tibet and deal later with territorial claims and India's influence in the Himalayas from a position of advantage. After all, it was only in May that Beijing signed the 17 Point Agreement with Lhasa, agreeing Tibet's submission to Beijing.²⁸³ By mid-June, the Chinese were researching the history of Tibet's borders, external relations and British intrusion.²⁸⁴ London noted that the Soviet media's discussion of British depredations on Tibet, including Ladakh, Bhutan and Sikkim had 'a particularly sinister slant' and implied 'Soviet sponsorship' of claims on Indian territory.²⁸⁵ Beijing noticed that India had blocked Tibetan merchants from entering Bhutan, and were proposing to station troops there, as they foresaw a PLA strike.²⁸⁶ Although India had placed tariffs on the wool trade with Tibet, Beijing

²⁸¹ 'Waijiaobu gao Yindu Yuan dashi Xizang wenti Zhou yu Pan zhi tanhua', 28 March 1951, Zhou Enlai zongli ji Dalai yu li Xizang shi tong Yindu dashi Pannijia de tanhua jilu ji Yinfang biaotai, 21 March-26 March 1951, CMFA 105-00010-04(1), 5

²⁸² 'Yindu zhengfu dui Zhou Enlai zongli guanyu Xizang wenti koutou yijian de koutou dafu', 26 March 1951, English version, CMFA 105-00010-04(1), 3

²⁸³ Shakya, 64-70

²⁸⁴ See, *Youguan Xizang tiaoyue zhi lishi beijing*, 1 June 1951 CMFA 105-00118-01; and, *Youguan Xizang tiaoyue de mulu ji tiaoyue tequan fenlei*, 2 June 1951, CMFA 105-00153-01

²⁸⁵ 'Extract from the Indian weekly "Atom" entitled "Stalin stakes claim on Bhutan and Sikkim." H.C.N. Delhi's letter no C5/30 of 20/6 to Moscow Emby, South East Asia Department, India and Pakistan, FO371/92871, PRO

²⁸⁶ 'Lasa xun', 15 August 1951, *Guanyu Yindu, Budan dui Xizang jinxing maoyi fengsuo shi de dianbao*, 15-28 August 1951, CMFA 118-00262-01, 1

deferred action until better local administration was set up.²⁸⁷ Efforts by Delhi to undermine trade contradicted assurances that its interest in Tibet was purely commercial, and seemed designed to destabilise.²⁸⁸ But Chinese policy was to avoid confrontation while securing a foothold in Tibet. Mao explained that the CCP priority in the region must be the development of agricultural and logistical infrastructure.²⁸⁹

Delhi soon dropped its attempt to confirm the McMahon Line. In February 1952, Panikkar suggested an agreement over respective interests in Tibet, but made no mention of the border. He said India could accept the changes in Tibet but hoped 'both sides interests can be protected through talks'. India's interests were explained to be its mission in Lhasa, various trade agencies, post and telegraph facilities, a 'small military escort' at Gyantse, and certain 'rights' for traders and pilgrims.²⁹⁰ Panikkar had persuaded Nehru that avoiding discussion of the border was the wisest policy, because they could then take Beijing's reciprocal silence to imply acceptance of Delhi's public statements that the McMahon Line marked the frontier. Others had suggested India should insist on conceding Tibet in return for confirmation of the border. But, the key point about Panikkar's approach, which Nehru persisted with, was that it would give India time to consolidate the border areas.²⁹¹ Nehru's overriding concern to avoid friction with China added to the appeal of Panikkar's strategy.

²⁸⁷ 'Zhongyang xun', 26 August 1951, *Ibid*, 2

²⁸⁸ 'Waijiaobu xun', 28 August 1951, *Ibid*, 3

²⁸⁹ 'Ruzang budui keyi shengchan yu zhulu bingchong', 13 September 1951, *Jianguo Yilai Mao Zedong Junshi Wengao (JGYLMZDJSWG)* [Military documents of Mao Zedong since the founding of the PRC], *shang*, (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 2010), 550

²⁹⁰ Zhang Hanfu *fuwaizhang yu Yindu dashi Pannijia jiu Yindu zai Xizang liyi wenti de tanhua jilu*, 11 November 1952, *CMFA* 105-00025-01(1), 1-8, and see 'Aide de Memoire - English Version - Present position with regards to Indian interests in Tibet', *ibid*, 9

²⁹¹ Raghavan, 2010, 230-40; Many scholars have criticised Nehru's border policy for being duplicitous, and allowing continued, and ultimately tragic ambiguity to persist, see for example Noorani, A.G., 'Nehru's China Policy', *Frontline*, 4 August 2000

Nehru's border policy functioned by avoiding the topic with the Chinese and then projecting public certainty within India that the border was settled. Since 1950 Nehru had been declaring that China acknowledged the border was settled. On 31 December he told his Chief Ministers that 'our ambassador in China as well as the ambassador for Burma have been assured that China has no territorial ambitions.' He said he had responded to concerns about Chinese maps showing territory down to the Brahmaputra River as Chinese by stating in Parliament that, 'our maps show that the MacMahon Line is our boundary and that is our boundary – map or no map. The fact remains and we stand by that boundary and we will not allow anybody to come across that boundary.' He pointed out that the Chinese had assured them that these were old maps in need of revision.²⁹² That Beijing did not reject such public claims did not, though, amount to acceptance. An assurance that Beijing had no territorial ambitions meant little, as there was no way of knowing if this assurance was offered on the basis of *de facto* or what was privately considered to be *de jure* borders. Beijing's attitude towards India's mission in Lhasa should have made Nehru more cautious as this was another product of the 'unequal' Simla Treaty of 1914. Furthermore, Lhasa's demands in 1947 and 1949 that Delhi return territory seized by the British, should also have induced more circumspection.²⁹³ Finally, the whole policy depended on rapid consolidation of the Indian state's control of these border areas but progress was awfully slow.²⁹⁴

Beijing continued to secure its position and avoid responding to Panikkar's suggestions for an agreement on Tibet. In February, Zhou explained Beijing's policy to his top official in Lhasa, Zhang Jingwu. He foresaw negotiations to settle Indian and Nepalese interests but preconditions were necessary. The PLA must first reach the southern borders of Tibet, a Military-Political Committee must be set up and new Tibetan foreign affairs organs must be established. Furthermore, research into the local history of foreign relations was required. India's military and other rights would end but it would be permitted to keep its office in Lhasa and commercial interests could be maintained.

²⁹² 'Note 37', 31 December 1950, *JNLCM*, Vol. 2, 301

²⁹³ Shakya, 23

²⁹⁴ Raghavan, 2010, 239-40

The rather alien issue of pilgrimage also needed research.²⁹⁵ Beijing wanted a more robust posture in Tibet prior to negotiations with India.

Indian suspicion of Chinese delays accumulated was compounded by a growing distaste for Chinese politics. Menon perceived a 'cunning' attempt to manipulate and take advantage of India by requesting Delhi's assistance with the transshipment of grain from Calcutta to Tibet while refusing to discuss other issues. Menon thought they should withhold cooperation until Indian interests were accommodated. He was also concerned with Chinese irredentism.²⁹⁶ Meanwhile, the increasingly belligerent tone of Beijing's propaganda and ruthless domestic campaigns and purges dismayed Panikkar and seemed to presage more international conflict.²⁹⁷ Moreover, India was not exempt from this propaganda and Delhi complained about the characterisation of Indian elections as unfree and reports of thousands of communist prisoners in Indian prisons.²⁹⁸

In mid-1952 Beijing decided to seek a limited settlement with India. However, although the Chinese appreciated the potential Indian contribution to Tibetan stability they remained deeply suspicious. In April, the North West Bureau had told Beijing it had arrested Indian spies planning on assassinating Chinese officials.²⁹⁹ However, India was crucial to Tibet's economic health. Beijing was buying all of Tibet's wool, but this could only be transported out of Tibet via India.³⁰⁰ Despite Menon's suspicions, Delhi agreed to transship Chinese rice to Tibet.³⁰¹ Although Zhou still wanted

²⁹⁵ 'Zhou letter to Zhang in Tibet, Committee in Tibet and Yuan in India about researching India and Nepal's special rights in Tibet', 26 February 1952, CMFA 105-00025-05, 1,

²⁹⁶ 'Untitled but signed KPS Menon' 11 April 1952, Pandit 2, 24, NMML, 60

²⁹⁷ 'Peking to Delhi', 21 March 1952 and attached note 'Prospects for Peace', Pandit 2, 24, NMML

²⁹⁸ *Waijiaobu Chen Jiakang sizhang yu Yindu zhuhua shiguan canzan Gao'er jiu wo 'Da Gong Bao' san yue san ri kanzai de youguan yindu daxuan wenzhang de tanhua jilu*, 15 March 1952, CMFA, 105-00235-01

²⁹⁹ 'Xibeixun - Bao Zhonggongbu qingshi yui yinjiandie abudouheman deng er renfan chuli yijian', 14 April 1952, *Guanyu Yindu jiandie Abudureheman deng 2 ren de chuli shi de wanglai dianbao*, CMFA 118-00509-061, 1

³⁰⁰ 'Guanyu Xizang gongzuo de fangzhen', 6 April 1952, *MZDWJ*, Vol.6, 226; 'Dui Xizang caijing gongzuo de yijian', April 1952, Chen Yun Wenxuan (CYWX), Vol. 2, 401

³⁰¹ '18 July 1952', *Zhongguo, Yindu shuangfang jiu wo tichu jing Yindu zhuanyun dami zhi Xizang wenti dacheng liangjie zhi lai wang zhaohui*, 25 May - 18 July 1952, CMFA 105-00154-01,

to expedite the CCP's assumption of formal control over Tibet's foreign relations, he explained to Zhang Jingwu that it was now in Beijing's interest to exchange consulates in order to facilitate vital trade and to reassure India.³⁰² As a result, on 14 June Beijing proposed that India's mission in Lhasa should become a consulate and China should receive a consulate in Bombay in return. Zhou's note also said British aggression had scarred Tibet and 'privileges that arose from the unequal treaties between the British government and the old Chinese government were no longer in existence, and therefore, the relations between the new China and the new government of India in Tibet, China should be built up anew through negotiations.' The Indians accepted the consulate exchange and it was agreed that other issues, such as trade agencies, could be discussed once the consulates were established.³⁰³ But no one queried whether the 'scar' of British imperialism ran across the Sino-Indian border.

Ambiguous language and deferral of concrete issues allowed Beijing to remain flexible. Saying that Sino-Indian relations in Tibet would be 'built up anew' gave leeway to abrogate the old arrangements, including the border treaties imposed by the British, and yet was not explicit enough to worry Delhi. Beijing avoided firm concessions of any sort, for instance they ruled out requesting a trade agent for Sikkim to avoid giving recognition of India's claim on that territory.³⁰⁴ The indirect language served Beijing's relations with Lhasa also. Tibetan leaders had notified Beijing of their territorial claims against India, including Sikkim and Bhutan, and also announced that Lhasa wanted to directly administer Chamdo again. Beijing reassured Lhasa that new China had the strength to revise the old treaties, but needed time.³⁰⁵ In November, Lhasa announced that they also wanted Tawang, south of the McMahon Line and occupied by India only in 1951, restored.

³⁰² 'Zhongyang xun', 8 June 1952, CMFA 105-00025-05, 3

³⁰³ 'English note - Chinese reply to Indians', 23 June 1952, *Zhang Hanfu fuwaizhang yu Yindu daiban jiu Xizang wenti de tanhua jilu*, CMFA 105-00025-03, 11

³⁰⁴ 'Xizang gongwei waiwei baobu: duiyu Yindu tan Xizang wenti de yijian', 14 November 1952, *Xizang difang zhengfu dui Yindu zai Lasa she lingshiguande ying chi taidu wenti*, 7 November 1952, CMFA 105-00025-06, 9

³⁰⁵ 'Zhongyangxun', 9 August 1952, CMFA 105-00025-05, 11

The Chinese regarded this as a deliberate test of Beijing's legitimacy and stalled by saying they were still researching the history.³⁰⁶

Despite the implications of Zhou's remarks that the 'privileges' derived from the old treaties had been cancelled, Delhi sought no clarification. In late July, Nehru briefly considered a direct approach about the border but quickly reverted to the policy of silence.³⁰⁷ He continued also to project public certainty. In August, Nehru wrote to his Chief Ministers that his Tibet policy was to give up less vital interests in order to secure good relations with China but that the main interest was to secure the border. He said he had made clear several times in Parliament that India regarded the McMahon Line as the inviolable border, so there could be no further question on that.³⁰⁸ So a reckless policy continued despite China's disparagement of the old treaties on which the McMahon Line was based.

India had initially sought Beijing's confirmation of the McMahon Line in return for assistance with Tibet, but the Chinese had avoided the issue because they they still felt weak in Tibet. However, early in 1952 Delhi changed its approach and adopted a policy of diplomatic silence and public certainty on the border. While still seeking an understanding over Tibet, Delhi pretended that the border was settled. In the meantime, Delhi would build up its presence in the border zones. Beijing at first continued to ignore Delhi's desire to discuss Tibet, but eventually agreed to discuss some limited issues. But Nehru's silence on the border allowed Beijing to also pursue consolidation of Tibet and research better its territorial claims. While Nehru thought he was earning China's trust, the ambiguity helped China postpone a genuine border settlement. The fault was on both sides as the Chinese took advantage of the silences and assumptions on India's part to build an expanded

³⁰⁶ *CMFA* 105-00025-06

³⁰⁷ 'On the Truce Talks', 25 July 1952, *JNSW*, Vol. 19, 584; 'Border issue with China', 29 July 1952, *Ibid*, 651

³⁰⁸ 2 August 1952, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, p.74

sense of what they could claim. Beijing certainly knew what India's view of the border was as, besides Nehru's public statements, Delhi was deporting Tibetan officials who crossed the border to collect taxes in Indian territory.³⁰⁹ Equally, India should not have ignored the implications of the Chinese statement that relations would be 'built up anew'. The mutual duplicity allowed for a few years of cautious cooperation but would eventually become a problem when their respective efforts to consolidate their border zones collided.

Ambiguous Cooperation

The duplicity and silences woven through interactions over Tibet, the Himalayan region in general and the border specifically were characteristic of the ambiguity that marked broader Sino-Indian diplomacy during the Korean War. A powerful element of this ambiguity was that Nehru's encouragement of Beijing's supposed latent, Asian moderation and his desire to socialise it to the international system, was partly driven by a desire to disrupt the Moscow-Beijing axis. Beijing meanwhile was deeply skeptical of Indian motivations on ideological grounds, but overcame this to exploit Delhi's desire to be useful. Throughout this period reasons to be wary of Beijing and question the possibility of influencing it would emerge, but Nehru's commitment to his overall strategy was never destabilised by such dissonance for long.

In early 1951 Beijing decided to build on the stabilisation of relations that had followed the excitement over Tibet and seek a major improvement in ties with Delhi. Beijing benefitted from Washington's insensitive policy towards Delhi. The US had appeared to exploit Indian distress at the major famine being suffered by explicitly tying potential relief to a more cooperative approach

³⁰⁹ 'To Foreign Secretary', 9 September 1952, *JNSW*, Vol. 19, 653

towards the US's international agenda.³¹⁰ Beijing determined to take a more 'positive' stance towards India and this new attitude resulted in the dispatch of three grain shipments and five cultural delegations to India through the year.³¹¹ Most dramatically, on 26 January, Mao made an unprecedented appearance at a party Panikkar hosted at the Indian embassy. The Chairman's speech echoed Indian hopes for Asian cooperation and dangled the prospect of an alliance with Russia and China before the Indians, 'if India, China and the Soviet Union's relations are good, then the world's problems can be solved. India, China and the Soviet Union have no conflicts between them. The relations between them ought to be even better.'³¹² Subsequently, Xinhua News Agency celebrated the warmth of Sino-Indian friendship which could 'defend the lasting peace of Asia and of the whole world' and extolled the common history of 'national liberation against the long-term aggression of the western capitalist countries'. The British observed that, 'China may not have succeeded in splitting the West, but she is certainly well on the way to detaching India'.³¹³

Mao's gambit was riddled with ambiguities however, with regard to both India and the Soviet alliance. One account has characterised China's diplomacy as fore-shadowing the later post-Korean War moderate turn, in an effort in 1951 to manage the fall-out from the PLA's occupation of Tibet.³¹⁴ Such a perspective is highly persuasive. The language of Asian fraternity belied a profound ideological scepticism that was shared by Moscow and Beijing. Stalin's meeting with CPI leaders in February 1951 indicated that the Socialist Bloc still hoped that India's government would

³¹⁰ Rotter, Andrew Jon. *Comrades at Odds : The United States and India, 1947-1964*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000, 260, 270-1; See also, Chomsky, 1994, 125-6; Brands, 54-9; Zachariah, 201-2

³¹¹ 'Zhongyin guanxi de fazhan', *Zhongguo tong Yindu ji Bajisitan guanxi de youguan cailiao*, 1-31 October 1955, *CMFA* 203-00180-03, 1-17

³¹² *Mao Zedong Zhuxi chuxi Yindu guoqing zhaodaihui yu Yindu dashi Pannijia tanhua x yao deng*, 26 January 1951, *CMFA* 105-00016-01

³¹³ 'Sino-Indian Friendship Aid Defence of World Peace', 2 February 1951, South East Asia Department, India and Pakistan, FO371/92879, PRO

³¹⁴ Sinha, 'Mao Zedong's Vision', 491-2

be overthrown. Stalin regarded friendship with Nehru as tactical and necessary mainly in order to secure China's position in Tibet.³¹⁵ Mao's toasting of Panikkar disguised these calculations.

The common public courting of India also obscured tensions within the Sino-Soviet relationship. On the one hand Chinese discussions of India displayed a flexibility alien to Stalin's two-camp vision. In September, Zhou explained that the 'two camps' understanding of global politics was insufficient. One also needed to grasp that there were 'three types' of country - imperialist, fraternal, and 'vacillating'. India, Burma and Indonesia belonged to this third group, controlled by imperialism, but not beneficiaries of war. Others, like the UK and France, wanted to preserve the status quo. Such an analysis gave Beijing far more flexibility than Stalin's rigid, polar understanding of global confrontation, and thus the opportunity to pursue an independent policy. It was also consistent with Beijing's early opinion, as Zhou told staff at the Foreign Ministry in March 1950 that 'from India to Japan, we need to do some work, to expand our camp'.³¹⁶

In addition, the Sino-Soviet joint pursuit of India obscured a subtle conflict for influence over the CPI. When Stalin met with the CPI in February 1951 he tried to discredit the CCP as a model for India. He denounced the former CPI leader Ranadive for his leftist attacks on Mao and pointed out that the Indians ought to follow the current 'Chinese path' of moderate and gradual change and eschew any hasty move to 'socialist revolution'. Stalin's point was that the CPI should follow the CCP's example only in its submission to Soviet policy preferences. He explained the CPI should not pursue a Maoist strategy of rural insurrection but should work in the cities also. Stalin said Mao's success was highly contingent, the latter would have worked in the cities if he could, and he

³¹⁵ 'Record of a conversation between Stalin and representatives of the Indian Communist Party' February 09, 1951, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History [RGASP], fond 558, opis 11, delo 310, listy 71-86. Translated for CWIHP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113938>

³¹⁶ Liao, '*Ershi shiji wushiniandai*', 12

had enjoyed a secure rear in the USSR. The CPI had no similar strategic asset.³¹⁷ That the CPI cancelled the Telengana insurgency in October was no doubt linked to Moscow and Beijing's desire to placate Nehru, but also indicated that Stalin was reasserting control over the Indian comrades.³¹⁸

India's engagement of Beijing was crafted to influence the PRC into distancing itself from Moscow's extremism, thereby cooling the temperature of global politics. At the peak of the Korea and Tibet crises Nehru diagnosed an 'identity' in Sino-Soviet foreign policy, with China cut off and dependent on Moscow. He foresaw a weakening of this bond if tensions eased and expected China to resist Soviet influence in the long run.³¹⁹ One Indian diplomat's concern that the PRC was proving resistant to Nehru's policy indicated that the goal of subverting Sino-Soviet relations remained. YD Gundevia, Counsellor to the Indian Embassy in Moscow, perceived a 'dangerous echo' of the Soviets in all that China said, and possibly did. He ended a letter to Delhi thus,

We have had great hopes in China. We still have them. There may be explanations for China's intransigence, but that does not explain away the fact of the typical Communist intransigence that she has repeatedly exhibited in recent months... I am not for giving up hope, but I do feel that hard facts must gradually and even reluctantly compel us to curtail them – the hope of an Asiatic Tito rising in the east, which we all so deeply cherish.³²⁰

This frank assessment contradicted the effusive language of Panikkar's dinner in Beijing and showed the Indians were still trying to detach Beijing from Moscow. The problem was that Delhi rarely allowed 'hard facts' to challenge its underlying strategy.

³¹⁷ 'Record of a conversation between Stalin and representatives of the Indian Communist Party' February 09, 1951, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive

³¹⁸ Sherman, 'The Integration of the Princely State of Hyderabad', 512; For Moscow and Beijing's battle to direct the CPI's strategy in the early 1950s see, Ray, 20-29

³¹⁹ 'Cable to KM Panikkar', 25 October 1950, *JNSW*, Vol. 15, 1, 440-1

³²⁰ 'Embassy of India in Moscow, signed YD Gundevia to KPS Menon, Foreign Secretary', 2 February 1951, 770 CJK/50 1950 MEA, Subject No. 1-22, *NAI*

While Delhi pinned hopes for socialist bloc moderation on China, Pandit was trying to cultivate cool heads in Washington, despite the US media's 'hymn of hate' against India.³²¹ Certain contacts bolstered the belief in India's moderating mission. Pandit reported that Robert Oppenheimer, the US nuclear physicist and former head of the Manhattan Project, was begging India to maintain its foreign policy and also withhold its thorium supplies from the US to thwart the 'horrible and deadly' work to develop new powerful weapons.³²² Nehru replied on 8 March assuring Pandit they would 'take no step' regarding thorium, and suggested she meet Oppenheimer again.³²³ While there is no evidence that communications with Oppenheimer went any further, this episode underlined the morality of Nehru's foreign policy and cemented his sense of purpose in trying to win China's trust.

Nehru's justification for Delhi's rejection of the Japan peace treaty illustrated the gulf between his and Chinese perceptions of Moscow. Despite the hidden agendas Chinese diplomats welcomed Delhi's emphasis on Beijing's responsibilities in the region and they agreed that the proposed treaty was a scheme to 'divide Asians'.³²⁴ The Indians explained that they rejected the treaty because it was an affront both to Japanese and Chinese sovereignty and declared that by refusing to sign the treaty Delhi had burnished its independence.³²⁵ Nehru had resisted significant pressure from Pandit and Bajpai who feared further damage to relations with Washington.³²⁶ But Nehru insisted he would not 'turn a political somersault' and abandon Indian independence by signing the treaty, which would also mean 'a break with China'.³²⁷ He justified this move in terms of carving out middle ground between the two extremes of the West, busy re-arming the old fascist states, and

³²¹ '5 February 1951', Pandit 1, 59, *NMML*, 152

³²² '21 February 1951', Pandit 1, 59, *NMML*, 166

³²³ '8 March 1951', Pandit 1, 60, *NMML*, 184

³²⁴ 15 August 1951', *Zhou Enlai Nianpu (ZELNP)*, Central Party Documents, Digital edition

³²⁵ *Waijiaobu Chen Jiakang Sizhang tong Yindu zhuhua canzan Gao'er tanhua jilu*, 27 August 1951 CMFA 105-00088-05

³²⁶ '24 July 1951', Pandit 1, 60, *NMML*, 218; '6 August 1951', Pandit 1, 59, *NMML*, 223

³²⁷ '6 August 1951', Pandit 1, 60, *NMML*, 225

the Soviets, who were pursuing 'Communist expansionism'.³²⁸ Nehru then imagined he was securing Beijing's loyalty to this moderate centre manned by Asian states, utterly failing to realise Beijing's ongoing 'identity' with Moscow.

The ambiguous cooperation on high politics was threatened by more straightforward problems regarding frontier consolidation and regime legitimacy. In September, a party of muslim Kazakh refugees from Xinjiang arrived in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Initially Beijing seemed content for India to disarm and manage the group appropriately.³²⁹ However, in November, a Chinese cultural delegation's scheduled visit to Kashmir was suddenly cancelled. The reasons were unclear, but the Indians and British assumed it was related to the Kazakh refugees, and that Beijing wished to obscure the fact that its rule in China's Muslim borderlands was disputed.³³⁰ A panegyric in the Chinese press marvelling at the liberated lifestyle now enjoyed by Kazakhs in the grasslands seemed to confirm this was a propaganda issue.³³¹ India's own intelligence assessment surmised Beijing was pettily protesting the sanctuary given to the Kazakhs.³³² The incident revealed a basic hesitation on both sides to give unambiguous endorsement of the other's regime.

Delhi's suspicion of Chinese subversion within India adding a layer of ambiguity to relations with Beijing. Indian Intelligence closely tracked the Chinese Cultural Mission's tour of India and all its interactions with local communists. It was assumed that instructions were being given to Indian communists. One report concluded by querying the legitimacy of the delegation and its relationship

³²⁸ 31 August 1951, *JNLCM*, Vol.3, 488

³²⁹ *Zhang Hanfu Fuwaizhang jiu Hasakeren jinru Yindu jingnei shi yu Yindu zhuhua dashi Pannijia tanhua jilu*, 26 September 1951, CMFA 105-00082-01(1); *Waijiaobu Chen Jiakang sizhang jiu zhongyin bianjie wenti yu Yindu zhuhua shiguan Kumar tanhua jilu*, 29 September 1951 CMFA, 105-00082-02(1)

³³⁰ 'British Embassy, Peking, 19 November, 1951, No. 10580/25/51 LH Lamb, Beijing to RH Scott, Foreign Office London', *Kazakh Refugees*, South East Asia Department, India and Pakistan, FO371/92897, PRO

³³¹ 'British Embassy, Peking, 30 November, 1951, No. 10580/25/51 LH Lamb, Beijing to RH Scott, Foreign Office London', *Kazakh Refugees*, South East Asia Department, India and Pakistan, FO371/92897, PRO

³³² 'A Brief review of the activities of the Chinese Cultural Delegation in India (1951) Secret' [Sent to HVR Iyengar and KPS Menon on 3 January 1952 by Assistant Director of Intelligence Bureau A Jayaram], *Exchange of goodwill missions between India and China*, 786-CJK/50, MEA, CJK Branch, NAI

to the CPI: 'According to reliable information, the cultural department, Peking, sent a sum of Rs. 273,000/- to the Chinese delegation through the Chinese Consulate Calcutta, and the Chinese Embassy New Delhi. The Chinese delegates were guests of the government of India and the purpose for which such a huge amount was sent to them remained obscure.'³³³ The IB was probably the Indian institution most hostile to both communists and Chinese in India, but such reporting nevertheless would have kept the threat of Chinese communist subversion at the front of ministerial minds. The Director of the IB (DIB) had a close relationship with Nehru, and so he would have been fully aware of these suspicions. Of course, one aspect of Nehru's policy to develop relations with the PRC was to obviate its desire to fund the CPI, but he under-estimated Beijing's commitment to the spread of global revolution.

In April 1952 Nehru sent a delegation headed by his internationally respected sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit to China to inculcate more sympathy between Delhi and Beijing. Part of her brief was to relay messages from the Americans and she was also carefully briefed on the Tibet question in case the Chinese broached the subject.³³⁴ However, her main task was to paint a more appealing picture of India and refute various themes of communist propaganda. Provided with sheets of statistics, one goal was to explain that contrary to Beijing's scepticism Delhi was successfully reducing the influence of foreign capital in India. Furthermore, Pandit was to defend the reputation of Indian democracy. The CPI had recently intensified its attacks on India's electoral system as a charade and Delhi believed Beijing and Moscow were supporting this. Pandit was to point out that 'several Ministers' had lost their seats recently. Finally, she was to reject the slanderous rumour

³³³ *Ibid*

³³⁴ 'Telegram from Foreign New Delhi to Indembassy Peking, No. 24917, 1 May 1952', 1952, *Papers relating to Indian Cultural Delegation to China under the leadership by VL Pandit, judicial system in China and cultural relations with China in the past*, Pandit 2, 23, NMML, 6; 'No.401-FS/52, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, April 16th, 1952', 1952, a) *correspondence with EA Ministry and Universities in Peking concerning the Indian Cultural Delegation to China, includes bio-data of the members of the delegation; b) letters from various people requesting VL Pandit to include them in her delegation to China*, Pandit 2, 22, NMML, 69

that India was supplying strategic materials to the US.³³⁵ In essence Pandit was to counter ideological assumptions that non-communist India's economy was dominated by US capital, that it served US foreign policy, and that its political system was rigged. Her other job was to form her own impressions of Mao's Republic.

Pandit's observations on her tour highlighted profound tensions at the heart of Nehru's China policy. First of all, there was a palpable clash between an ugly authoritarianism and the energetic embrace of progressive modernisation. This dissonance struck Pandit in the person of Chairman Mao himself when they met in intimate conclave at *Zhongnanhai*. While Pandit sensed that he modelled his regal mannerisms on Stalin he rustically and familiarly urged her to discard feudal etiquette and smoke a cigarette with him.³³⁶ In Delhi, Pandit conveyed her awe and envy for the 'contagious enthusiasm' the CCP had unleashed for development work. She suggested that it was China's land and marriage reform that had catalysed this energy. However, she also said that the CCP's campaigns did not appeal to 'democratic methods of thinking' even if certain 'evils' had been eradicated and 'efficiency' raised.³³⁷ Although inspired by the training of young development workers, she was suspicious of how 'rigid the "remoulding" process' was. Nevertheless, she thought something similar could be done in line with '*our own ideology*' to train rural workers in India.³³⁸ The most damning indictment of China's system however came in a report by one of Pandit's companions on the tour, Shrimati G Durgabai. Her detailed survey of the PRC's legal system revealed a total absence of legal restraint on the political power of the party.³³⁹ So while

³³⁵ 'Ministry of External Affairs, XP Division S Sen,' 24 April 52, [Contains a note on 'Communist Propaganda in India'], *1952 Notes/correspondence with K.M. Panikkar, K.P.S. Menon, Y.D. Gundevia regarding V.L. Pandit's visit as a cultural delegate to china, includes extracts of her speeches, etc.* Pandit 2, 24, NMML, 47

³³⁶ 'Untitled - 16th May, 1952 [signed 'much love']', *Ibid*, 17

³³⁷ 'Cultural Mission Members Address MPs', *1952 Appointment of V.L. Pandit as leader of the Indian Cultural Delegation to China. Mrs Pandit's speeches, itinerary of the delegation etc.*, Pandit 2, 18, NMML

³³⁸ 'Pamphlet: Secret - Indian Cultural Delegation to China, Report by Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, leader of the delegation' New Delhi 1952, *Ibid*

³³⁹ 'Judicial System in China, Note by Shrimati G Durgabai', Pandit 2, 23, NMML, 104-126

admiring the enthusiasm the Chinese had harnessed for development India's elite found the system which fostered this spirit distasteful if not repellent.

Secondly, this sense that Chinese progress was realised through dubious means buttressed a nascent conviction that India must compete with the PRC to define an Asian model of modern development. Having visited countless industrial sites, infrastructure projects, schools and training centres, Pandit was concerned that China's success might 'undermine the appeal of democracy in Asia'. She imagined that India faced a profound challenge: '[U]nless we can similarly respond to our own problems by our own methods of adaptation, assisted by others if need be, we shall not be able to withstand the appeal which China must make to the vast population of Asia.'³⁴⁰ Although Nehru himself regarded China as an important source of developmental inspiration for India, given their common problems and had often justified his policy in those terms, he now also spoke in terms of a great contest. If India could liberate its own masses from poverty that would be a great victory for democracy, he argued.³⁴¹ So, Delhi seemed to have imbibed a central tenet of the Cold War, that there was an epic clash of social systems underway. Nehru was a partisan for democracy, indicated by his warm approval of recent reforms delivered by the UK Parliament.³⁴² But, for Nehru the contest with China was to provide a model specially conditioned by Indian soil that might take root across Asia. He certainly believed that India had its own unique sources of energy, exemplified for instance by the land reform campaign of the old Gandhian, Vinoba Bhave.³⁴³

Finally, Pandit's delegation perceived an intimacy with Moscow that undermined India's attachment to China as a symbol of Asia's resurgence. This impression undercut a basic premise of Nehru's

³⁴⁰ 'China - The Great Challenge', *Background material on the history and polity of China, sent by the ministry of external affairs to v.l. pandit*, Pandit 2, 19, NMML

³⁴¹ 16 June 1952, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3

³⁴² *Ibid*, 19

³⁴³ 5 June 1952, *Ibid*, 39-40

policy, that China's Asian character limited its deference to Moscow. When Pandit visited the Huai River Project she responded with prideful reveries: 'when one saw what had been achieved by the Chinese people without any kind of outside assistance or financial help, how 2.5m workers had built it within six months, one could not but share in the pride of the Chinese people.'³⁴⁴ The Indians seemed desperate to cling to evidence of the indigenous, and Asian, nature of Chinese development. Pandit had been given for example an academic paper explaining the classical, ancient roots in Mencius and Wang Anshi of the CCP's recent land reforms.³⁴⁵ The Chinese seemed prickly to Indian interest in Soviet assistance, with one Chinese site manager responding, 'Our Soviet advisers are in the Soviet Union. They come here when we send for them.'³⁴⁶ The group was taken to Manchuria to dispel rumours that it was run by the Soviets.³⁴⁷ However, the Chinese were not able to persuade the delegation that Moscow genuinely remained a distant partner. For example, while Frank Moraes was very impressed by the gender equality he saw, he echoed Patel's caution of 1950, warning that Beijing was closer to Moscow than realised, far less interested in Asian fraternity than thought and far from respectful of India's own achievements.³⁴⁸

Nehru's confidence in Beijing's independence from Moscow was prescient, but his assumption that this inclined Beijing towards moderation was misplaced. In fact the CCP and CPSU competed to influence the CPI's ideological direction. In 1952 some of these tensions became more apparent to Indian observers. Moraes interpreted the Asian and Pacific Regional Peace Conference, held in Beijing in October, as a reflection of the CCP's desire to establish Asian leadership. He reported on Moscow's sceptical response to the conference and the care taken by Soviet theorists to reject the idea that China was an 'obligatory model' for Asian communist parties. Moraes noted that it was

³⁴⁴ 'Cultural Mission Members Address MPs', Pandit 2, 18, *NMML*

³⁴⁵ 'Some aspects of the Agrarian Reform in New China. (Points from an article by Ya-lun Chou in *Pacific Affairs Journal* of March 1952)', Pandit 2, 23, *NMML*, 44-53

³⁴⁶ 'Pamphlet: Secret - Indian Cultural Delegation to China', Pandit 2, 18, *NMML*

³⁴⁷ Panikkar, 1955, 172-3

³⁴⁸ Frank Moraes, *Report on Mao's China*, New York: Macmillan, 1953

said that in India, 'we have seen the full error of mechanically applying the experience of the Chinese revolution'. The Soviet conclusion seemed to be that China's experience must 'not be made a fetish applicable to all situations in Asian countries.'³⁴⁹ Moraes's observations therefore threw doubt on the assumption that Chinese nationalism created a fertile soil for Nehru's Asian fraternity. He argued that Beijing wanted to lead in Asia, but it also wanted to compete ideologically with Moscow.

Despite Moraes's views, Delhi remained certain that Moscow was more of a danger than Beijing. Nehru had said in August that the USSR was the source of 'communist expansionism'.³⁵⁰ In the latter part of 1952 Indian Home Minister, H.V.R. Iyengar, grew hugely agitated by Moscow's pressure on the CPI to adopt more aggressive tactics. He was especially worried by the recent CPSU conference and Stalin's conclusion that 'Soviet Russia would henceforth give greater support to foreign Communists and democratic parties in their struggle for liberty and peace.'³⁵¹ Iyengar, was less alarmed by Beijing's conference, which he saw as mainly propagandist, and less likely to have served as a conduit for instructions to the CPI.³⁵²

In the final months of 1952 Nehru's failure to mediate over the issue of Korean War PoWs highlighted his limited influence over Beijing and the contrasting intimacy of Sino-Soviet collaboration. There were various signs through the summer that Beijing would resist Indian persuasion. Pandit had failed to encourage a more flexible view and Zhou himself had rejected this while communist forces were under pressure.³⁵³ In addition, Nehru observed the strengthening of

³⁴⁹ Moraes, 88-89; Mao did not attend the conference but endorsed it sending a congratulatory telegram welcoming its convention, see '*Zhuhe Yazhou Taipinyang quyue heping huiyi zhaokai*', 2nd October, 1952 *MZDJGYL*, Vol.3, January-December, 1952, 576

³⁵⁰ 31 August 1952, *JNLCM*, Vol.3, 488

³⁵¹ Garner telegram 24 October 1952, FO371/101132

³⁵² Garner telegram 3 November 1952, *Ibid*

³⁵³ '*Buneng jieshou diren de qianfan zhanfu fang'an*', 15 July 1952, *Zhou Enlai Junshi Wenxuan (ZELJSWX)* [Selected Military Documents of Zhou Enlai], Vol.4, (Beijing: Renmin, 1997), 289

Sino-Soviet ties as a raft of new agreements emerged.³⁵⁴ By October, the Chinese had regained the initiative on the Korean battlefield, reinforcing their recalcitrance at the talks.³⁵⁵ However, Nehru continued mediating sustained by a conviction that the UN must engage with issues of war and peace to avoid irrelevance.³⁵⁶ In fact, there was even some sympathy in Delhi for China's public position regarding the PoWs.³⁵⁷ So, Delhi tried to develop a mutually acceptable plan in November and communicated closely with Beijing while formulating a proposal.³⁵⁸ The Indians believed that Beijing had encouraged them to expect a compromise.³⁵⁹ However, on 24 November the Chinese suddenly announced that they could not support Delhi's plan.³⁶⁰ Nehru's spirits fell. It had been clear to him all along that the US favoured the continuation of conflict.³⁶¹ But China's rejection was a shock. Only a few days previously he had thought Beijing would accept India's resolution.³⁶²

Indian diplomacy was in disarray. But it was China's retreat from the reassurances it had given that stung most. Sino-Soviet partnership seemed as strong as ever and Nehru's China policy a case of dead-end. The Indians noted that the whole event had left the Soviets suspicious of them, while the US thought it had outmanoeuvred Delhi into lining up on its side.³⁶³ But, while Moscow's

³⁵⁴ 'Note 8', 26 August 1952, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 82

³⁵⁵ 'Zhuhe Zhongguo zhiyuanjun de zhongda shengli', 24 October 1952, *Mao Zedong Jianguo yilai wengao (MZDJGYLWG)*, 596

³⁵⁶ 'Note 9', 10 September 1952, *JNLCM*, Vol.3, 100

³⁵⁷ 'Ministry of External Affairs to Pandit', 27 October 1952, *1947-1951, Correspondence of VL Pandit (as Ambassador to USSR) with GS Bajpai - Sec Gen EAM regarding official matters, includes a few letters of J Nehru*, Pandit 1, 55, *NMML*

³⁵⁸ *Zhang Hanfu fuwaizhang jiu Yindu hui zhanfu deng wenti de jianyi yu Yindu zhuhua dashi Laijiawen de tanhua jilu*, 4 November 1952, *CMFA*, 105-00027-07(1); 'Wo yu Nihelu jianmian de tanhua', 4 November 1952, *Zhongguo zhu Yindu dashi jiu Chaoxian wenti yu Nihelu de tanhua zhaiyao*, 1-3 November 1952, *CMFA* 105-00027-13, 1

³⁵⁹ Stueck, 295

³⁶⁰ 'English version of statement given to the Indians', 24 November 1952, *Zhongguo zhengfu jiu Yindu xiang lianheguo dahui tichu de guanyu Chaoxian tingzhan de jueyian cao'an shi xiang Yindu zhengfu tichu de shengming*, 24-30 November 1952, *CMFA* 105-00027-12(1), 3

³⁶¹ '25 November, 1952', Pandit 1, 47, *NMML*

³⁶² 'Note 14', 20 November 1952, *JNLCM*, Vol.3, 168

³⁶³ 'To RK Nehru Foreign Secretary from Mrs Pandit', 2 December 1952, Pandit 1, 55, *NMML*; '4 December 1952', Pandit 1, 48, *NMML*

reaction 'irritated' Nehru, Iyengar told the British, 'he [Nehru] was even more deeply offended by the attitude of Peking.' The Indians worried that they had damaged their reputation for non-alignment, noting that Moscow commented that in the event of war India would at best be an unfriendly neutral.³⁶⁴ The basis of Nehru's policy was challenged. He reflected in early December, 'One gets the impression that China's final attitude was partly at least governed by Soviet advice or pressure', and it seemed Beijing was 'more closely associated with the Soviet Union than might have been thought'.³⁶⁵ Zhou formally rejected India's resolution in mid-December, saying 'this illegal resolution, stripped of its disguise, is actually nothing but a revamped version of the 21-nation proposal submitted by Dean Acheson to the Political Committee of the General Assembly on 24 October.'³⁶⁶ Internally the Chinese regarded India as 'deceptive' and 'two-faced'.³⁶⁷ Meanwhile, Beijing was itself preparing for renewed conflict with the US in Korea following the inauguration of the incoming Eisenhower administration, and Mao consequently requested more aid from Stalin.³⁶⁸

A powerful ideological faith set the limits of China's friendly attitude towards India. Despite the desire to draw India into an anti-US front, the revolutionary overthrow of Nehru's government remained a long-term goal. However, Nehru's own cooperation with Beijing also masked a fundamentally hostile scheme. Nehru was anti-communist but firmly believed that cooperating with Beijing would cool its revolutionary fever and integrate the PRC into the international system and so diminish the appeal of the alliance with Moscow. Nehru believed international stability was threatened most by the dangerous extremists in Washington and Moscow and he imagined that because Beijing's revolutionary zeal was tempered by its nationalism it could also be a bulwark of moderation. The mutual suspicion underlying these conflicting goals manifested in petty clashes

³⁶⁴ 'UK High Commissioner in India to CRO', 16 December 1952, *Communism in India*, SE Asia, India, FO371/101132

³⁶⁵ 'Note 15', 4 December 1952, *JNLCM*, Vol.3, 187

³⁶⁶ 'Note 20', 22 December 1952, *JNLCM*, Vol.3, 208, fn.

³⁶⁷ 'Diren de shibai yu women de shengli', 11 December 1952, *ZELJSWX*, Vol.4, 292; 'Zhongyin guanxi de fazhan', *CMFA* 203-00180-03

³⁶⁸ 'Chaoxian zhanzheng xingshi yu Zhongguo junshi dinghuo', 15 December 1952, *ZELJSWX*, 308

like over the Kazakh refugees and Kashmir, and the Indian fears that the Chinese channelled funds and advice to the CPI. Delhi's diplomacy, best symbolised by Pandit's tour, aimed at continuing Panikkar's mission to show Beijing that neutrality was possible. The Indians wanted to demonstrate that Beijing's ideological dismissal of India was misplaced, their development path had prospects and they were not dependent on the US. But India was nonetheless increasingly aware of an unpleasant radical authoritarianism in China that implied it was closer to Moscow than Nehru hoped. As a result, the Indians grew to regard themselves as in a contest with China to provide a more democratic model of development for Asia. Subsequently the violent rejection of India's plans to resolve the PoW problem rocked Nehru's confidence that Beijing was both amenable to reason and willing to diverge from Moscow.

Conclusion

Sino-Soviet attacks on India continued at high intensity into January 1953 underlining how powerfully the Socialist Bloc alliance congealed around the Korean War regardless of Delhi's efforts.³⁶⁹ Nehru was downcast and he was briefly minded to refocus on domestic development, '[f]oreign entanglements', he suggested, were a distraction. However, the Indian Prime Minister quickly recommitted to his approach because he regarded it as India's 'destiny' as an 'independent country'. The Congress Party then reconfirmed its support for Nehru's foreign policy, in particular the importance of the PRC entering the UN's various bodies.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ 'Note 21', 4 January 1953, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 219

³⁷⁰ 'Note 22', 27 January 1953, *Ibid*, 226-227

Nehru clung to his central argument that the PRC's admission to the UNSC would ease the bitter polarisation of international politics. This seemed eminently practical because, outside of this international forum, the PRC was likely to be more fearful and less predictable. Moreover, it was also a point of simple justice that the body exercising authority over the mainland of China ought to be acknowledged as its legitimate government. Nehru's undeniable idealism was manifest in his private insistence that India defer its undoubted right to a seat in the UN Security Council until the more critical question of China's representation had been resolved. But the idealism blended with a realist emphasis on India's broadest interest in a stable international system which incorporated China as a great power. It was this imperative that dominated Nehru's consistent response to the evolution of the Korean War and Tibet problem in 1950. Nehru believed that if the PRC was placated and brought into the international system then it would far less likely to lash out.

China's leaders could not appreciate their centrality to Nehru's strategy. Beijing just did not recognise the value that Delhi placed on the UN. While Nehru critiqued the very concept of alliance arguing this was a fundamental cause of instability, the Soviet alliance was Beijing's anchor in a world of threats. Even if the PRC had been admitted to the UN its prioritisation of the socialist bloc would not have diminished. Therefore, India was peripheral to China's central strategy. Beijing's revolutionary aspirations for India sharply contradicted the policy of friendship begun in early 1951. At the same time the centrality of India to international communism's plans for continued revolution was an issue in which Sino-Soviet tensions could be observed. Although unwitting, this partly justified Nehru's faith that Beijing could be drawn away from Moscow. But his analysis of the Sino-Soviet embrace was misguided, he thought Beijing could be wooed away as it was the less passionate partner, not realising that it was competition that would drive them apart.

Beijing's scepticism of India had a more concrete source in the threat Delhi posed to Tibet. Beijing's suspicions eased when it appeared that the Indians had conceded the former's full sovereignty in Tibet. However, it was clear in private that Nehru continued to think that Tibet should

have a separate and special status within the PRC and this was made plain by his attempt to dissuade Beijing from taking military action. Although Beijing reacted with outrage, it was soon decided to restore relations in the interests of focusing China's energy against the US, but also because cooperative relations with India served the stabilisation of Tibet. But Beijing always regarded the Indians as 'two-faced', and with good reason. Many Indian officials were far less enthusiastic than Nehru to retreat from Tibet, and even he thought it was reasonable for India to maintain some influence.

Broader Himalayan questions related to the fate of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, and the border itself, formed additional obstacles to trusting long-term cooperation. Nehru's attitude to the sovereignty of the border states looked unfriendly to Beijing as well as hypocritical and was an implicit challenge to China's absolute rights in Tibet. The failure of both sides to confront the ambiguous issue of the border created an underlying instability that would plague relations. In particular, Nehru's strategy of reassuring the public that there was no problem would ultimately make him a hostage to nationalist sentiment. Beijing meanwhile was happy to exploit the nebulous state of the border discourse to reassert its own position and quietly consolidate its key claims.

Beside the clash of these hard interests, Delhi's strategy of socialising the PRC was riven by acute tensions. Not only were there real doubts about the feasibility of appealing to China's Asian flavoured nationalism in order to dilute its bonds to Moscow, but increasingly Delhi came to observe that, like Moscow, there was a profoundly radical and authoritarian system being developed in the PRC. As a result, the conviction was taking root amongst many senior Indian figures, including Nehru, that India had an obligation to compete with China to project an alternative, democratic model of development for Asia. Of course, this was not simply a case of being an Asian democracy, Nehru's sense of India's unique mission went beyond this. He also wanted to develop an approach to economic development more in tune with Asia and that harmonised the extreme alternatives offered by the Cold War.

Chinese leaders, gripped by their ideology had no sympathy for Indian innovations in economic development or politics. However, Beijing's pragmatic engagement encouraged the Nehruvians to think that their policy of socialising the PRC had potential. But the vast gulf which remained was hard to breach. A powerful distrust of the Chinese as communists remained in India, demonstrated rather starkly by the wife of ambassador Panikkar, who in one incident panicked that her husband might not be returned if he responded to a midnight call to visit to Zhou.³⁷¹ The Chinese leaders were a tight-knit group of guerrilla strategists and revolutionary theorists who had discovered through their own experience the political benefits of violent struggle. However, Nehru saw this not so much as a reason to shun China but rather a compelling reason to embrace it. He believed his mission was to show them that the paranoid fear of the guerrilla fighter should now give way to the sober moderation of the statesman. Nehru perceived all of Beijing's violence in language and deed as simply a response to ongoing isolation. So, the PLA's march into Tibet, the confrontation with the US in Korea, and the several bitter denunciations of India, were all judged by the Indian Prime Minister to justify his policy to cultivate Beijing's latent moderation. Nehru failed to realise that rather than being an aberration caused by the baleful impact on the international environment of the real extremists in Moscow and Washington, Beijing's periodic outbursts of hostility towards India reflected sincere ideological conviction.

³⁷¹ Panikkar, 1955, 109

Chapter Three - A Moderate Friendship? 1953-56

Introduction

Shortly after Stalin's death in March 1953 Beijing and Moscow began to engage with Asia under the language of peaceful coexistence.³⁷² Together the communist allies projected a moderate image in order to expand a diplomatic front in non-socialist Asia. Therefore, Beijing took a more friendly approach to India, dropping the castigation related to the Korean PoW issue and largely adopting its plan to resolve that deadlock.³⁷³ Mao explicitly revived talk of the 'intermediate zone' and the international united front, positing that Beijing's strategic imperative was to rally those countries between the Cold War camps to collectively resist US imperialism. India's size made it a critical component of this project and also made it the gateway to expanding relations throughout Asia.³⁷⁴ India's centrality to this strategy produced an Indian consciousness within Sino-Soviet interactions, symbolised by Anastas Mikoyan, the senior Soviet leader, greeting the Chinese comrades at Beijing airport in Spring 1956 with palms in a prayer pose, imitating an Indian *namaste*.³⁷⁵

³⁷² Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"', 238-55

³⁷³ 'Cable to VK Krishna Menon', 13 April 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 22, 424-426; Also see, *Yindu de jiben qingkuang dongxiang, Waijiaobu*, 21 February 1953, *CMFA* 102-00055-01

³⁷⁴ Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"', 251-53

³⁷⁵ 'Indian Embassy Beijing Report for April, 1956', *Reports on China (Peking)*, MEA 1956, F 19/-R&I/56(S), *NAI*

Nehru welcomed this new approach and credited his longstanding policy of engaging the PRC and Moscow.³⁷⁶ Nehru did not think the change was simply due to the demise of Stalin, as the old man had recently hinted at a softening view of India.³⁷⁷ The Indian Prime Minister ascribed the ongoing improvement in the international atmosphere to Moscow and Beijing's initiative and talk of peaceful coexistence.³⁷⁸ His enthusiasm for this trend was compounded by his view of the US, which declined from dismay to outrage through 1953. In Nehru's view US policy increasingly appeared to obstruct reconciliation, decolonisation and Asian independence.³⁷⁹ The US's China policy particularly frustrated and at times outraged the Indians.³⁸⁰ American scepticism of Indian impartiality was also increasingly public.³⁸¹ Moreover, Nehru thought the US's military supply agreement with Pakistan showed Washington was now actually targeting India.³⁸² Nehru was also alarmed by American influence in Nepal, a country with which India believed it had special relations.³⁸³ These concrete threats to Indian interests contrasted with China's efforts to encourage reconciliation on the sub-continent.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁶ *Amrit Kaur Raj Kumari, Health Minister - Visit to USSR*, MEA 1953, F.EII/53/1743/67(S), *NAI*. The visit to Tashkent in particular showed Moscow's extraordinary solicitude for India

³⁷⁷ 'KPS Menon to RK Nehru', 12 February 1954, *Indian Embassy, Moscow - Annual Polit/Econ Report for 1953*, MEA 1954, F.EII/54/1311/67(S), *NAI*; see also, 'Joseph Stalin', 21 April 1953, *JNSW*, Vol.22, 368

³⁷⁸ 'Note 29', 8 April 1953, *JNLCM*, Vol.3, 273

³⁷⁹ See, *JNSW*, Vol.22, 462-471; 'Note 28', 16 March 1953, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 262

³⁸⁰ 'Report of meeting with General Bedell Smith' 23 March 1953, *1953, A note on meeting with Lester Pearson by VLP, President of UN General Assembly's interview with ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge*, Pandit 2, 4, *NMML*

³⁸¹ 'Note 37', 22 August 1953, *JNLCM*, Vol.3, 356; also see, 'Note 41', 17 October 1953, *JNLCM* Vol. 3, 397

³⁸² 'To Mohammad Ali', 10 November 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 413-416; 'To KM Panikkar', 12 November 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 422

³⁸³ 'To King of Nepal', 23 March 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 25, 453-458

³⁸⁴ '25 August 1953', *ZELNP*

The Sino-Soviet policy to assure the world of their commitment to peaceful coexistence was simply a convenient posture. Khrushchev denied it, but the 1920 Leninist origin of the policy of peaceful coexistence had simply been tactical cover for the Red Army's retreat from Poland.³⁸⁵ In 1953, behind this updated facade of moderation, Beijing and Moscow continued to prepare overseas communist parties for revolution.³⁸⁶ Faith in the Marxist creed meant a cast-iron confidence in the ultimate victory of the revolutionary cause, and so Beijing and Moscow could afford a pause after the Korean War to regather their strength. Furthermore, the apparent shelving of revolutionary ambition was belied by the simple fact that even the strategy of the intermediate zone and the international united front remained at their core policies derived from the radical ideology of class struggle.³⁸⁷

Besides the latent question of whether Moscow and Beijing could maintain agreement on their degree of moderation, the new approach had immediate implications for Sino-Soviet cohesion. For instance, Beijing's emphasis on the intermediate zone implicitly downgraded the centrality of the Soviet alliance and socialist bloc in Beijing's strategic thinking.³⁸⁸ In addition, an emphasis on inter-state over inter-party relations also implied a threat to the cohesion of the Socialist Bloc.³⁸⁹ The fact that Beijing had mulled a change in approach

³⁸⁵ 'On Peaceful Coexistence', Khrushchev, Nikita, *Foreign Affairs* 38, no. 1 (1959): 1-18; See also, Fiddick, Thomas C., *Russia's Retreat from Poland, 1920: From Permanent Revolution to Peaceful Coexistence*, London: Macmillan, 1990.

³⁸⁶ Westad, 2012, 321

³⁸⁷ Yang, Kuisong, 'The Theory and Implementation of the People's Republic of China's Revolutionary Diplomacy', 134

³⁸⁸ Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"', 240-2

³⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 248

before Stalin's death also suggested some desire to carve an independent path.³⁹⁰ Finally, Mao's eulogy to Stalin hinted that he might seek more influence over international communism.³⁹¹ Clearly then, the new foreign policy posture carried dangers for the Sino-Soviet alliance.

Nehru's policy towards the PRC and socialist bloc also contained certain ambiguities. He had always assumed that Beijing could be levered away from the radicals in Moscow. In April 1953, Nehru reconfirmed his goal of easing the PRC's isolated dependency on Moscow, even suggesting that the Soviets wanted the PRC outside of the UN to preserve the Soviet dependency.³⁹² In December, Nehru explained that the 'Asian' conception of international relations emphasised independence.³⁹³ There was a contradiction here because, although Nehru perceived Beijing through his own anti-colonial mindset, at the same time he observed that Mao's stature might now change the balance of Sino-Soviet relations.³⁹⁴ Furthermore, a growing sense of Moscow's relative moderation would increasingly contradict Nehru's basic approach to China. In fact, Nehru failed to envision that Chinese nationalism might lead the PRC ultimately in a more radical direction. In addition, Nehru had a basic mistrust of 'expansionist' Moscow and Beijing.³⁹⁵ Engagement with distrusted counter-parts was however at the core of Nehru's non-alignment, which he conceived of as an exercise in socialisation, trust building and dissipation of fears. This was the doctrine of 'right means' applied to international politics.

³⁹⁰ Liao, 'Ershi shiji wushi niandai', 15

³⁹¹ 'Zui weida de youyi', 9 March 1953, Jianguo Yilai Mao Zedong Wengao (JGYLMZDWG) [Collected Documents of Mao Zedong since the founding of the PRC], Vol.4, (Digital Edition) 103

³⁹² 'Faith in New China', 28 April 1953, JNSW, Vol. 22, 360, fn 4

³⁹³ 'Major Issues of Foreign Policy', 23 December 1953, JNSW, Vol.24, 558-570

³⁹⁴ 'Note 28', 18 March 1953, JNLCM, Vol. 3, 265

³⁹⁵ 'Note 46', 1 December 1953, JNLCM, Vol. 3, 453

Sino-Indian relations can be analysed in the period following the Korean War from the perspective of three subjects. Firstly, the specific concerns symbolised by and evolving from the 1954 agreement over Tibet . Secondly, the theory and practice of the package of principles that emerged from that agreement, known as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, or *Panchsheel*. Finally, the new strategic importance of economic development in the Cold War. The tensions arising from the interplay of these different concerns became acute but were resolved in 1956 once they climaxed with widespread instability across Tibet and within the socialist bloc.

The formal agreement reached between Delhi and Beijing over Tibet in April 1954 provided a platform for developing relations but also symbolised the collaborative, competitive, and catalysing relationship between their imperial projects.³⁹⁶ The preceding talks confirmed Delhi's concession of British India's rights in Tibet, and the agreement articulated the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence' (later often referred to by the Sanskrit term *panchsheel*) , which provided the logic for India's withdrawal from Tibet, and were deemed to be the basis of future Sino-Indian relations.³⁹⁷ However, this apparently straightforward arrangement was riddled with problems. Neither side confronted the border issue. The agreement was something of an imperial concord, a compromise between the 'internal colonialism' underway on either side of the Himalayas. Nehru realised that for India to consolidate its own interests such as the border, and control of the Himalayan border states, he had to cooperate with PRC control of Tibet. But he wanted a system of limited

³⁹⁶ *Agreement between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India, Peking, 29 April 1954, UN Treaty Series, Volume 299, No. 4307, 1958.*

³⁹⁷ The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

sovereignty in the Himalayas. If India accepted Tibet's autonomous position within the PRC, Beijing would have to recognise India's pre-eminence in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim.

For its part, Beijing saw the agreement as a pillar of a policy of a moderate united front to effect rapid consolidation of Tibet. Moderation in the international and Tibetan sphere reinforced each other. The Indians and Tibetans were encouraged to think that the test of Tibetan autonomy, and Chinese moderation in general, would be Lhasa's right to delineate the timing and extent of reform. Thus, Sino-Indian relations were hostage to the CCP's desire to defer progress in Tibet. Ultimately, this would become an issue of sovereignty, when Mao decided that only revolutionary methods would properly integrate Tibet and that moderation and autonomy were allowing Tibetan reactionaries to resist Beijing.

The Five Principles were regarded as the foundation of a shared approach to international affairs. However, in theory and practice these principles implied major tensions and contradictions. Not least, Nehru's imagined system of limited sovereignty in the Himalayas was directly contradicted by the explicit emphasis of absolute sovereignty dictated by the Five Principles. In addition, this emphasis and the practical deployment of these principles as a tool for expanding Beijing's diplomacy in Asia, logically contradicted the proletarian internationalist duty to support revolution and submit to the international socialist hierarchy. A policy that emphasised moderation and the rights of the nation-state undermined the rational basis of the Socialist Bloc. Furthermore, Moscow and Beijing would come to disagree about the applicability of peaceful coexistence. Delhi firmly regarded these principles as universal and the Soviets agreed that the US should be a target for this policy. Beijing disagreed and, furthermore, came to suggest that the principles could also be applied *within* the socialist bloc.

The third crucial aspect of Sino-Indian relations in the mid-1950s was the question of economic development. Beijing's new emphasis on re-construction provided much diplomatic common ground with Delhi. But at the same time also brought new ambiguities. India's ability to exploit the new superpower desire to sponsor Third World development led to a dramatic growth in economic ties to the USSR but seemed to muddy the purity of relations within the socialist bloc. Even while Beijing had reservations about the ideological implications of Soviet aid for India, Mao was nevertheless starting to re-evaluate Soviet influence over Chinese development. So, ironically, as Indian and Soviet economic ties grew, Mao started to strain against the limits of Soviet guidance, reflecting the triangular tensions between Delhi, Moscow and Beijing over *Panchsheel*. At the same time, Nehru had also decided that India was competing to both outperform Beijing's economic performance and to promote its own unique model of development within Asia. While this demonstrated that in some ways Nehru accepted the Cold War premise that there was a contest underway to define modernity, his intense anxiety to keep up with China damaged India's own planning. The reality was that Nehru and Mao's view of development was starkly different and pointed towards a fundamental clash of world-views.

In 1956 the contradictions of Beijing's moderate policies would converge in Tibet and Eastern Europe. This crucible of ambiguities would clarify one startling point however, that was only dimly apparent from Delhi and Beijing's different views of development. Leaders in China and India were operating on utterly opposed views of the driving force of history. While the CCP saw class as the key dynamic powering politics, the Indians disagreed seeing history rather as the rise and fall of nations. Beijing had suppressed this frame of analysis in order to cultivate ties with India but it improved impossible to continue to do so. Autonomy for Tibet, a key pillar of Sino-Indian relations, was allowing reactionaries to

challenge the CCP with support from overseas class allies. Mao began to think that class struggle might better resolve matters in his favour. Furthermore, his ideological impatience with the Soviets was growing, they seemed to be adapting themselves to a permanent policy of peaceful coexistence, betraying its Leninist origin as a tactical tool. The crises in Eastern Europe of 1956 confirmed to Mao that the threat of domestic and international class enemies collaborating to undermine socialist governments was more profound than he had realised. However, the disruption also showed the danger caused by disunity in the socialist camp. Mao chose to repress his misgivings and prioritise bloc unity, reconfirming Beijing's commitment to the socialist hierarchy.

Tibet, the Himalayas and the contradictions of sovereignty

Delhi sought a settlement over Tibet for a couple of years because it was crucial for Nehru's grand strategy for China to neutralise this contentious issue. But he also hoped to have Beijing acknowledge India's own interests in the Himalayas. In August 1953, Nehru returned to the Tibet issue even before the new relationship between Pakistan and the US emerged.³⁹⁸ In September, India again requested talks with Beijing.³⁹⁹ The earlier initiative had produced a consulate exchange in 1952,⁴⁰⁰ but Nehru wanted to settle other issues, including the facilities in Tibet inherited from the British. He called these 'old-time

³⁹⁸ 'Residual Problems Regarding Tibet', 30 August 1953, *JNSW*, Vol.23, 484

³⁹⁹ 'Message to Chou En-lai', 1 September 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 23, 485

⁴⁰⁰ See Chapter 2

privileges', meaningless in the 'present day' once they had conceded China's sovereignty in Tibet.⁴⁰¹

Nehru was happy to concede old interests to an autonomous Tibet but wanted Beijing to accommodate India's own concerns in the Himalayas. In fact, the implication of Nehru's approach to the Tibet talks was that China and India would acknowledge a system of graded sovereignty across the Himalayan region within which Delhi and Beijing would dominate respectively Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim and Tibet. When first contemplating the talks, Nehru had said that in the future he wanted India's 'special position in the border states' recognised.⁴⁰² Nepal, the most significant of these border states was '[n]ot quite a foreign country', but a critical strategic interest for India and the exclusion of China and others from there was a key goal.⁴⁰³

The content of the final treaty appeared to confirm that Beijing had acquiesced to a system of fluid sovereignty. The agreement seemed to dilute the usual authority of the state to control border movement and made concessions to those engaged in cross-border travel deemed traditional and in line with 'custom'. The particular beneficiaries were Lamaist, Buddhist and Hindu pilgrims travelling in either direction or else '[I]nhabitants of the border districts' habituated to cross-border travel, and traders 'customarily' involved in cross-border trade. Such individuals and their families would be subject to very limited documentary requirements.⁴⁰⁴ The consideration for religious activity especially was a useful manifestation of the CCP's new image, and confirmed in Indian minds that China

⁴⁰¹ 'Note 46', 1 December 1953, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 453

⁴⁰² 'Residual Problems Regarding Tibet', 30 August 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 23, 484

⁴⁰³ 'To BK Gokhale', 15 September 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 23, 468-471; Also see, *Nepal - and Indo-Nepal Relations*, by late GS Bajpai, MEA 1956, F 1(4)-NEF/56, NAI

⁴⁰⁴ *Agreement*, UN Treaty Series, Volume 299, No. 4307, 1958.

respected Indo-Tibetan cultural relations and would allow the continuation of traditionally fluid sovereignty across the Himalayas.

The sense of compromise led Nehru to relax his insistence on describing Beijing's relationship with Lhasa in terms of 'suzerainty'. He suggested the distinction with 'sovereignty' was irrelevant because in practice Tibet had always exercised significant autonomy and would continue to do so.⁴⁰⁵ However, Nehru's conception of a system of limited sovereignty was contradictory in a number of ways. Despite the Tibet agreement's implicit acknowledgment of PRC sovereignty, Delhi believed that the 1951 agreement between Beijing and Lhasa guaranteed Tibet's autonomy, and that retained its traditionally flexible relationship with China.⁴⁰⁶ The Indians appeared to hope that Beijing's relations with Lhasa would mirror Delhi's relations with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. But this demonstrated a striking failure to grasp the CCP's commitment to modern, absolute sovereignty. India may have been happy to continue Raj-style domination of the border states, but the PRC leaders wanted full integration of Tibet, even if fundamental change could be deferred. The impression that the PRC had moderated its revolutionary aspirations added to Indian expectations that this compromise was possible.

Ill-conceived as it was, Nehru's effort to forge an imperial settlement was also undermined by Delhi's indirect approach. Rather than seek a candid discussion of Indian interests, Nehru continued the policy of silence begun in 1952. Delhi pretended to assume that China's lack of response to pronouncements about the McMahon Line indicated acceptance.⁴⁰⁷ It was decided that if China insisted on discussing these topics, India's

⁴⁰⁵ 'The Indo-Tibetan Frontier Issue', 24 December 1953, *JNSW*, Vol.24, 579; see also, 'India and the International Situation', 15 May 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 25, 397

⁴⁰⁶ Maitra, 1963, 29, 39-40

⁴⁰⁷ 'Friendly Policy Towards China', 25 October 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 596

delegation would walk out.⁴⁰⁸ Despite growing concern in Delhi about its grip over Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim,⁴⁰⁹ Nehru also instructed the delegation to avoid discussing these in Beijing.⁴¹⁰ Delhi tried to trap Beijing into acknowledging the border, and its relations with the border states, by saying the talks included all outstanding issues, therefore these questions, by implication because of their non-inclusion in talks, were considered settled. There was some justification for this pretence, as the Chinese had said in 1952 that there were no territorial disputes between them, but it was dangerously dishonest nonetheless.⁴¹¹

Silence regarding the border was particularly ill-judged. Nehru was quite aware that Beijing's revolutionary nationalism rejected old 'unequal' treaties.⁴¹² However, this engendered no caution regarding the legitimacy of the McMahon Line, confirmed by the Simla Treaty of 1914. The contradiction is startling. Aware that the CCP was, at best, deeply suspicious of the collection of international legal agreements which had restrained previous Chinese governments, Nehru was still content to risk the assumption that Beijing would not challenge the legality of a border based on just such an agreement.

⁴⁰⁸ 'The Beijing Conference', 3 December 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 598

⁴⁰⁹ 'Neighbours, Foreign Settlements and Tribals', 18 June 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 22, 522; see also, 'Residual Problems Regarding Tibet', 30 August 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 23, 484

⁴¹⁰ 'To BK Gokhale', 21 December 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 590; 'The Beijing Conference', 3 December 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 598; The Bhutanese were also to be more firmly tied to India, see 'Residual Problems Regarding Tibet', 30 August 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 23, 484; See also, 'Growing Friendship with Bhutan', 13 January 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 592; and, 'Coordination between India and Bhutan', 30 January 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 593

⁴¹¹ 'Message to Chou En-lai', 1 September 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 23, 485

⁴¹² 'The Beijing Conference', 3 December 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 598; Also see, Chapter 2, Delhi was aware the PRC had dispensed with the former legal system

The policy of silence was followed in order to consolidate India's position in the border zones. Nehru keenly felt India's weakness in this encounter, but identified an opportunity due to China's ideology. Unlike some officials, Nehru saw no direct Chinese threat to India's North East. But, he thought, Delhi must develop 'settled conditions within India's border, in areas where the administrative position was weak and the political position was only growing'. India must exploit the 'contradictions of China's policy in Tibet' and so firmly integrate its own border zones. Nehru felt that the development of communications infrastructure in the border regions but especially 'winning people there to the conception of India' would guarantee stable relations with China.⁴¹³ He implicitly acknowledged that there was a contest with Beijing for the loyalty of these border peoples.

While Nehru thought the CCP's radical reputation gave India an advantage in the contest for the border peoples, Delhi's weakness was exactly the lack of an ideology of unity or indeed some justification for its arbitrary boundaries.⁴¹⁴ The increasingly violent response to the Naga problem would evince, for example, Delhi's shortage of legitimacy in the North East.⁴¹⁵ Such weakness was another reason why Nehru adopted the policy of silence and hoped to establish a system of graded sovereignty because it gave India time to cultivate these peripheral zones and acknowledged that India needed external recognition of its imperial claims. Nehru failed to realise that the CCP promise of class liberation was a very competitive legitimating ideology.

⁴¹³ 'Friendly Policy Towards China', 25 October 1953, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 596

⁴¹⁴ Zachariah, Benjamin, *Nehru*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004, 209

⁴¹⁵ 'No Scorched Earth Policy, Note to MK Vellodi, Defence Secretary', 12 June, 1956, *JNSW*, Vol. 33, 197; 'Use of Harvard Aircraft in Naga Operations, Note to Defence Secretary', 15 June, 1956, *JNSW*, Vol. 33, 198

Beijing regarded the Tibet talks an important step in the international strategy to form a united front against the US. But in the first instance, the talks would be a crucial confirmation of Beijing's sovereignty in Tibet and begin the process of winding down British India's extra-territorial rights. This was a key goal for the CCP and Zhou had written to Nehru in October 1953 that foreclosing these rights would demonstrate their mutual respect for each other's sovereignty.⁴¹⁶ Beijing was keen to dull the Indian threat. Strategic planning for Tibet often considered the India factor. For instance, in January 1953, Mao had selected a longer route for the Chamdo-Lhasa highway, closer to the Indian border it better served national defence.⁴¹⁷

Secondly, the talks with India complemented Beijing's approach to ruling Tibet. The CCP had shelved its ideological preferences and was trying to govern via a united front with the Dalai Lama and Tibetan elite in charge of 'political, economic, cultural and religious development'.⁴¹⁸ The termination of India's extra-territorial rights boosted Beijing's legitimacy amongst elite Tibetans. Furthermore, a friendly relationship with India reassured the Tibetans of Beijing's sincerity and made India more willing to assist Beijing. After all, in the first friendly meeting since the Korean PoW row, Zhou had asked ambassador Raghavan for help transshipping Chinese grain to Tibet. So, it was clear that engagement with India was linked to a very specific domestic interest, the stabilisation of CCP rule in Tibet.

⁴¹⁶ 15 October, 1953, *ZELNP*; see also, Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"', 249

⁴¹⁷ 'Guanyu queding xikang gongluxian wenti de piyu', 1 January 1953, *JGYLMZDWG*, Vol. 4, 3

⁴¹⁸ 'Jiejian Xizang guoqing guanlituan, canguantuan daibiao de tanhua', 18 October, 1953, *MZDWJ*, Vol. 6, 311

Because sound Sino-Indian relations appeared to be premised on Tibetan autonomy, the extent of Beijing's commitment to this autonomy was a critical question. Some major recent scholarship takes a sympathetic view of Beijing's attempt to govern Tibet with a light touch.⁴¹⁹ However, there was a fundamental clash between the CCP's central ideals and the notion of Tibetan autonomy. Every united front the CCP constructed was conceived of as a temporary servant of the ultimate ideological goal to transform China. Claims that Tibet could decide for itself what changes to make were contradicted by Mao's assertion in 1949 that Tibet would become a 'People's Democratic Tibet'. Furthermore, the vaunted 1951 agreement on Tibetan autonomy had been signed by the Tibetans with Deng Xiaoping's army massed at their border and a crushed Tibetan army in its wake. How autonomy would function was demonstrated when the Tibetan Cabinet requested in July 1954 that the military be reduced. The CCP Work Committee for Tibet rejected the proposal as unwise.⁴²⁰ Rather than the overall direction of policy autonomy was limited only to its timing.

Beijing's prioritisation of international factors and Indian cooperation with the stabilisation of the united front in Tibet meant that contentious issues were tactically shelved. Zhou briefed his negotiating team that although India's attitude had changed to one of equals, it 'still wants to retain some special rights in Tibet. [However], the stronger China grows and the more consolidated is the unity of our ethnic groups, then India's attitude will change.' Beijing's prime purpose was to settle outstanding problems that were ripe for settlement. 'Unripe' questions like the border and McMahon Line could wait for an opportune moment and when there was more material available to research China's claims.⁴²¹ Therefore,

⁴¹⁹ See Melvyn Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, Volumes 1, 2 & 3; also, Khan, 2015.

⁴²⁰ 'Dui Xizang gongwei guanyu gaxia tichu caijian zangjun wenti de chuli yijian de piyu', 6 June, 1954, *JGYLMZDWG*, Vol.4, 514

⁴²¹ Yang, 215

although Beijing knew there were potentially large claims to be made south of the McMahon Line and deep into Ladakh,⁴²² and some officials wanted to raise these issues with India, Beijing rejected this for fear of destabilising relations with India.⁴²³ Like India, the Chinese made no explicit reference to the deferral of such important issues. Zhou told Delhi they should set up 'new' relations in Tibet and settle specific problems such as that recently raised by an Indian trade agent.⁴²⁴ That building 'new' relations implied cancellation of the Simla Treaty was left unsaid

Unsurprisingly, after the agreement was reached both sides moved to strengthen their positions on the border. Nehru proceeded as if the status quo had been fixed,⁴²⁵ ignoring Zhou's explicit reservations about the McMahon Line made in Delhi in June 1954.⁴²⁶ On 1 July, Nehru ordered all maps redrawn with the McMahon Line transformed into a settled border. He said the frontier was 'finalised not only by implication in this Agreement but the specific passes mentioned are direct recognitions of our frontier there.' Checkpoints were also to be set up in areas of possible dispute. He reiterated the policy of silence on the frontier, although acknowledging that India might have to raise the issue of problematic Chinese maps in the future.⁴²⁷ So Nehru acted as if the border was confirmed but privately he knew this was not the case. Fatefully, by maintaining the projection of public confidence in a border settlement, Nehru restricted his leeway for later compromise.

⁴²² *Ibid*, 214

⁴²³ Liu, 'Friend or Foe', 121

⁴²⁴ 15 October 1953, *ZELNP*; Also, see, *Nehru's Reply to Zhou's Congratulatory Telegram of 29th April, 1954*, CMFA 105-00048-03

⁴²⁵ Raghavan was probably correct that Nehru's firm public line on the border was to some extent a negotiating position, see Raghavan, 2010, 242

⁴²⁶ 28 June 1954, *ZELNP*

⁴²⁷ 'Trade and Frontier with China', 1 July 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 26, 481-484; See, *Agreement*, UN Treaty Series, Volume 299, No. 4307, 1958. The passes were: Shipki La, Mana, Niti, Kungri Bingri, Darma and Lipu Lekh.

Beijing was clear that the Tibet agreement with India was not permanent, implied nothing about the border, and was simply a step towards the firm integration of Tibet.⁴²⁸ Beijing believed it had won irrevocable recognition of its sovereignty in Tibet from India and so responded by removing the responsibility for foreign affairs from Lhasa. However, the border remained an outstanding question and the Chinese began researching Tibetan territorial claims against India.⁴²⁹ That Beijing viewed the border with India and Burma as a delicate problem was clear from the way that Zhang Hanfu's recommended Zhou visit India, despite the risk that the Indians and Burmese might try to raise the border problem.⁴³⁰

Another weakness in Nehru's notion of an Himalayan compromise was the ongoing confusion of Delhi's Tibet policy. Nehru explained that China was not to be trusted and was 'expansive', but insisted that compromise over Tibet would develop trust. India must, he said, consider China's history of expansionism and 'fashion our policy to prevent it coming in the way of our interests'.⁴³¹ Unfortunately, India's ability to concede even an autonomous Tibet to China was undermined by the obvious regret of certain officials and their sense of contest with Beijing for influence.⁴³² And indeed, the Chinese noted the

⁴²⁸ Yang, 1999, 220

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*, 200

⁴³⁰ Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"', 250

⁴³¹ 'Tibet and China, 18 June 1954', *JNSW*, Vol.26, 476

⁴³² For example, 'Indian Trade Agency at Gyantse Annual Report for 1953-54', 27 April 1954, *Annual Reports from Lhasa*, MEA 1954, 3(19)-R&I/54, *NAI*; and, 'Indian Consul General, Lhasa Annual Report on Lhasa for 1953', *Ibid*; see *Political Officers Reports on Bhutan*, MEA 1955, F21(4)/NEF/55(S), *NAI*

reluctance of some Indian officials to implement the Tibet agreement.⁴³³ From Beijing's perspective, India looked to be seeking to maintain its influence in Tibet.

While Nehru maladroitly sought to concede Tibet to Beijing, he provocatively attempted to tie Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim to a state of semi-subjection as the other side of a Himalayan compromise.⁴³⁴ Shortly after concluding the Tibet agreement, Nehru told Kathmandu he wanted its foreign policy subordination to Delhi confirmed.⁴³⁵ Subsequently, throughout 1954 and 1955 Delhi tried to limit Nepal's diplomatic activities.⁴³⁶ Delhi wanted to maintain a traditional system of subordinate states to its north and hoped that China acknowledged this and viewed Tibet similarly. Hence there was great disquiet when Beijing interfered in Nepalese affairs, traditionally the concern of Lhasa.⁴³⁷ Delhi thought an autonomous Lhasa should maintain its own customary relations with its neighbours.

This attempt to maintain something akin to a traditional system of limited sovereignty not only clashed with Beijing's modern conception of binary sovereignty but also contradicted Nehru's anti-colonial reputation and provoked Beijing. To the Chinese, Indian machinations in Nepal negated his assertion of friendship and Beijing responded by gradually challenging Delhi's position.⁴³⁸ In October 1954, Yuan Zhongxian, China's ambassador to

⁴³³ 'Guanyu jieshou yindu zai xizang youdian shebei, yizhan de qingkuang deng', 29 November 1954, *CMFA* 105-00200-01, 9

⁴³⁴ 'Growing Friendship with Bhutan', 13 January 1954 & 'Coordination between India and Bhutan', 30 January 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 24, 592-594

⁴³⁵ 'To MP Koirala', 4 June 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 26, 485

⁴³⁶ To MP Koirala, 29 June 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 26, 487-488; 'Meeting with the Nepalese Ambassador', 25 August 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 26, 493

⁴³⁷ 'Indian Consul General in Lhasa Annual Report for 1953', MEA 1954, 3(19)-R&I/54, *NAI*

⁴³⁸ Yang, 1999, 221

India, noted with frustration that the Nepalese were waiting to consult with Nehru before replying to China's official request for diplomatic relations.⁴³⁹ In Beijing, Zhou resisted Nehru's efforts to secure his recognition of India's rights in Nepal, and only agreed on an *ad hoc* basis to follow the US example and designate China's ambassador in Delhi simultaneously to Kathmandu.⁴⁴⁰ Asked in India about China's view of Indian interests in Nepal, Nehru said there was no need for formal recognition of this as it was well known.⁴⁴¹ This attitude matched his approach to the border. He thought that his unilateral pronouncements were accepted if repeated often enough and were not publicly refuted.⁴⁴²

The Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet was the basis for diplomatic cooperation in the 1950s but it was also an imperial concord for the Himalayas. However, the settlement was flawed and contest continued alongside collaboration. Nehru sincerely believed it was only realistic to concede the old privileges in Tibet. He also imagined that they were adhering to a system of fluid, traditional sovereignty across the Himalayas, in which an autonomous Tibet reflected the semi-sovereign border states. But Nehru over-estimated Beijing's commitment to Tibetan autonomy and failed to realise that his attitude to the border states made him seem like a hostile imperialist. Furthermore, silence over the border undermined the longterm viability of this concord and Nehru's projection of public certainty regarding an agreement meant the Indian public were unprepared for any future compromise. While Beijing believed the agreement was a plank of its new foreign policy, it was also crucial to

⁴³⁹ 'Ambassador to India to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 13 October 1954, *Yindu baozhi dui Zhongguo yu Neibo'er jianjiao fanying*, 105-00292-02, CMFA, 7

⁴⁴⁰ 'Foreign Policies of America and China, (minutes of talks with Zhou Enlai)', 20 October, 1954 *JNSW*, Vol. 27, 11; 'Situation in South East Asia (minutes of talks with Zhou Enlai)', 21 October 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 27, 31

⁴⁴¹ 'Minutes of talks with Zhou Enlai', 13 November 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 27, 73-77

⁴⁴² Deshingkar, Giri, 'India-China Relations: The Nehru Years (The China Report, 1991)', in *Security and Science in China and India: Selected Essays*, Manoranjan Mohanty & Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea (eds.), New Delhi: Saskriti and Institute of Chinese Studies, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, 2005, 9

get Delhi's acceptance of Beijing's sovereignty. Friendship with India boosted the credibility of the united front in Tibet and secured Indian assistance with the consolidation of the region. Of course, autonomy was a facade, but in the interests of international factors, and Indian cooperation, the Chinese disguised their true ambitions for Tibet and also remained quiet about the border. But Nehru's effort to win Beijing's trust was undermined in two ways. First of all, he failed to implement a Tibet policy that fully reassured Beijing of Delhi's disinterest. And secondly, Indian attempts to dominate Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim looked imperialist and specifically hostile towards China. But there was a genuine degree of collaboration nonetheless, and Beijing and Delhi would seek to cooperate further by supporting other state-building efforts in the region.

Panchsheel in theory and practice

There has been a remarkable longevity to the mistaken idea that India converted the PRC to moderation with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.⁴⁴³ In fact, Zhou introduced these to Sino-Indian discourse at the first session of the Tibet talks in Beijing, although they were only included in the final text at India's request.⁴⁴⁴ Zhou had thought their inclusion was unnecessary given their presence in the PRC's temporary constitution.⁴⁴⁵ Niu Jun argues that these principles were Beijing's attempt to find a basis for relations with

⁴⁴³ See, 'Foreword', *JNSW*, Vol. 25; and, 'Foreword', *JNSW*, Vol.26; Also, Zachariah, 2004, 204; Westad, 2012, 320, and Raghavan, 2010, 241.

⁴⁴⁴ Yang, 1999, 215; see also, Liao '*Ershi shiji wushi niandai*', 15

⁴⁴⁵ Zhang, 2004, 11

the non-socialist world.⁴⁴⁶ It was likely, however, that Moscow was the ultimate source, given its influence over the PRC's first constitution, and because peaceful coexistence was, after all, a Soviets doctrine which they re-introduced to international affairs in 1953. However, the Indians felt these principles echoed their own thinking so closely that it was as if they *had* converted Beijing.⁴⁴⁷ Nehru appropriated the Five Principles so firmly that he sanctified them with the Sanskrit term, *Panchsheel*, and by 1955 was proclaiming their ancient Indian origin in the rule of the Buddhist Emperor, Ashoka.⁴⁴⁸ The confusion indicates Nehru's exaggeration of his responsibility for any moderation in Beijing or Moscow.

Whatever the origins of *Panchsheel*, Delhi and Beijing both prioritised the broad international value of the Tibet agreement, which provided the basis for them to rally the region against US intervention. Zhou had explained prior to the talks that China's policy was to draw India into opposition to US expansionism.⁴⁴⁹ By April 1954, Delhi and Beijing agreed that Asian unity was the solution to US imperialism's unprecedented threat to Asia.⁴⁵⁰ While the Tibet talks had dragged on,⁴⁵¹ Nehru, alarmed at the US's attempt to create an anti-communist alliance for South East Asia, urged his Ambassador in Beijing that a quick agreement was desirable and would have a 'salutary effect' on the forthcoming Geneva Conference.⁴⁵² Zhou subsequently told Burmese Prime Minister, U Nu, that he

⁴⁴⁶ Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"', 249

⁴⁴⁷ Dutt, Subimal, *With Nehru in the Foreign Office*, Calcutta, 1977, 89

⁴⁴⁸ 'The Relevance of *Panch Shila*', 30 November 1955, *JNSW*, Vol. 31, 312

⁴⁴⁹ Yang, 1999, 215

⁴⁵⁰ 19 April 1954, *ZELNP*; Zhou Enlai jiu Yinduzhina wenti yu yindu zhuhua dashi Laijiawen tanhua jilu, 19 April 1954, *CMFA* 105-00042-01

⁴⁵¹ Yang, 1999, 215-219

⁴⁵² 'Cable to N Raghavan', 16 April 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 25, 467

thought the Five Principles would catalyse greater trust in the region.⁴⁵³ At Geneva, the Chinese observed that India had a similar plan to their own and also opposed the US's development of an alliance system in Asia.⁴⁵⁴ So a shared concern with the US intrusion into South East Asia fostered agreement between Delhi and Beijing.

However, Nehru was not only concerned at US belligerence but also Chinese. Therefore the restraining effect of these principles on Beijing seemed a major contribution to world peace. For Nehru, the problem with US intervention in South East Asia was that it would provoke a PRC to respond and produce another Korean-type war.⁴⁵⁵ Nehru's more exalted perception of the Five Principles's value than Beijing had was underlined by his ecstatic response to their articulation. He said, 'We have done nothing better in the field of foreign affairs during the last six years than signing this Agreement over Tibet... This agreement is good not only for our country but for the whole of Asia and the rest of the world.'⁴⁵⁶ Nehru felt his China policy was vindicated and he coined a new term, 'collective peace', an Asian contribution to international relations, based on an Asian identity formed by Asian history. For Nehru, Sino-Indian relations had become a universal model for best practice in bilateral diplomacy.⁴⁵⁷ In Delhi, it was thought they had discovered an antidote to the Cold War.

⁴⁵³ "Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Burmese Prime Minister U Nu," June 29, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 203-00007-03, 46-57. Translated by Jeffrey Wang. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120364>

⁴⁵⁴ Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"', 250

⁴⁵⁵ 'Note 58', 3 June 1954, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 552

⁴⁵⁶ Dutt, 1977, 90

⁴⁵⁷ 'India and International Situation', 15 May 1954, *JNSW*, Vol.25, 397-410; See also, 'Note 62', 22 June 1954, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 572

Nehru believed that regional adherence to the Five Principles would boost trust, create an environment conducive to non-alignment, and loosen Chinese ties to Moscow. Beijing's restraint would diminish the risk of US intervention. Therefore, China's explicit commitment to non-interference in India should now be extended to inoculate the region against Cold War paranoia. Burma was a case in point. Nehru instructed ambassador Raghavan in Beijing that he was to gently explain Burmese fears about Chinese support for rebels in Burma, its involvement in the fighting at Dien Bien Phu, and Rangoon's resentment at the recent trade agreement. Raghavan was to advise that fear of China might curtail Burma's non-alignment.⁴⁵⁸ Concurrently, Nehru advised the Burmese to persevere, take confidence from India's understanding with China, and seek its own *Panchsheel* agreement with Beijing.⁴⁵⁹ In June, one day after a Sino-Indian statement on the Five Principles, Burma and China followed suit.⁴⁶⁰ Thus continued the project of socialising the PRC in order to ease regional paranoia, forestall nations from taking sides in the Cold War, and gently undercut Beijing's isolated dependence on Moscow.

The Five Principles was a statement of the absolute sanctity of national sovereignty. Nehru's celebration of these principles therefore appears to contradict his well-known campaign for an international human rights regime, a form of over-arching world government he often referred to as 'One World'.⁴⁶¹ At one time, Nehru had actively sought to break down the concept of absolute national sovereignty by forcing the UN to intervene

⁴⁵⁸ 'To N Raghavan', 9 May 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 25, 476

⁴⁵⁹ 'To KK Chettur', 9 May 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 25, 478

⁴⁶⁰ 'Panchsheel - A Model Code for Bilateral Relations', 28 June, 1954, *JNSW*, Vol.26, 410; See also, 28 June 1954, *ZELNP*; and, 29 June 1954, *ZELNP*

⁴⁶¹ See Bhagavan, 2012.

in South Africa's development of racist legislation.⁴⁶² So it might appear that his desire to socialise China had led him to a dramatic shift to prioritise national rights. No doubt Nehru had become disillusioned with UN impartiality given the impasse over Kashmir and its role in the Korean War. But Subimal Dutt explained that Nehru had for some years based his foreign policy on the spirit of these principles.⁴⁶³ Nehru's joy at reaching the agreement with China suggests it had been a long-standing goal to have Beijing commit itself to respect for sovereign limits. The bilateral nature of the Five Principles meant they need not impact Nehru's ultimate goal of a system of international human rights.⁴⁶⁴ A diffuse acceptance of these principles as the basis of bilateral relations would provide a useful prerequisite to strengthening the UN.

Beijing's embrace of the Five Principles and India was neither so novel or indicative of genuine moderation as might be assumed. The Five Principles and the new India policy are often said to be the critical component of the PRC's moderate foreign policy after the Korean War.⁴⁶⁵ But some have indicated that there were signs of this shift in 1952, with Zhou's language showing a new emphasis on inter-state over inter-party relations.⁴⁶⁶ Furthermore, the policy was underpinned by Mao's old concept of the intermediate zone. In fact, the basis of this new approach to India had been laid in 1951 when Mao attended Panikkar's party in Beijing and encouraged the idea of Sino-Indian solidarity.⁴⁶⁷ Zhou had even emphasised as early as 1950 that the importance of diplomatic work in India was that

⁴⁶² Mazower, 170-80

⁴⁶³ See note 66 above - Dutt, 1977, 89

⁴⁶⁴ Bhagavan, 2012, 119

⁴⁶⁵ Shu, 'Constructing 'Peaceful Coexistence'', 509-28

⁴⁶⁶ Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"', 249

⁴⁶⁷ Sinha, 1998 491-2

it would lay the basis for the unity of hundreds of millions of people.⁴⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the policy was clearly a joint project with Moscow.

Logically, *Panchsheel* displaced the Marxist doctrine of proletarian internationalism suggesting that Beijing had accepted the sanctity of the nation-state and renounced the export of revolution. However, the apparent moderation was belied by the fact that the radical ideology of class struggle remained at the core of this united front policy. While the international united front served the international class struggle with US imperialism, temporary allies still remained class enemies.⁴⁶⁹ Behind the moderate facade, Beijing and Moscow continued to prepare Asian communist parties for revolution and Mao only ever saw moderation as tactical.⁴⁷⁰ So, the idea that Mao had permanently accepted the nation-state as the major unit of international affairs was dubious.⁴⁷¹

Despite the shared underlying ideology and the fact that *Panchsheel* emerged within a common Sino-Soviet policy, different understandings of how this framework might be used created some profound tensions. The emphasis on individual state sovereignty logically challenged the notion that socialist states submitted to a hierarchy centred around Moscow.⁴⁷² So the embrace of inter-state diplomacy implied a potential threat to this system, and indeed the Chinese came to think that *Panchsheel* should be applied within

⁴⁶⁸ See Chapter 1

⁴⁶⁹ Yang, 'The Theory and Implementation', 133-4

⁴⁷⁰ Westad, 2012, 320-321

⁴⁷¹ Howland, 'The Dialectics of Chauvinism', 178

⁴⁷² For thoughts on this subject see, Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace, the end of empire and the ideological origins of the united nations* (Princeton and Oxford, 2009); Michael Hunt, *Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy*, (New York, 1996); Yan Xuetong, 'Xunzi's thoughts on international politics and their implications', *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 2, 2008, p.135-165

the socialist bloc.⁴⁷³ Simultaneously, Beijing rejected Moscow's idea that these principles could be applied to relations with the US because the PRC had a uniquely intimate and physical sense of a threat from the US, due to Korea and Taiwan.⁴⁷⁴ This friction between both interests and ideas was a point of potential tension even at this period of highly successful Sino-Soviet cooperation, and presaged future disagreements.

Beijing regarded its new policy as a success. The neutralisation of Indochina at Geneva proved that the policy of an international united front, regional promotion of *Panchsheel* and cooperation with India, was effective in isolating the US and relaxing international tension.⁴⁷⁵ As a result, Beijing continued to promote this approach with new regional counterparts, urging Thailand that it could follow India's example and avoid sides in the Cold War. Beijing even cooperated with Moscow to order the Malay communists to end their insurrection.⁴⁷⁶

Whatever the latent problems, Sino-Soviet diplomatic cooperation was the chief force behind Beijing's success at Geneva and its warming relations with India.⁴⁷⁷ This new approach delivered the neutralisation of Indochina, relaxed international tensions and isolated the US.⁴⁷⁸ Beijing urged other regional actors, like Thailand to copy India's example and avoid sides in the Cold War. Beijing even cooperated with Moscow to order

⁴⁷³ Chen, 'China and the Bandung Conference', 135

⁴⁷⁴ Deshingkar, 'India-China Relations', 22

⁴⁷⁵ Shu, 'Constructing 'Peaceful Coexistence'', 518-9

⁴⁷⁶ Yang, 'Mao Zedong and the Indochina Wars', 63

⁴⁷⁷ Shu, 'The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the Cold War in Asia, 1954–1962', 357

⁴⁷⁸ Shu, 'Constructing 'Peaceful Coexistence'', 518-9

the Malay communists to end their insurrection.⁴⁷⁹ Soviet enthusiasm for Nehru and *Panchsheel* only grew, particularly after the US moved to create the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO). Moscow told the Indians they regarded the Five Principles and Sino-Indian relations as bulwarks of Asia's resistance to the US and proposed they also make a *Panchsheel* agreement with Delhi.⁴⁸⁰ In October 1954, Moscow and Beijing made a joint commitment to basing relations with Asian states on *Panchsheel*.⁴⁸¹ Hand in hand, the comrades courted non-socialist Asia and assured the region that revolution was not for export,⁴⁸² but secret support for overseas insurrections continued.⁴⁸³

Nehru under-estimated the degree of unity in the Sino-Soviet relationship and exaggerated his ability to effect moderation in Beijing and Moscow. He did not realise the extent to which the Five Principles, and Beijing's partnership with India were serving joint Sino-Soviet goals. Nehru over-estimated the significance of India's role as a channel between the US and PRC on the question of US prisoners and its assistance to Egypt in establishing relations with Beijing.⁴⁸⁴ Nehru failed to grasp the ongoing influence of

⁴⁷⁹ Yang, 'Mao Zedong and the Indochina Wars', 63

⁴⁸⁰ 'Political Report for September', 22 September 1954, *Moscow - Report from Indian Embassy at*, MEA 1954, F.EII/54/1321/67(S), NAI; see 'To KPS Menon', 8 August 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 26, 516

⁴⁸¹ 'Indian USSR Report for October 1954', 29 October, 1954, MEA 1954, F. EII/54/1321/67(S), NAI

⁴⁸² 'Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Burmese Prime Minister U Nu', June 29, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 203-00007-03, 46-57. Translated by Jeffrey Wang. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120364>;

⁴⁸³ 'Guanyu yuenan renminjun de zuozhan guimo de dianbao', 20 June 1954, *JGYLMZDWG*, Vol. 4, 508; Also see, Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"', 251

⁴⁸⁴ 'Record of interview which Ambassador of India in China had with Premier Chou En-lai', 17 December 1954, *Ambassador in China talk with Zhou*, MEA, FEA, 1955, F. No.9(1)FEA/55, NAI, 2-3

Moscow over Beijing's foreign policy. For instance, he seemed to credit India rather than Moscow for the resumption of ties between Yugoslavia and China.⁴⁸⁵

However, Beijing's more visceral sense of a US threat soon undermined its ability to reassure both Delhi and Moscow of its moderation. Underlining the PRC's inability to coexist with the US, Beijing had told the Soviets, in late July 1954, that they were planning the liberation of Taiwan.⁴⁸⁶ Obviously, this was a long-standing preoccupation, but a proximate cause was the US's alliance building in Asia after Geneva. In September, the PLA began a sustained bombardment of the GMD's offshore islands, fomenting the first Taiwan Straits Crisis.⁴⁸⁷ The ideology of class struggle meant that Beijing could not long ignore the US threat and Mao reminded Zhou in January 1955 that a united front strategy should still include an element of confrontation.⁴⁸⁸ Bombing the islands was also a carefully calibrated demonstration to Moscow of the limits of coexistence with the US.⁴⁸⁹ Khrushchev wanted CCP support in his own internal struggles, so backed Beijing in face of the US's nuclear guarantee of Taiwan.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁵ 'Note 17', 24 December 1954, *JNLCM*, Vol.4, 105

⁴⁸⁶ Shen & Xia, 2015, 209-10

⁴⁸⁷ Shu, 'Constructing 'Peaceful Coexistence'', 520-2

⁴⁸⁸ Yang, 'Revolutionary Diplomacy', 137-8; '*Dui zhongyang guanyu tongyi zhanxian gongzuo zhishigao de piyu he xiugai*', 1 January, 1955, *JGYLMZDWG*, Vol. 5, 2

⁴⁸⁹ Mao's instruction to attack the KMT controlled offshore islands *only* if no US military units were nearby, showed he wanted to limit the crisis, despite appearing recklessly confrontational, see '*Guanyu gongji shangxia dachendao shiji wenti de piyu*', 21 August 1954, *JGYLMZDWG*, Vol. 4, 533

⁴⁹⁰ Shen & Xia, 2015, 209

Nehru did not share Khrushchev's tolerance but he tried to find a way for Beijing to reconcile the Taiwan problem with peaceful coexistence. During his visit to China in October 1954, Nehru debated the nature of the US threat and the consequent limitations of peaceful coexistence. Mao complained that Beijing could not coexist with the US while it was literally invading China in Taiwan. He told Nehru that *Panchsheel* could only be used to reduce fears within Asia.⁴⁹¹ Zhou explained that coexistence with the US would legitimise the separation of Taiwan and argued with Nehru that the US sought to expand, not just maintain, its position.⁴⁹² In February, 1955 Nehru proposed a solution suggesting Beijing use subversion to destabilise Jiang Jieshi, this was a middle way between diplomacy and outright war.⁴⁹³ Although Nehru tried to find a way for Beijing to achieve its goals in less confrontational ways, there can be no doubt that his sense of China as inherently more prone to moderation shifted after the Taiwan Crisis and his close encounters in Beijing with Mao's extreme language about nuclear weapons and the progressive nature of war.⁴⁹⁴

While Beijing's bellicosity did not prevent Sino-Soviet cooperation it certainly fortified Nehru's resistance to their joint courting. Moscow and Beijing made repeated attempts to draw Delhi into a more formal diplomatic relationship, proposing in May, August and

⁴⁹¹ 'Record of talks at first meeting of Chairman Mao and Nehru, 19th October, 1954', *CMFA* 204-00007-01

⁴⁹² 19-27 October 1954, *ZELNP*; 'Minutes of talks with Chou En-lai', 20 October 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 27, 11

⁴⁹³ *Chen Xiang daiban yijiuwuwunian eryue qiri yu nihelu tanhua jilu*, 7 February 1955, *CMFA* 105-00058-09

⁴⁹⁴ 'Mao and Nehru second talks in Beijing', 23 October 1954, *CMFA* 204-00007-15

November 1954 that they ought to agree a 'non-aggression' pact.⁴⁹⁵ Nehru naturally rejected the invitation to align and instead rediscovered an interest in using the forthcoming Asian African Conference at Bandung, Indonesia, for crafting international resistance to US imperialism.⁴⁹⁶ Nehru regarded nonaligned Asia to be the most positive force for peace because they practised 'right means', not the Communist powers, which had shown themselves to be persistent protagonists in the Cold War at Dien Bien Phu and across the Taiwan Straits.⁴⁹⁷

In some ways the Bandung Conference was a high point of Sino-Indian cooperation. Both sides use it to further spread *Panchsheel* to exclude the US from SE Asia.⁴⁹⁸ Despite the Taiwan crisis, Nehru thought inclusion of the PRC would demonstrate that Asia operated outside Cold War paranoia.⁴⁹⁹ In Beijing, Zhou agreed that the Conference would strike a blow against US imperialism and he asked Nehru to support the PRC's participation.⁵⁰⁰ Therefore, Nehru fully backed the PRC's participation and blocked Pakistan and Ceylon's attempt to invite the GMD. He argued that the conference would promote *Panchsheel* and

⁴⁹⁵ 'Future Negotiations with China', 12 May 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 25, 469; 'Collective Security in South East Asia', 7 November 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 27, 71; 'To KPS Menon', 8 August, 1954, *JNSW*, Vol.26, 516

⁴⁹⁶ 'Indonesian Proposal for an Afro-Asian Conference', 24 September 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 26, 429; See also, 'Note 7', 1 October 1954, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 50

⁴⁹⁷ 'Indian USSR Report for May, 1954', 8th June, 1954, MEA 1954, F. EII/54/1321/67(S), *NAI*

⁴⁹⁸ see Ang Cheng Guan, 'The Bandung Conference and the Cold War International History', in See Seng Tan & Amitav Acharya (eds.), *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*, Singapore, 2008, 37

⁴⁹⁹ Abraham, Itty, 'Bandung and State Formation in Post Colonial Asia', 59

⁵⁰⁰ 'Foreign Policies of America and China', 20th October, 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 27, 11

reduce fears of China.⁵⁰¹ Thus Nehru continued trying to socialise the PRC and propagate peaceful coexistence to build trust as an antidote to the Cold War.

A component of *Panchsheel* based trust-building between China and regional states at Bandung was the demarcation of sovereign limits in cases where ambiguity prevailed. Similar to the Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet, this was to some extent an exercise in imperial collaboration.⁵⁰² Nehru believed it was critical for new Asian states to cooperate in pacifying their peripheral zones. Hence, while suppressing the ambitions of the Nagas, he had also supported counter-insurgency in Burma and Malaya.⁵⁰³ At Bandung, Zhou assured Burma that Beijing was content to divide the Dai ethnic group between it and China's Yunnan province. He insisted that the creation of a Dai Minority Autonomous Region was no threat to Burma and that Beijing saw no danger from a similar political unit across the border.⁵⁰⁴ Beijing submitted to another limitation of the modern nation state and followed Delhi's lead to begin relinquishing claims on the loyalty of overseas Chinese so cooperating with the nation-building efforts of states like Cambodia, Thailand and

⁵⁰¹ 'Thoughts on Afro-Asian Conference', 20 December 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 27, 107-110; 'Objective of the Proposed Conference', 28th December, 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 27, 112; 'A note on South East Asia by CS Jha', *AAC - Held in Bandung in April 1955, working papers different countries*, MEA, 1955, F.1(11)-ACC/55(S), *NAI*; also see, *AAC - Reported American pressure on certain countries not to participate*, *NAI*, MEA, 1955, F.1(9)-ACC/55(S)

⁵⁰² Howland, 'The Dialectics of Chauvinism', 190, says the modern nation-state is an imperialist concept. Partha Chatterjee writes that Bandung was the confirmation of the nation-state as the legitimate unit of international relations and the ultimate object of anti-colonial struggle, see Chatterjee, Partha. 'Empire and Nation Revisited: 50 Years after Bandung', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6, no. 4 (2005)

⁵⁰³ Regarding Nehru and Malaya, see, Zachariah, 159; For Nehru's desire to support Burma in its struggle against rebels see, 'To CD Deshmukh', 9 September 1955, *JNSW*, 30:408-9

⁵⁰⁴ 19 April 1955, *ZELNP*; Burma and the PRC also began a process to divide the Wa state in the mid 1950s, but the settlement they reached would be rejected by the Kachin people, see Prashad, Vijay. *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*, New York, New Press: 2007, 165

Indonesia.⁵⁰⁵ The settlement of interests such as these in line with the practice of modern nation states demonstrated Beijing's moderation and supported its overall strategy.

Beijing's aim at Bandung was to bolster its moderate image and project its new Asian identity that was critical to building the united front.⁵⁰⁶ Moderation was evinced by proclaiming that revolution could not be exported and that communism could not be imposed on Tibet. But in particular, the conference was a forum for demonstrating China's Asian identity. The response to the blowing up of the Chinese chartered Indian airliner, the *Kashmir Princess*, which was originally scheduled to carry Zhou to Bandung, showed how this identity was used, the importance of Sino-Indian relations to the development and credibility of this identity, and how the Taiwan problem was reframed in the process. The Chinese said the attack on their chartered plane targeted the Asian African Conference and Sino-Indian relations.⁵⁰⁷ The assumed culprits, Beijing's most intimate enemies, the GMD backed by the US, were characterised as the enemies of India and the whole Asian African movement. Zhou's eulogy underlined the point: 'The glorious names of the martyrs, will forever be written in the history of the struggle for peace by the peoples of Asia and Africa and the world's advanced members of mankind.'⁵⁰⁸ Taiwan was again confirmed as a colonial problem.⁵⁰⁹ Hence, at Bandung, Beijing offered direct talks about

⁵⁰⁵ Abraham, 'Bandung and State Formation', 54. See also, Bhagavan, 2013, 87

⁵⁰⁶ Niu, 'Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"', 253-4

⁵⁰⁷ *Ji Pengfei fubuzhang yu yindu zhuhua dashi Laijiawen de tanhua jilu*, 12 April 1955, CMFA207-00009-01; then Ji said it was an attack on both China and India by KMT and US agents, *Ji Pengfei fubuzhang yu yindu zhuhua dashi Laijiawen de tanhua jilu*, 13 April 1955, CMFA 207-00009-02

⁵⁰⁸ 20 April 1955, ZELNP

⁵⁰⁹ *Zhou Enlai zongli jiejian yindu zhuhua dashi laijiawen tanhua jilu*, 6 February 1955, 105-000057-01, CMFA; 'Mao Zedong zhuxi tong yindu zhuhua dashi la ku nihelu ji dashi furen tanhua jiyao', 8 December 1955, 105-00055-04, 3, CMFA

Taiwan to the US, cutting out the non-state GMD, and burnishing a moderate, conciliatory image to the world.⁵¹⁰ One firm strategic gain from this Asian approach came in the form of a new channel to the US ally Pakistan, a nascent relationship of great significance.⁵¹¹

Nehru thought he could use Bandung to continue to encourage Sino-Soviet moderation to dissolve the radical glue binding Moscow and Beijing in an atmosphere of international tension.⁵¹² However, Nehru's relative perception of Chinese and Soviets interest in confrontation had shifted. Chinese belligerence over Taiwan and Mao's language regarding nuclear weapons and the progressive consequences of war, had induced a more cautious view of Beijing. By contrast, Moscow's recent conciliatory approach to international affairs seemed down to Indian influence and their shared understanding of peaceful coexistence.⁵¹³ Indo-Soviet relations were increasingly showing more common ground than Sino-Indian relations, despite Nehru's early expectation that Asian nationalism would bring Beijing and Delhi together. Unlike Beijing, Moscow publicly sided with India on Goa and Kashmir. It also privately suggested that Delhi might join the UNSC and continued to increase economic aid.⁵¹⁴ The Indians even speculated that Moscow's embrace of India was an attempt to balance the PRC.⁵¹⁵ Nehru therefore explicitly used

⁵¹⁰ 23 April 1955, *ZELNP*

⁵¹¹ Shang Quanyu, 'Lengzhan Yu Diyuan Zhengzhi Dui Zhongyin "Xiongdi" qingyi De Shanghai', in *Zhongyin Datong: Lixiang Yu Shixian*, Tan Zhong (ed.), Ningxia: Ningxia People's Publishing House, 2007, 334

⁵¹² Singh, 'From Delhi to Bandung', 61

⁵¹³ 'Note 30', 26 August 1955, *JNLCM*, Vol.4, 253

⁵¹⁴ 'Note 39', 21 December 1955, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 309; 7 October 1954, *ZELNP*; 4 January 1956, *ZELNP*; 'Talks with Soviet Leaders', 22 June 1955, *JNSW*, Vol. 29, 228-232

⁵¹⁵ 'Embassy of India, Moscow', 22 December 1955, *KPS Menon on Soviet foreign policy trends*, NAI, MEA 1955, F 1(98)/EUR/55, 4

Bandung to further encourage Moscow's commitment to peaceful methods and to desist from supporting the CPI and other overseas communist parties.⁵¹⁶

Indian leaders were satisfied in the wake of Bandung that it had served their major interest in encouraging Moscow and Beijing's commitment to peaceful coexistence. Dutt concluded that India's primary goal of encouraging Beijing's moderation was met.⁵¹⁷ Nehru felt a sense of victory in excising condemnation of Soviet 'imperialism' from the conference's *Final Communique*. He had not wanted any criticism of Moscow to damage its recent trajectory, nor put Beijing on the defensive at Bandung, to the detriment of overall unity.⁵¹⁸ Delhi's confidence in Moscow was quickly confirmed when Soviet Premier Bulganin held a reception at his *dacha* to celebrate the end of the Cold War.⁵¹⁹ But Nehru did not realise how profoundly Mao thought that peaceful coexistence threatened Beijing's interests.

Despite Beijing's announcement that it would discuss the Taiwan problem with the US, the sincerity of the turn from belligerence was dubious. After all, Beijing's creation of the crisis had wrested from the Soviets the infinitely valuable commitment to provide nuclear aid.⁵²⁰ Tension brought results. So, although Bandung's *Final Communique* stated that

⁵¹⁶ 'Talks with the Soviet Leaders - II', 12 December 1955, *JNSW*, Vol. 31, 338-344; External Finances for CPI, 23 January 1955, *JNSW*, Vol.31, 420; 'Conversation with Selwyn Lloyd - I', 4 March 1956, *JNSW*, Vol. 32, 368

⁵¹⁷ '1955 Asian and African Cooperation, Retrospect and Prospect', Dutt, 86, *NMML*

⁵¹⁸ 'Problem of Dependent Peoples', 22 April 1955, *JNSW*, Vol. 28, 100; 'Recollections of the Conference', 3 May 1955, *JNSW*, Vol. 28, 153-156

⁵¹⁹ 'India's Moscow embassy report on 1955', 17 February 1956, *Report - Moscow*, MEA 1956, F 3(30)R&I/56(S), *NAI*

⁵²⁰ Shen & Xia, 2015, 209

participants supported disarmament and prohibition of nuclear weapons,⁵²¹ Beijing was actively pursuing its own nuclear weapons programme.⁵²² While Beijing's greed for Soviet nuclear aid thwarted any hopes of drawing it away from dependence on Moscow, the Chinese defection from the anti-nuclear campaign was compounded by the horrific nature of Beijing's nuclear doctrine.⁵²³ Furthermore, Beijing remained deeply sceptical of the leaders of non-socialist Asia, believing they were natural allies of the West.⁵²⁴

If Beijing's commitment to confrontation was disguised at Bandung, it overtly differed with Delhi on the issue of non-alignment. Beijing did not back Nehru's vision of Asian non-alignment or support the specific language of *Panchsheel*. Preparing for the Conference, Beijing decided it would 'strive to have the Five Principles accepted by even more countries in the Asian-African region' to thwart US expansionism.⁵²⁵ However, at Bandung Zhou revealed that he did not regard *Panchsheel* as sacrosanct: 'We think, the Five Principles form can be modified, items can be added or subtracted, because what we are seeking is confirmation of our shared aspirations, in order to benefit the guarantee of

⁵²¹ *Final Communiqué of the Asian-African conference of Bandung*, 24th April 1955, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia

⁵²² Shu, 'The Sino-Soviet alliance and the Cold War in Asia, 1954–1962'; Austin Jersild, *e-Dossier No. 43 - Sharing the Bomb among Friends: The Dilemmas of Sino-Soviet Strategic Cooperation*, Cold War International History Project; Xia Yafeng & Shen Zhihua, "Between Aid and Restriction: The Soviet Union's Changing Policies on China's Nuclear Weapons Program." *Asian Perspective*, 2012, 36(1); See also, Prashad, 2007, Chapter 3 on Bandung;

⁵²³ Austin Jersild, *e-Dossier No. 43 - Sharing the Bomb among Friends: The Dilemmas of Sino-Soviet Strategic Cooperation*, Cold War International History Project; Also see, 'War and Peace', 23 October 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 27, 32

⁵²⁴ 'Liu Shaoqi jianghua', 22 March 1955, National People's Congress, *Ershi shiji wushiniandai Mao Zedong deng guanyu dapo xifang fengsuo, kaizhan heping wajiao de lunshu* - June 1949 - April 1957, *Dangde wenxian*, no. 4 (2008); Shu, 'Constructing 'Peaceful Coexistence'', 509-28.

⁵²⁵ 'Canjia Yafei huiyi de fang'an', 5 April 1955, *Zhongguo daibiao tuan chuxi 1955 nian yafei huiyi (YFHI)* [Chinese Delegation attends the 199 Afro Asian Conference], (Beijing: Shijie zhishi, 2007) 41

collective security.⁵²⁶ As a result, the Final Communiqué's principles looked rather different to the Five Principles, and had nothing to do with non-alignment. The fifth of the ten Bandung principles read: 'Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.' Point six was a sop that could not disguise that the Asian African movement had collectively agreed that taking sides in the cold war was acceptable: 'Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of the big powers.'⁵²⁷ The Bandung Conference had rejected non-alignment.⁵²⁸

Delhi regularly over-estimated its responsibility for Beijing's embrace of *Panchsheel* and more moderate posture after 1953, overlooking Moscow's role. Although Beijing and Delhi shared the view that the Five Principles were a tool to exclude the US from South East Asia, the Indian understanding of these principles' value went further. Nehru believed that *Panchsheel* could help socialise China and make South East Asia safe for non-alignment, so stabilising peace in the region, but it was also a universal antidote for wider Cold War tensions. Nehru's belief that his foreign policy was partly responsible for Sino-Soviet moderation missed the fact that Beijing's new approach was not a complete innovation and belonged to a joint Sino-Soviet strategy. Furthermore, the very idea of peaceful coexistence was only tactical, and Beijing's underlying ideology remained decisive. Although Beijing's new approach did logically contradict the cohesion of the Sino-Soviet alliance and Moscow and Beijing would disagree about the applicability of the Five Principles, nevertheless, this was a period of great success for their joint diplomacy. While

⁵²⁶ 'Zhou Enlai zai Yafei huiyi zhengzhi weiyuanhui huiyi shang de fayan', 23 April 1955, YFHI, 70

⁵²⁷ *Final Communiqué of the Asian-African conference of Bandung*, 24th April 1955, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia

⁵²⁸ Abraham, 'Prolegomena to Non-Alignment'

the Taiwan Crisis and Mao's belligerent language began to cause Nehru to revise his expectation that the Chinese would tend towards moderation, Khrushchev only deepened his cooperation with Beijing. Nehru's response was to revive his interest in the potential for Bandung to form an obstacle to US imperialism and encourage the Soviets and Chinese to stick with their recent moderation. In many ways, Bandung was a highpoint for Sino-Indian cooperation as the PRC's peaceful integration with the region continued. But in fact Nehru was mistaken to think he was successfully prodding Beijing along a more conciliatory path. He failed to realise the depth of Beijing's suspicions of Indian leaders and of Delhi's closer ties with Moscow and encouragement of its less confrontational foreign policy. The Taiwan Straits crisis had shown Mao that Cold War tension brought great benefits to Beijing. Thus although Delhi was satisfied that Bandung had successfully boosted Moscow and Beijing's commitment to moderation, Beijing was gratified that the Asian African Conference had rejected Nehru's principle of non-alignment, explicitly accepting the confrontational logic of the Cold War. As a result of this failure, Nehru's skepticism of creating a permanent machinery for the Asian Africa movement was confirmed.⁵²⁹

Development

The question of economic development became complicated common ground for Delhi and Beijing in the mid-1950s. Firstly, a Sino-Indian contest to promote one's own model of development in Asia emerged. This was not simply a result of Nehruvian nationalism, but was linked to Nehru's strategy of defusing the Cold War. By synthesising the best of East and West, Nehru's development model refuted the binary logic of the Cold War, and offered an alternative for impoverished Asia. Naturally, this clashed with the CCP's own

⁵²⁹ "Conversation with Chou En-lai and U Nu," 23 April, 1955, *JNSW*, Vol.28, 124

ideology. Secondly, economic development related to the shifts in the balance of relations between Delhi, Beijing and Moscow. While Nehru increasingly regarded Moscow as more reasonable than the Chinese, he also sought to draw on Soviet experience and aid, while Mao began straining against the limitations of the model Moscow had provided to the PRC.

Economic development in Asia became a central aspect of international politics in the mid-1950s. Even before the Korean War's end there were US officials who advocated support for Indian development efforts to thwart communist influence. After 1953 US setbacks in Asia led to an explicit strategic value being placed on India's economic success. Although, it was only in 1955 that President Eisenhower received Congressional approval for finance to compete with Soviet overseas aid, it was undoubtedly India's growing economic and political relationship with Moscow that spurred the US in this direction.⁵³⁰ By the late 1950s, the superpowers would be extraordinarily focused on which form of development third world states chose, but even in 1955-56 India's apparent preference for Soviet planning, industry over agriculture, and even its record against China's performance, caused anxiety amongst US development thinkers.⁵³¹

While Washington and Moscow began to see development as a strategic and ideological contest, shifting attitudes in Beijing and Delhi seemed to make economic policy a sphere of common ground. A key motive behind Beijing's moderate turn after 1953 was the desire to revive China's economy.⁵³² Focusing on development in turn buttressed Beijing's new moderate image. A key aspect of the Asian identity that Beijing began to assert included an

⁵³⁰ Brands, 1990, 65, 80-86

⁵³¹ Engerman, 'The Romance of Economic Development', 37-39

⁵³² Shu, 'Constructing 'Peaceful Coexistence' 510; Yang, 'Mao Zedong and the Indochina Wars', 64-5

emphasis on the common under-development and agricultural character of the region's economies.⁵³³ In India, Nehru had always conceived of development as both a unifying national project and part of a modern Indian identity.⁵³⁴ In 1953, with the First Five Year Plan (FYP) (1951-56) apparently failing, he had reclaimed control of the planning process and guided India towards a more industrial, public sector and Soviet direction. Non-alignment was a crucial complement to this because Nehru remained sceptical of Moscow, and still wanted to draw on US support.⁵³⁵ Nehru also remained very interested in China's progress.

Indian diplomats had seen a great opportunity for seeking Soviet assistance in the aftermath of Stalin's death, and the expectation that India could benefit from superpower competition only grew in the following years. In particular, Soviet support would help balance dependence on US grain aid, thus serving Delhi's independence.⁵³⁶ For Nehru, development aid did not conflict with nonalignment as political independence would be maintained through vigilance. But Soviet aid now made it easier to resist US pressure and Indian enthusiasm produced the popular slogan, '*Hindi Rusi Bhai Bhai*'.⁵³⁷ So, India's non-alignment performed the exemplary function of refuting the Cold War's binary logic, but it also served the instrumental purpose of securing superpower aid. However, the growing warmth of Indo-Soviet relations implied a change to Nehru's focus on Chinese moderation and another threat to the logical cohesion of the socialist bloc in which Moscow prioritised the economic development of the fraternal states.

⁵³³ Niu, '*Chongjian "zhongjiandidai"*', 253; See also, Shu, 'Constructing 'Peaceful Coexistence'', 513

⁵³⁴ Khilnani, 2003, 153

⁵³⁵ Zachariah, 2004, 224

⁵³⁶ Mastny, 'The Soviet Union's Partnership with India', 52; Also see, 'India's Moscow Embassy Report on 1955', MEA 1956, F 3(30)R&I/56(S), NAI; 'Annual Report on the UK, 1955 by YD Gundevia', *Annual Report - London*, F.3(48)R&I/56(S), NAI

⁵³⁷ Brands, 1990, 86-87

Nehru's belief that Indian development served as a paradigm for Asia was a challenge to Beijing's sense of its role in the world. The Indian Prime Minister sought to construct a unique *Indian* model, a 'third way', eschewing the extremes of American capitalism and Soviet central planning.⁵³⁸ Just as his foreign policy insisted on the possibility and necessity of compromise between systems, so did Nehru's concept of development propose a middle way incorporating democracy and planning. This satisfied a practical imperative and the Nehruvian idea that India the 'palimpsest' was a beacon of tolerance and synthesis.⁵³⁹ Nehru's catholic interest in other development experiences grew through 1953 and by 1954 he was talking about 'democratic planning', a synthesis and solution most appropriate to India.⁵⁴⁰

Nehru's sense that Delhi was evolving a unique, syncretic model of Asian development confirmed his sense of a developmental contest with China. One motive for Nehru's China policy had always been to benefit from exchanges on their economic experiments. Nehru wanted to learn from China's rural policies to invigorate India's own efforts.⁵⁴¹ To some extent the idea of using social reform to boost rural productivity was inspired by the Chinese.⁵⁴² Nehru also envied how central government decisions were seamlessly

⁵³⁸ Frankel, 2004, 155

⁵³⁹ Nehru, Jawaharlal. *The Discovery of India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992, 47

⁵⁴⁰ For example, 'Note 41', 17 October 1953, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 397; also see, 'Note 6', 15 September, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 44

⁵⁴¹ Zachariah, 2004, 194-8

⁵⁴² Perkins, John H., *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution Wheat, Genes, and the Cold War*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 178-80

activated across the country.⁵⁴³ However, his trip to China in October 1954 particularly convinced Nehru that there was a real competition afoot.⁵⁴⁴ Nehru shared the general awe, felt also by Pandit's earlier delegation, in Beijing's apparent ability to mobilise vast quantities of labour. He concluded the key to this energy was serious land reform and bemoaned India's slow progress on that question.⁵⁴⁵ The great question for Nehru was how to replicate this spirit in India and match China's progress, but without violence.⁵⁴⁶

Nehru believed that the parameters of India's solution to Asia's development challenge were starting to emerge. There were two key aspects to India's approach. First of all was the peaceful social transformation in India's villages realised through local development projects. The second element, as seen above, was the merger of Western style democracy with Soviet central planning. In 1953 Nehru had welcomed the prospects of 'revolutionary change' in rural India brought by the 'Community Projects'.⁵⁴⁷ Nehru's confidence in these grew through the mid-1950s and by 1956 he spoke of them as a unique model of more value in Asia than Western methods.⁵⁴⁸ India had shifted towards Soviet planning in 1953, but it was only in 1955 that the hybrid approach was more formally declared with the Congress Party's *Avadi* declaration. India committed to a 'socialistic' pattern of society, but the declaration's wording avoided 'socialism' and the implication that India was aligning with the Soviets. The declaration clearly articulated the

⁵⁴³ Zachariah, 2004, 208

⁵⁴⁴ 'Note 11', 15 November 1954, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 69

⁵⁴⁵ 'Note 1', 5 August 1954, *JNLCM*, Vol.4, 1

⁵⁴⁶ Thorner, 'Nehru, Albert Mayer and Origins of Community Projects', 117, Thorner suggests Delhi's saw the Community Projects as mitigating rural social conflict while preparing land reform

⁵⁴⁷ 'Note 30', 19 April 1953, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 295; See also, Thorner, Alice, 'Nehru, Albert Mayer, and Origins of Community Projects', 117-20

⁵⁴⁸ 'Economic Development of Asia', *Inaugural address at the twelfth session of the Commission for Asia and the Far East, Bangalore, 2nd February, 1956*, *JNSW*, Vol. 32, 474-477; also see, 'The Shaping of India's Foreign Policy', from *Prime Minister's statements at the Conference of Heads of Missions, 24th March to 3rd April, 1956*, *JNSW*, Vol. 32, 408-473

limit of India's embrace of Soviet methods. While land reform was promoted the land would remain with the tiller rather than be collectivised; planning was to be 'democratic' and class conflict was not mentioned.⁵⁴⁹

Girded by his confidence in India's progress, real and potential, Nehru presented India's model to the world believing it had universal value. The Indian Prime Minister had enthusiastically embraced the new turn in the Cold War, the shift towards a global development contest that Indian diplomats were reporting about in the mid-50s.⁵⁵⁰ It seemed to Nehru in 1955 that the world was following Indian development efforts closely, with great expectation and great approval.⁵⁵¹ Hence, Indian officials had been so determined to use Bandung to showcase their country's unique methods to the 'underdeveloped and agricultural countries.'⁵⁵²

After Bandung, when Nehru travelled to the USSR, his sense of the historic importance of India's project to forge a competitive alternative to Soviet and Chinese development only grew. En route to the USSR, he wondered if Soviet methods could be reproduced shorn of their coercive aspects, a crucial question given capitalism's utter failure to avoid war and subjugation.⁵⁵³ Nehru felt India had a global mission to resolve these contradictions. He returned from Russia apparently convinced. Although conceding the possibility of Soviet slave labour camps, Nehru decided:

⁵⁴⁹ 'Foreword', *JNSW*, Vol. 27; and also, 'Foreword', Vol. 28

⁵⁵⁰ 'Annual Report on the UK, 1955, by YD Gundevia', F.3(48)R&I/56(S), *NAI*

⁵⁵¹ 'Note 20', 23 February 1955, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 131

⁵⁵² 'Note 22', 14 April 1955, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 149; Also, see 'CS Jha to BK Nehru', 23 February 1955, *AAC - Held in Bandung April 1955, working papers different countries*, MEA, 1955, F.1(11)-ACC/55(S), *NAI*, 116

⁵⁵³ 'Note 26', 5 June 1955, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, Note 26, 185

“So far as the economic structure is concerned, it might be said to be a completely new experiment in human organisation. The only way to consider it objectively is to forget or set aside the coercive technique of communism and try to understand it purely as an economic system.”⁵⁵⁴

His misapprehension of the function of violence in that system meant Nehru would turn the same cracked lens upon the development efforts of both the People’s Republic and also India.⁵⁵⁵

Soviet aid and this trip confirmed Delhi’s impression that Moscow had become the more moderate member of the Sino-Soviet bloc, challenging the basic assumption of Nehru’s China policy. Nehru had long sought to encourage Beijing to distance itself from Moscow’s radicalism, but now it was Moscow apparently leading an effort to defuse tensions. In the mid-1950s Nehru increasingly thought revolution and fear were fading in a more flexible USSR, while Beijing’s irascible leaders were willing to risk millions of lives for Taiwan.⁵⁵⁶ Nehru had always assumed that Chinese nationalism would restrain the revolutionary impulses of the CCP. He failed to predict that while Moscow’s fervour cooled Chinese nationalism would drive it in more extreme directions.

⁵⁵⁴ ‘Note 27’, 20 July 1955, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, Note 27, 192

⁵⁵⁵ The CCP had a history of using violence for political mobilisation and development policies, see Westad, Odd Arne, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003, 132

⁵⁵⁶ ‘Nehru talks to Heads of Mission in Europe..., 28-30th June, 1955’, *JNSW*, Vol. 29, 242-257; See also, ‘Note 27’, 20 July 1955, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 192

The Chinese did not really think there was any common ground or anything significant to learn from Indian economic policy. However, Beijing did think that Indian interest in its development projects was a diplomatic asset, the fruit borne by the language of Asian identity and under-development. In early 1956, some Chinese analysts were optimistic that this interest would sustain a continued improvement in Sino-Indian relations, and that even though Delhi remained greedy for US aid it was regularly opposing American positions on international questions. However, the Chinese had very little expectation that India's own economic policy could deliver genuine progress.⁵⁵⁷ The narrowness of Beijing's interest in India was clear from the dismissal of its developmental prospects.

Beijing's scepticism meant that Nehru's conviction that India had a template to inspire the region was viewed as extremely presumptuous. Furthermore, Mao believed that it was the PRC that was pioneering Asian modernity. Beijing's transition from a policy of revolutionary export to one calibrated to support domestic development suggested that less emphasis might be placed on the universal value of the CCP's experience. However, just because the model was not being packaged for export, did not mean it was no longer on display. At the Eighth Party Congress, Mao announced that they were entering a new epoch, as

'An Eastern country of 600 million people undertaking a socialist revolution to change the historical direction and national appearance of this country, to achieve basic industrialisation within the space of three five year plans, and moreover to complete socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist commercial industry, to catch up and overtake the most powerful capitalist countries in a few decades...'.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁷ Liu, 'Friend or Foe', 117-43, 125-6

⁵⁵⁸ 'Zai Zhongguo gongchandang quanguo daibiao huiyi kaimuci', 21 March 1955, JGYLMZDWG, Vol. 5, 59

Mao was clear therefore that he was leading his vast *Asian* country to a modernity in advance of the capitalist west. The implication being that the rest of Asia should follow him. Thus steeled, Beijing had continued to guide revolutionary movements in Asia despite the policy of the international united front.⁵⁵⁹ So while the Indians thought there was a competition underway, Beijing simply thought it was no contest.

Even more profoundly, while Indian development rebalanced towards the Soviets, Mao began bucking against the limitations imposed by Moscow. So, while economic development provided a base for warming Indo-Soviet ties, it became a source of tension for the Sino-Soviet alliance. The CCP had long shelved its public celebration of its vision of Asian modernity, defined by *Mao Zedong Thought* to be the creative blend of Marxism-Leninism with China's historical conditions, in order to 'lean to one side' and enjoy the security and economic support of the Soviet Union.⁵⁶⁰ The PRC had therefore committed, more or less, to Soviet modernity.⁵⁶¹ Following the Korean War, Soviet economic support grew tremendously. However, despite 'leaning to one side', the state's legitimacy was founded upon the fact it represented the 'standing up' of the Chinese people. Dependence on outside forces could only be temporary.⁵⁶² Hence, despite the huge material benefits, Mao grew to perceive a threat to Chinese independence from Soviet economic influence. But he also quite simply thought that Beijing could develop faster. So, despite the First Five Year Plan (1953-57) closely following Soviet industrial priorities, from 1955 Mao would

⁵⁵⁹ 'Guanyu yuenan dianbianfu zuozhan ying zhuyi shixiang gei Peng Dehuai, Huang Kecheng de dianbao', 28 April, 1955, *JGYLMZDWG*, Vol. 5, 90

⁵⁶⁰ Shen, 2013, 146-151

⁵⁶¹ Westad, 2012, 286

⁵⁶² Hunt, 1996, 20

increasingly push in favour of a more rural emphasis, collectivisation and an acceleration of effort beyond Soviet recommendations.⁵⁶³

Mao's scepticism of Soviet caution lay in his sense that class struggle and popular enthusiasm could force an economic leap beyond more conservative forecasts. From the end of 1955, Mao began pushing agricultural production targets up, thinking China could outperform Soviet recommendations.⁵⁶⁴ One aspect of this was Mao's rivalry with his colleagues for pre-eminence within the CCP, and through the first half of 1956 he wrestled with the more cautious Zhou and Liu Shaoqi over production targets.⁵⁶⁵ However, Mao's influence clearly had the PRC juddering towards far more radical notions of development and science than prevailed in India and elsewhere.⁵⁶⁶ The Chairman's dramatic elevation of targets would have an impact on those striving to learn from and match Chinese efforts.

Nehru shared Chairman Mao's acute unease with the pace of economic development.⁵⁶⁷ The Indian Prime Minister regularly voiced concern that the enthusiasm of the freedom struggle had been lost.⁵⁶⁸ And, like Mao, Nehru sought to use international tension to rouse energy for efforts in development. For example, the National Development Loan scheme of 1954 was consciously viewed as a tool to exploit public anger at Pakistan's

⁵⁶³ Shu, 'The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the Cold War in Asia, 1954–1962', 354-59

⁵⁶⁴ Shu 'The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the Cold War in Asia, 1954–1962'

⁵⁶⁵ Shen, 2013, chapter 3

⁵⁶⁶ Deshingkar, 'Science and Technology in China: A Framework of Analysis', Mohanty & Bhattacharjea (eds.), 336; Also see, Anderson, Robert S. *Nucleus and Nation: Scientists, International Networks, and Power in India*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 175-80

⁵⁶⁷ Chen, 2001, see Introduction

⁵⁶⁸ For example, 'Note 27', 3 March 1953, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 249

military relationship with the US and incite popular developmental passion.⁵⁶⁹ Nehru had even expressed a Maoist-like frustration with his own economic experts.⁵⁷⁰ Although Zhou had admitted to an Indian delegation that there were 'coercive orders' behind the setting up of the communes,⁵⁷¹ nevertheless, Nehru did not realise the centrality of violence for Mao, who regarded the killing of counter-revolutionaries as a catalyst for popular energy.⁵⁷² Nehru desperately wanted to understand the growth of agricultural and industrial cooperatives in China, as he believed, or hoped, there must surely be causes other than an authoritarian regime.⁵⁷³

Nehru's anxiety and close attention to the progress claimed by Beijing led him to an exaggerated sense of what planning could deliver. The proliferation of Indian study delegations to China since 1955 returned with tales of astonishing developmental targets. Nehru's impatience only grew as a result, driving him to demand much higher food production targets from his own planners in summer 1956.⁵⁷⁴ The irony was that Chinese planning was in turmoil, Beijing's leadership divided, and Zhou had to spend all of July and August 1956 revising and moderating China's Second Five Year Plan.⁵⁷⁵ Mao's own enthusiasm for irrational advance in economic growth had led India to also squeeze more from its plan. Nehru did not know it but rather than the tedium of conservative centralised

⁵⁶⁹ 'Note 48', 18 January 1954, *JNLCM*, Vol.3, 484; 'Note 59, 8 June 1954, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 557

⁵⁷⁰ Note 17, 24 December 1954, *JNLCM*, Vol.4, 105

⁵⁷¹ 17 August 1956, *ZELNP*

⁵⁷² 'Lun shida guanxi', Draft of speech given at the expanded conference of the Central Party Political Bureau, 25 April, 1956, *JGYLMZDWG*, Vol.6, 82

⁵⁷³ 'Note 40', 30 December 1955, *JNLCM*, Vol.4, 326

⁵⁷⁴ *China's Planning - Replies to the questionnaire regarding*, MEA 1955, F10(48)/FEA/55, NAI; 'Basic Approach to Second Plan', Summary of seventh meeting of National Development Council, 1-2 May, 1956 *JNSW*, Vol. 33, 39-55; 'Note 45', 10 May 1956, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 366; 'Note 52', 27 August 1956, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 427; 'Note 53', 20 September 1956, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 431

⁵⁷⁵ Shen, 2013, 132

planning Mao had a romantic preference for the spontaneous energy of mass movements.⁵⁷⁶ Therefore, taking Chinese development targets as a benchmark of rational planning in 1956 was an error because these figures were in fact more goals for Maoist mobilization than sober forecasts.

The reality is that economic development was understood very differently in Beijing and Delhi in the mid-1950s. To be sure, leaders in both capitals saw economic progress as the *sine qua non* for the consolidation and unity of their new states and integration of areas like India's north-east and China's Tibet. But unity through development was understood very differently. Nehru believed economic development was the key to national unity, a counter to the 'fissiparous' pressures that tortured India, and the solution to the tribal problem. But Nehru's sense in 1955 that China practised 'gentle' colonialism in Tibet, underscored his misunderstanding of Beijing's attitude.⁵⁷⁷ Ultimately, just as Mao's moderate foreign policy was underpinned by a fundamental class perspective, so was his view of development primarily related to class. For Mao, economic development brought class unity. Revolutionary methods in Tibet would finally integrate that region with the PRC, hence Beijing aimed to create a Tibetan working class that would be loyal to the CCP.⁵⁷⁸ Concerned with class rather than national unity, Mao believed class struggle catalysed genuine development.⁵⁷⁹ While Nehru was therefore misguided to think either that Chinese development was a reliable model for India or a sound basis for deepening Sino-Indian cooperation, Mao's reversal to his underlying preferences would also cause tension for relations with Moscow.

⁵⁷⁶ Shen, 2013, 145

⁵⁷⁷ Zachariah, 2004, 144; 'To Bisnuram Medhi', 9 March 1955, *JNSW*, Vol. 28, 479

⁵⁷⁸ 'Monthly Report', 6 December 1955, Political Officer, Gangtok, Sikkim, MEA 1955, F21(4)/NEF/55(S), *NAI*, 78

⁵⁷⁹ Shen, 2013, 286

Although the issue of economic development provided Delhi and Beijing with common diplomatic ground it also led to the complication of their relations. Changing views of development led to a profound shift in the balance of relations between Delhi, Beijing and Moscow. India exploited the new environment to counter-balance US aid and seek more Soviet support. At the same time, Nehru drew more on Soviet approaches as his hybrid model took more concrete shape. The resulting growth in Indo-Soviet economic ties complemented Delhi's appreciation of Moscow's conciliatory international posture, which contrasted with Beijing's ongoing inflexibility. Meanwhile, Mao was growing to regard Moscow as a limitation on China's prospects. A second major shift was the emergence of a Sino-Indian contest in the developmental field. While to some extent this underpinned Delhi's interest in Beijing, as it sought to learn from China's developmental experiments, it also exacerbated Nehru's impatience and led him to unduly pressure his planning bureaucracy. In Beijing, there was little respect for Delhi's development policy, which was regarded as doomed to fail, but the desire to highlight Beijing's superiority added to Mao's desire to accelerate China's progress. But the thinking underlying development in Delhi and Beijing indicated a clash of world-views, in which economic policy served either class or national unity. The collision of these perspectives would become explicit in 1956. But simultaneously, Mao would decide that despite the limitations imposed by his ties to Moscow, the vital unity of the socialist bloc demanded he reaffirm his commitment to the Soviet alliance.

Crucible of contradictions: The 1956 Rebellions in Hungary and Tibet

The dangers of ideological relaxation required by Beijing's engagement with India became acute in 1956. The growing instability in Tibetan regions already demonstrated that moderation risked the proliferation of class enemies. Meanwhile, Moscow seemed oblivious to the danger and moved to enshrine peaceful coexistence as permanent doctrine at the CPSU Congress. However, while the instability in Eastern Europe in 1956 confirmed to Mao that class confrontation remained a fundamental problem it also brought home the danger posed by any disunity within the socialist bloc. The Chairman therefore prioritised the principle of socialist unity, regarding this as the foundation on which all other problems could be solved. As a result, regardless of the instability in Tibet, suspicion of Indian interference, and heightened sensitivity to the threat of reactionary subversion in general, Beijing continued to seek Delhi's cooperation because this adhered to Soviet preferences. Although the Soviet invasion of Hungary seemed a reversal in Sino-Soviet moderation and renewal of their alliance, Nehru was content to maintain his non-aligned engagement of the socialist bloc.

In late 1955, India decided to exploit the perception that Beijing endorsed Indo-Tibetan cultural relations. Delhi turned to Buddhism and the Dalai Lama to consolidate its legitimacy in its border zones. Nehru had acknowledged privately that the McMahon Line's dubious origin impelled Delhi to win the loyalty of the border peoples.⁵⁸⁰ The Government now decided to sponsor Indian Buddhist organisations' celebration of the anniversary of Buddha's death, the *Buddha Jayanti*, and their invitation to the Dalai Lama to attend these

⁵⁸⁰ Principles of Foreign Policy, 24 March 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 25, 391

events in late 1956. It was thought the celebrations would raise New Delhi's prestige in the eyes of the Buddhist populations in the border areas,⁵⁸¹ and it was hoped the Dalai Lama's participation would boost the stature of the events.⁵⁸² The manner of the Dalai Lama's invitation with a traditionally styled letter was an ostentatious flourishing of India's cultural links to Tibet, which implied a special relationship was still expected.

This invitation was not particularly threatening to China's immediate interests in Tibet. Beijing's basic policy in the region was moderation, a united front with the Dalai Lama and elites, and friendship with India. The key goal of policy was to isolate Tibetan radicals,⁵⁸³ and rally the majority under the Dalai Lama.⁵⁸⁴ As a result, throughout 1955 the Chinese emphasised to the Tibetans that Sino-Indian relations were 'friendly'.⁵⁸⁵ To reassure Nehru, Zhou Enlai had laughingly told him at Bandung that 'communism' could not be imposed on Tibet.⁵⁸⁶ This approach was maintained despite the outbursts of resistance across Tibetan regions in 1955. Mao wrote to the Dalai Lama in November admitting errors which he ascribed to the excessive zeal of some officials in the campaign against counter-revolutionaries. He soothingly stressed that progress in Tibet need not be rushed.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸¹ *Buddha Jayanti 2500th Celebration - India/delegation from foreign countries*, NAI, MEA 1956, F. 40(1)-BC(B)/56VOL.1 PART 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, NAI, 1, 13 & 19

⁵⁸² *Ibid*, 19, 42, 52; Also, see *Yindu yaoqing dalai, banchan fangwenxin*, 26 August 1956, CMFA 105-00328-01

⁵⁸³ 'Zhongyang fu guanyu weirenmin huiyi de huodong wenti(jielu)', 25 September 1955, *Pingxi Xizang Panluan* [Pacifying the Tibet Rebellion], Zhonggong Xizang dangshi ziliao congshu, (Xizang renminchubanshe, 1995), 57

⁵⁸⁴ 'Monthly report for month of August', 14 September 1955, Gangtok Sikkim, *Bhutan - Political Officers reports on*, MEA 1955, F21(4)/NEF/55(S), NAI, 54; also see, 'Guanyu Xizang maoyi deng wenti gei Liu Shaoqi, Zhuo Enlai deng de xin', 28 November 1955, JGYLMZDWG, Vol.5, 460

⁵⁸⁵ 'Report for April', 1955, MEA 1955, F21(4)/NEF/55(S), NAI, 10; also see 'Report for the month of July', 16 August 1955, *Ibid*, 49

⁵⁸⁶ 'Note 23', 28 April 1955, *JNLCM*, Vol.4, 159

⁵⁸⁷ 'Gei Dalai lama de xin', 24 November, 1955, JGYLMZDWG, Vol.5, 451

But the invitations for the Dalai Lama to join the *Buddha Jayanti* came at a moment of crisis for Beijing's Tibet policy. The disconnected discontent across of 1955 exploded in acute form with the Khampa Tibetans' rebellion in early 1956. This uprising in Kham, Western Sichuan, against local CCP control seemed to suggest Beijing could not deliver sufficient moderation or autonomy to placate Tibetans. The Khampa rebellion is usually said to have been the direct result of the 'democratic reforms' begun by local CCP officials.⁵⁸⁸ No doubt this was the major proximate cause of the resort to arms. But the Khampas also believed Han migration and demands that they relinquish their weapons to contradicted the assurances of autonomy in 1950. Their response in 1956 was to start massacring Han.⁵⁸⁹ It was also clear that although only the Khampas rose in armed rebellion, opposition to the CCP was pan-Tibetan. Throughout 1955, Apa Pant had reported on resistance within Tibet based on a national antagonism towards the Chinese, even despite the Dalai Lama's efforts to cooperate.⁵⁹⁰ In 1956, Pant continued to underline pan-Tibetan factors, such as that Khampa partisans were trying to mobilise people in Lhasa, and that fighting was in some instances only 150 miles from there.⁵⁹¹ Moreover, although Beijing's very violent repression focused on the Khampas,⁵⁹² its anxiety to reassure Lhasa about continued moderation showed an awareness of the broader risks.⁵⁹³

⁵⁸⁸ Goldstein, 2014, 474

⁵⁸⁹ 'Report for June 1956', 16 June 1956, *Annual reports - Sikkim (Gangtok)* MEA 1956, F.52-R&I/56(S), NAI

⁵⁹⁰ *Bhutan - Political officer's reports on*, MEA 1955, F21(4)/NEF/55(S), NAI, 54, 69, 78

⁵⁹¹ *Annual Reports - Sikkim (Gangtok)*, MEA 1956, F.52-R&I/56(S), NAI

⁵⁹² 'Report for April', 9 May 1956, *ibid*; There were even reports of the use of gas, see 'Untitled Document', *File containing information about Tibet*, Apa Pant Papers, Instalment I, Subject File 3, 1956-57, NMML

⁵⁹³ 'Zhongyang zhuanfa zhongyang daibiaotuan guanyu dangqian Xizang dongtai he daibiaotuan gongzuo qingkuang baogao de piyu', 8 May 1956, JGYLMZDWG, Vol.6, 113

However, even while the Dalai Lama assisted with Beijing's pacification efforts, Mao was reconsidering his united front policy in Tibet, and thus cooperation with the Tibetan leader and India. In July, Mao discussed redefining the conflict as a class struggle. The rebels, Mao complained, used slogans like 'Defend Religion' and 'Protect Tibetans', in order to 'trick' the people. Mao suggested that the CCP might persuade the Tibetan masses that it could liberate them from oppression and raise living standards.⁵⁹⁴ In other words, Mao contemplated ending the united front and unleashing revolution against Tibet's elite. Mao's refusal to allow the Dalai Lama to go to India for the *Buddha Jayanti* contradicted the pretence of cultural autonomy and was a symptom of the dilemma Beijing faced over how to respond to the crisis in Tibet. Mao did not want the Dalai Lama to go to India and endorse it as the home of Buddhism and risk his recruitment by the rebel Tibetans whom, he thought, operated from there.⁵⁹⁵ By October, Beijing was still blocking the visit and Tibet was rife with speculation on the question. As the date for the *Buddha Jayanti* approached, Khampa rebels looked likely to remain in control of large territories through the winter.⁵⁹⁶ But Mao's analysis of events in Kham and Tibet and their relationship to India went far beyond the purely regional level.

Events far from China had a crucial impact on Mao's calculations. The opportunities and risks inherent to the Sino-Soviet embrace of *Panchsheel* and India came into sharp relief with the turmoil in Egypt and Eastern Europe in 1956. Sino-Indian relations, the rhetoric of *Panchsheel* and the 'Bandung Spirit' all contributed to Nasser's confident nationalisation of

⁵⁹⁴ 'Zai ting ganzhi, liangshan liangge zizhizhou gaige he pingluan wenti huibaoshi de tanhua', 22 July 1956, *Mao Zedong Xizang gongzuo wenxuan*, (MZDXZGW) [Mao Zedong Tibet Work Documents], (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 2008), 148

⁵⁹⁵ 12 July 1956, *ZELNP*

⁵⁹⁶ 'Report for September 1956', 9 October 1956, *Annual Reports - Sikkim (Gangtok)*, MEA 1956, F.52-R&I/56(S), *NAI*

the Suez Canal, and thus the ensuing international crisis.⁵⁹⁷ The common response to the crisis itself then seemed to demonstrate the potential for the Sino-Soviet bloc to link arms with the Afro-Asian movement in opposition to colonialism, bringing Indian and Sino-Soviet concerns together just as the San Francisco Treaty and SEATO had earlier. It was agreed all round that Suez was a test of Asian unity.⁵⁹⁸

Simultaneously, the inherent risk that the logic of *Panchsheel* and Sino-Soviet moderation held for the cohesion of the socialist bloc took concrete and dramatic shape in Eastern Europe. Khrushchev's beginning of de-Stalinisation was a crucial precondition for this. And Yugoslavia's statement of equality with the Soviets in June 1956, giving recognition to Tito's third way approach, was a major inspiration to reformers in Poland and Hungary.⁵⁹⁹ But the Sino-Indian rhetoric of *Panchsheel* also resonated with these restless observers in the Soviet satraps, imagining Beijing's growing moderation and independence. Following the CPSU's 20th Congress, Hungarian and Polish reformers had called for the study of China, and later, protestors celebrated Chinese-Hungarian unity, deploying Hundred Flowers slogans.⁶⁰⁰ The CCP declared at its Eighth Congress that *Panchsheel* should be applied to relations between socialist states, making explicit the tacit threat of the Five Principles' logic for intra-socialist relations.⁶⁰¹ The doomed Imre Nagy in Hungary announced that the Bandung principles should apply to relations between socialist states

⁵⁹⁷ 'Report for May', *Annual Reports - Peking*, MEA 1956, F 19/-R&I/56(S), *NAI*; see, Mark Philip Bradley, *Decolonisation, the Global South and the Cold War, 1919-1962*, Leffler & Westad (eds.), Vol.1, 464-85; also, 'Note 50', 15 August 1956, Enclosure, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 406 & 'Background Note for Indian Missions', 31 July 1956, *JNSW*, Vol. 34, 324

⁵⁹⁸ 'Report for August', *Annual Reports - Peking*, MEA 1956, F 19/-R&I/56(S), *NAI*; See also, 'USSR Report for August, 31 August, 1956', MEA 1956, F.60-R&I/56(S), *NAI*

⁵⁹⁹ Mišković, Nataša, 'Between Idealism and Pragmatism: Tito, Nehru and the Hungarian Crisis, 1956,' Fischer-Tiné, Mišković, & Boškowska (eds.), 123

⁶⁰⁰ Shen, 2013, 172-173

⁶⁰¹ 'September Report', *Annual Reports - Peking*, MEA 1956, F 19/-R&I/56(S), *NAI*

just as the Chinese had declared during the Polish crisis.⁶⁰² Until the final moment in Hungary the protestors expected China's sympathy, with the press welcoming the *People's Daily's* criticism of Soviet chauvinism and calls for peaceful coexistence amongst all nations.⁶⁰³ Indian inspiration was also clear from the Indian flags amongst the crowds in Budapest.⁶⁰⁴

Soviet extermination of Hungarian independence undermined the unified opposition to imperialism at Suez, the carefully wrought image of Soviet moderation and Nehru's Bandung rejection of the concept of Soviet 'imperialism'. The invasion's coincidence with the climax of the Suez crisis epitomised Nehru's critique of the Cold War, that it obstructed de-colonisation. While the Chinese called for the Bandung powers to rally against Suez,⁶⁰⁵ Nehru bemoaned the Soviet action for distracting attention from events in Egypt.⁶⁰⁶ At Bandung, Nehru had crushed discussion of Soviet 'imperialism' in his urgency to enlist Beijing and Moscow to the anti-colonial struggle and opposition to the US's threat to Asia. But Nehru's conceit that the Soviets did not practice 'imperialism' in Eastern Europe was eviscerated in Hungary.

The Hungary crisis led to shifts in Beijing that would have a profound meaning for Sino-Indian relations. First of all, Beijing fully supported Moscow, dropped *Panchsheel* as a guide to intra-bloc relations and recommitted to the principle of socialist hierarchy. China's

⁶⁰² Shen, 2013, Chapter 5

⁶⁰³ Peter Vamos, "'Much Listening, Little Speaking": Chinese Foreign Ministry Documents on Hungary, 1956', *CWIHP E-Dossier 50*, 2014

⁶⁰⁴ 'Note 56', 8 December 1956, *JNLCM, Vol. 4*, 462

⁶⁰⁵ 2 November 1956, *ZELNP*

⁶⁰⁶ 'Cable to KPS Menon', 2 November 1956, *JNSW, Vol.35*, 451; See also, 'Cable to RK Nehru', 3 November 1956, *JNSW, Vol.35*, 434-435

influence on the Soviet decision to invade was minimal but Beijing quickly backed Moscow, dropping criticism of Soviet chauvinism and ending its moderate image in Europe.⁶⁰⁷ Mao did so despite his alarm at Khrushchev's recent ideological innovations at the CPSU Congress, and particularly the shift to viewing peaceful coexistence as a permanent strategy. Mao also backed Moscow despite the Soviet support of his domestic opponents in economic policy debates.⁶⁰⁸ In December, Mao's *More on the Historical Experience of the People's Democratic Dictatorship* re-emphasised the universal value of Soviet experience, dropping the warnings against dogmatism that had followed Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech'.⁶⁰⁹ China's leaders certainly felt that the Hungary episode proved Soviet leaders were inexperienced, rash and even incompetent.⁶¹⁰ But Mao decided Beijing should pursue dominance within a unified bloc and de-emphasise *Panchsheel* for intra-Bloc relations. Thus Hungary was also a setback for Nehru's strategy of undermining the Sino-Soviet relationship.

Secondly, Mao's particular analysis, that Hungary's troubles were due to a lack of class struggle seemed to confirm his view that Tibet also would be best pacified by a dose of revolution. While Liu and Zhou argued for moderation in economic policy to avoid similar disruption to Hungary and Poland, Mao's radical nature asserted itself. He urged his comrades to take the opposite lesson: Eastern Europe's difficulties had been the result of a wilting resolve to scour their societies for counter-revolutionary threats. Therefore, class struggle must be deployed to boost production and inoculate the country against similar

⁶⁰⁷ See Vamos, "Much Listening, Little Speaking"

⁶⁰⁸ Shen, 2013, 138-139

⁶⁰⁹ Shen, 2013, 288-294

⁶¹⁰ Chen, 2001, 161; See also, 24 January 1957, *ZELNP*

trouble.⁶¹¹ Mao's perception that trouble in Eastern Europe was related to class confrontation reinforced his sensitivity to the same problem within China, not least because the US alliance with reactionaries in Hungary seemed to mirror a similar constellation of threats in Tibet.

However, although Mao was convinced that the stability, development and integration of Tibet would be best delivered by full-blooded class struggle, he held back. He decided that the united front in Tibet should be maintained in order to adhere to the ongoing Soviet interest in sound relations with Delhi. Therefore, in late November, the Indians were told that the Dalai Lama could travel to the *Buddha Jayanti*.⁶¹² Mao resisted the temptation to launch revolution in Tibet in late 1956 because of 'international factors'.⁶¹³ A Central Committee document of September stated: 'We can say that this is our compromise with the elite Tibetans. We think that this compromise is necessary and correct.'⁶¹⁴ He continued to prioritise Sino-Indian relations to serve the wider Sino-Soviet agenda. Indeed, at that moment, Mao was extolling the united front's applicability at home and abroad.⁶¹⁵

The impact of Hungary was nonetheless clear. The Dalai Lama, the Tibetan elite and India had one final chance to cooperate, but Mao's contingency planning for a revolutionary solution in Tibet was straightforward. He told his colleagues he did not care if the Dalai

⁶¹¹ Shen, 2013, 277-288

⁶¹² 20 November 1956, *Dalai, Banchan fangwen Yindu anpai yu Yinfang shangtan*, 1 April - 30 November 1956, CMFA 105-00328-02

⁶¹³ 'Zhongyang guanyu Xizang minzhu gaige wenti de zhishi', 4 September 1956, *Xizang Minzhu Gaige* [Democratic Reform of Tibet], (Lhasa: Xizang Renmin, 1995), 56-58; 'Zai ting ganzi', 22 July 1956, MZDXZGW, 148

⁶¹⁴ Goldstein, 2014, 470

⁶¹⁵ 'Zhongguo gongchandang dibaici quanguo daibiaodahui kaomu', 15-27 September 1956, JGYLMZDWG, Vol. 6, 201

Lama leader remained in India and publicly opposed Beijing.⁶¹⁶ Zhou followed the Dalai Lama to India and warned him that opposition in Tibet would bring violent revolution. Delhi was expected to help by urging the Dalai Lama to cooperate. The message to the Tibetans was that 'reforms' would be delayed and India would not help the rebels because of Sino-Indian friendship.⁶¹⁷ In mid-December Mao explained to CCP officials in Lhasa that if 'foreign directed reactionaries' launched rebellion the 'labouring classes' would overthrow feudalism.⁶¹⁸

To secure Indian pressure on the Dalai Lama, the Chinese made an artfully hedged concession to Delhi's interests in the Himalayas. Zhou first demolished Nehru's pretence that the border was settled: 'In the last agreement which we signed about Tibet, the Tibetans wanted us to reject this Line; but we told them that the question should be temporarily set aside.' He explained that he had never known about the McMahon Line until the CCP had studied the border, but because it seemed to be an 'accomplished fact, we should accept it.' However, giving himself leeway to withdraw this offer, while also casting Beijing as the reasonable party, Zhou added that 'we should try to persuade and convince the Tibetans to accept it.' Finally, Zhou also reassured Nehru that the 'relations of Sikkim and Bhutan with China differ from those between Tibet and China, because Sikkim and Bhutan were never under China'.⁶¹⁹ But this assurance did not amount to recognition of India's 'special interests' in the border states. Nevertheless, Beijing was clearly trying to

⁶¹⁶ 'Yao gujidao Dalai lama keneng bu huiguo', 15 November, 1956', *MZDXGW*, 156

⁶¹⁷ 'Zhou Enlai zongli fangwen yindu shi tong Dalai, Banchan tanhua jilu', 29 November 1956, *CMFA*, 203-00018-04

⁶¹⁸ 'Zhongyang fu Lasa dengdi keneng fasheng baoluanshi de zhishi', 16 February 1956, *Pingxi Xizang*, 62

⁶¹⁹ 'Talks with Chou En-lai - I' Talks with Zhou 3-6pm, 10-11.30pm and 00.30-2.30am 31 December 1956 & 1 January 1957, *JNSW*, Vol. 36, 583-603

lure Delhi into assisting with the crisis in Tibet by appearing to maintain the trans-Himalayan cooperation with India.

While Zhou's offer was slippery he was perfectly frank that Beijing's Tibet problem was subversion a la Hungary. Zhou explained that while Tibetan autonomy was a good thing, it was no general panacea and could be exploited by foreign interference. Therefore, he made clear, Indian cooperation was imperative if autonomy was to survive in Tibet.⁶²⁰ A week later, Zhou told the Indonesian Ambassador that the imperialist powers, having realised that they cannot overturn the socialist countries on the battlefield, now focus on subversion instead.⁶²¹ So the lessons from Hungary were firmly applied to Tibet. For Beijing, sound relations with India were founded on Delhi's willingness to assist with the elimination of external reactionary interference in Tibet.

Nehru's problem was that Beijing had reverted to a world-view profoundly at odds with his own. Nehru explained the Hungary crisis in terms of a national uprising against Soviet domination and forecast failure for the external imposition of communism.⁶²² But, in early December, Zhou dismissed this insisting to Nehru on the ideological legitimacy of force and fully supporting Soviet action.⁶²³ On 31 December, Zhou explicitly disagreed with Nehru's characterisation of the crisis and argued it was a counter-revolutionary uprising and that force had saved the socialist system. He implied that neutrality was impossible for a socialist state, and socialism was impossible for a neutral state.⁶²⁴ So despite the desire

⁶²⁰ *Ibid*

⁶²¹ 6 January 1957, *ZELNP*

⁶²² 'India and the International Situation - I, 19 November 1956,' *JNSW*, Vol.35, 351-368

⁶²³ *Zhou Enlai zongli diangao Mao Zedong zhuxi he zhonggongzhongyang ta tong yindu zongli Nihelu tan Xiongyali wenti de qingkuang*, 3 December 1956, *CMFA* 109-01046-02

⁶²⁴ Talks with Chou En-lai - I, 31 December 1956, *JNSW*, Vol. 36, 583-603

to continue cooperation with India, Beijing was no longer willing to compromise on ideological principle. Zhou made plain his scepticism of neutrality and abandoned the reassuring language of Bandung.

Nehru was now in a very awkward position. He had defended his China policy as practical in light of historical Chinese expansionism, and had said that, like the Soviets, China was expansionist for 'evils other than communism'.⁶²⁵ But, not only was Beijing supportive of the Soviet invasion on ideological grounds and was re-committing to the Soviet bloc, they were doing so publicly and in as stark terms as possible, almost daring Nehru to find fault with their uncompromising ideology. That China was rewarded for its support with a new stature in the Socialist Bloc by Moscow only compounded Nehru's ongoing difficulty in separating the comrades.⁶²⁶

As a result, Nehru was assailed, home and abroad, for his handling of both Suez and Hungary. The ongoing association with the UK through the Commonwealth was attacked in light of the UK's imperial action at Suez against India's non-aligned partner, Egypt.⁶²⁷

Nehru was even more vociferously assaulted for his failure to promptly criticise Soviet action in Budapest and for India's abstention on the UN vote against the Soviet action.⁶²⁸

His China policy, seen as linked to his response to these events, was harshly criticised into the new year.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁵ 'Tibet and China', 18 June, 1954, *JNSW*, Vol. 26, 476

⁶²⁶ Shen, 2013, Chapter 6; See also, *Chinese Premier - Visit to India of*, MEA 1956, F 10(20)-FEA/56(S), *NAI*, 121 & 125

⁶²⁷ 'To Lord Pethick-Lawrence', 16 November 1956, *JNSW*, Vol.35, 345; 'India and the International Situation - II', 20 November 1956, *JNSW*, Vol.35, 368-388

⁶²⁸ *Ibid*; see also, 'India and the International Situation - I', 19 November 1956, *JNSW*, Vol. 35, 351-368

⁶²⁹ 'Times of India', 29 January 1957', MEA 1956, F 10(20)-FEA/56(S), *NAI*, 110

Nehru had no intention of bowing to these attacks and adjusting his non-aligned policy. There had been practical and principled reasons for his delay in criticising Moscow, and he had made his outrage public on 5 November once armed with the facts.⁶³⁰ To charge that non-alignment 'failed' in November 1956 is to misunderstand Nehru's foreign policy. Nehru rammed his commitment to Commonwealth membership back at those criticising him over Suez.⁶³¹ And, despite Soviet action in Budapest and China's unambiguous support, Nehru's public friendship for the Sino-Soviet bloc did not waver. This was Nehruvian non-alignment in action. The discomfort was clear, but, as Nehru admitted often, non-alignment implied the dissatisfaction of all sides.

In fact, India's relations with the UK make an instructive comparison with Sino-Indian relations. Nehru insisted on close ties to the UK and the Commonwealth, despite many historical and current differences. Nehru regarded the Commonwealth connection as an 'exemplar' without the obligations of a 'treaty of alliance'.⁶³² He repeatedly expressed the hope that Sino-Indian relations would also perform an exemplary function in international relations. Furthermore, he had explained to India's diplomatic elite in June 1955 that the intimate relations India had with the UK and the PRC were the foundation of India's international stature. The significance of relations with the UK was despite the fact that India was in acute conflict with the UK regarding East Africa.⁶³³ Therefore, the idea that

⁶³⁰ AM Rosenthal, 'Nehru Outraged by the Invasions - Tells UN Group in India Freedom Has Suffered in Egypt and Hungary', *The New York Times*, New Delhi, Nov. 5, 1956

⁶³¹ 'India and the International Situation - II, 20 November 1956,' *JNSW*, Vol.35, 368-388; 'Relevance of Commonwealth Membership', 7 December 1956, *JNSW*, Vol.36, 456

⁶³² 'Note 28', 18 March 1953, *JNLCM*, Vol. 3, 262

⁶³³ 'Nehru talks to Heads of Missions in Europe about the International Situation', 28-30 June 1955, *JNSW*, Vol. 29, 242-257

non-alignment 'failed' over Hungary is as absurd as the idea that Indian membership of the Commonwealth was an 'anomaly' of Nehru's foreign policy.⁶³⁴ Despite their distasteful behaviour, in fact almost because of it, relations with these countries were critical components of Nehruvian non-alignment and the exercise of 'right means' in international affairs as an antidote to the Cold War.

While Nehru's broadest international goals led him to continue assisting Beijing over Tibet, this cooperation was profoundly undermined at the same time. Nehru urged the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet, curbed trouble in Kalimpong and dismissed talk of Indian intervention in Tibet.⁶³⁵ But Nehru was unable to capitalise on Zhou's comments about a border settlement, because to admit first that the border was not already fixed would wreck his longstanding public position.⁶³⁶ Furthermore, while Zhou made it clear that Sino-Indian relations and Tibetan autonomy now rested on India's ability to curb subversion in Tibet, Nehru was unable to even restrain those Indian officials who continued trying to encourage the Dalai Lama to resist the CCP.⁶³⁷ Even Nehru himself persisted with the expectation that Beijing tolerated the cultivation of special cultural ties between Delhi and Lhasa.⁶³⁸

⁶³⁴ Zachariah, 2004, 160

⁶³⁵ Yang, Gongsu, *Zhongguo fandui waiguo qinlve ganshe Xizang difang douzhengshi*, Beijing: *Zhongguo zangxue*, 2001), 281-286; see also, 'Talks with Chou En-lai - V', 24 January 1957, *JNSW*, Vol. 36, 623-637; 'To Maharaja of Sikkim', 12 October 1956, *JNSW*, Vol.35, 519

⁶³⁶ 'Talks with Chou En-lai - I' 31 December, 1956, *JNSW*, Vol. 36, 600-601

⁶³⁷ See for example, *Bhutan - Political Officers reports on*, MEA 1955, F21(4)/NEF/55(S), NAI; *On Dalai Lama visit to India*, Apa Pant 1, 4, NMML; '3rd January, 1957', Apa Pant Papers I, Subject File 6, NMML

⁶³⁸ *Yindu zongli Nihelu zhihan Dalai*, 8 May - 13 August 1957, CMFA 105-00373-01

The crisis in Tibet indicated to Mao the risk of accommodating the bourgeois preferences of Delhi by deferring the class problem. At the same time, the Soviet leadership's apparent shift to make peaceful coexistence a permanent strategic posture rather than a tactical expedience added to Mao's conviction that the Soviet leadership were incompetent. To Mao the intrinsic and implacable hostility of the exploiting class meant coexistence could never be permanent. While the Hungary crisis confirmed this perception, it nevertheless also made Mao realise that he needed to prioritise the cohesion of the socialist bloc. As a result he dropped the idea that *Panchsheel* had any meaning for intra-bloc relations and opted to preserve cooperation with India over Tibet. This did not mean he accepted Khrushchev's ideological innovations. Mao believed that once the socialist camp had been stabilised then he could in time lead it back to what he considered ideological orthodoxy. Nehru, on the other hand, while confronted by the devastating reversal of recent positive trends in the moderation of Moscow and Beijing, and the firm restoration of Sino-Soviet unity, had no option but to persevere. He engaged the communist powers in order to moderate them, not because they had moderated. Non-alignment was an active posture, and moreover was a moral demonstration to the world that nothing could obstruct Indian friendship. While this might appear naive it was at least a consistent strategy. But Nehru's Tibet policy was crippled by his inability to make it genuinely friendly. Partly this was due to the independent machinations of some Indian officials, but the clash of world-views, of class versus nation meant that India's interaction with Tibet would ultimately come to be seen in Beijing as the interference of a hostile class.

Conclusion

Panchsheel, the disavowal of revolutionary ambition and warm Sino-Indian relations all served important goals for Beijing after the Korean War. These lent credibility to the united front strategy in Tibet and secured Indian cooperation with that approach. Simultaneously, this gave Beijing the breathing space to clarify and secure its border interests. Moderation and partnership with India also presented a pacific image of the PRC throughout the region, reducing China's neighbours' incentives for cozying up to the US. Thus the risks of another conflagration like that in Korea seemed to retreat. The fact that this all took place within a joint Sino-Soviet strategy to ease international tensions after the Korean War confirmed Moscow's new confidence in Beijing and economic aid grew dramatically. Therefore, Beijing was able to focus on economic reconstruction.

Delhi also extracted great benefits from Sino-Indian relations, *Panchsheel* and Sino-Soviet moderation after the Korean War. Nehru believed India had reached an understanding with Beijing to respect each other's interests in the Himalayas. While the border was not unambiguously settled he felt he had enough flexibility to secure India's position. Delhi was also optimistic that the principles agreed with Beijing served the reduction of tensions within South East Asia, and provided a universal template for normalising international relations. This cooperative era brought economic benefits also, as Delhi studied Chinese developmental efforts more closely, but also balanced its dependence on US aid with Soviet support and guidance.

However, an array of problems implied a certain vulnerability to the Sino-Indian partnership. Across the Himalayas, in Tibet and along the borders a fragile understanding had been achieved to provide a platform for Delhi and Beijing to develop broader

cooperation. Both parties avoided a frank discussion of their border interests in order to unilaterally consolidate their position. This reticence remained a latent threat to the stability of Sino-Indian relations. Another challenge was Nehru's idea that India would exchange Tibet's autonomous integration into the PRC in return for Beijing's acceptance of the semi-sovereign subjection of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim to Delhi. Chinese leaders saw no comparison between its absolute rights over Tibet and Indian relations with these Himalayan border states, and simply regarded Nehru's ambitions as imperialist. Moreover, Beijing's tolerance of Tibet's autonomy depended on stability. Friendship with India served Beijing's effort to ally with Tibetan elites, but once those elites began to reject cooperation then Sino-Indian relations lost an element of its appeal.

Panchsheel based cooperation was challenged by different calculations in Beijing and Delhi. Beijing had a far narrower conception of *Panchsheel* as simply a tool to block US interference and secure regional stability. Delhi's grandiose vision went far beyond this and conceived of *Panchsheel* as an Asian innovation in international affairs that could help to defuse the Cold War. For Nehru, *Panchsheel* was not only a tool to obstruct the US but also constrain the PRC and by encouraging Sino-Soviet moderation ease Beijing's dependency on its comrade. Concrete differences emerged between Moscow, Beijing and Delhi as it became clear that the CCP's could not accept peaceful coexistence with Washington. Beijing's underlying interest in maintaining a degree of Cold War confrontation, revealed by the first Taiwan Straits Crisis, clashed with Moscow and Delhi's overall strategies. But Khrushchev decided he could tolerate this and offered Beijing nuclear aid, confirming for Mao the value of international tension. However, Nehru's basic expectation that China would prove to be more moderate than the USSR was now upturned, and he began to regard India's interests as more closely aligned to Moscow than the PRC. Nehru tried to use Bandung to maintain the pressure on Beijing and Moscow to

continue to pursue moderation and persuade the non-Western world to embrace non-alignment. But while Beijing sought to restore its positive image at Bandung it was embracing a nuclear weapons programme and contradicted Nehru by agreeing with those who confirmed the right of states to enter military alliances.

To some extent economic development afforded a new sphere for Sino-Indian interaction after the Korean War. The Chinese leadership wanted to focus on economic reconstruction and emphasised this as a common Asian concern. The Indians had always wanted to development exchanges with Beijing, but this became more pertinent as Nehru steered his country's planning institutions in a Soviet direction. But at a more profound level the question of economic development introduced new tensions. India's burgeoning economic ties to Moscow in terms of aid, guidance and proximity of methods complemented Nehru's basic shift towards viewing the Soviets in a more favourable light than Beijing. At the same time, while Delhi increasingly valued Moscow, Mao was pushing back against its dominance of the PRC's development policy. There was also a growing sense of a contest between Delhi and Beijing over their development models, with Nehru convinced India was evolving a revolutionary, hybrid approach to inspire the rest of Asia. Soviet support for Delhi therefore seemed all the more worrying in Beijing. This sense of contest contributed to the underlying desire to accelerate progress in India and China, which anxiety in turn disrupted the planning process in both countries.

The problem with Sino-Indian cooperation in this period was that in many ways it clashed with Mao's fundamental worldview. Partnership with India implied Beijing's acceptance of the viability of non-alignment, Tibetan autonomy, Nehru's development approach and peaceful coexistence. But all these were ways of avoiding class conflict. The delusion of this became clear to Mao in 1956. The explosive threat from Tibetan reactionaries as the

Khampa rebellion reverberated across the region made autonomy and cooperation with India look extremely dangerous. This and the myriad other ways in which class enemies continued to threaten and obstruct revolution made the Soviet desire to cement peaceful coexistence as a permanent strategy look like the most naive nonsense to Mao.

Furthermore, sustained peaceful coexistence would also permit the continued support of defunct development models like India's. However, the instability in Eastern Europe of 1956 presented a dilemma to Mao. While it completely confirmed the acute risk of deferring class struggle, it also made plain the danger posed by an over-emphasis on moderation and *Panchsheel* for the unity of the socialist bloc. Mao chose to cement bloc unity and confirmed his commitment to Moscow. As a result, Mao also resisted the temptation of unleashing revolution in Tibet in order to preserve relations with India, a central pillar of Moscow's foreign policy.

Nehru for his part was confronted by the problem that Beijing, and Moscow, had jointly shifted back to the uncompromising language of class confrontation. Soviet action in Hungary was defended as the legitimate suppression of counter-revolution. So Nehru's conceit that he was both leading the communist giants to moderation and at the same time levering them apart was exposed. The brazen defence of the blood spilt in Budapest seemed a gigantic infringement of the spirit of *Panchsheel*. Indeed, Mao had redefined *Panchsheel*, saying in January 1957 that support for overseas communist parties was no contradiction of this because it furthered world revolution.⁶³⁹ But Nehru was not going to give up his efforts. While starting to look for new partners in non-alignment, his engagement with China and Moscow would continue to aim to smooth the brittle edges of their revolutionary fever. But Nehru failed to realise that operating on the assumption of

⁶³⁹ Luthi, 2008, 142

inevitable class conflict, Beijing simply viewed his basic political positions as at best naive and at worst dams to be swept away by the final revolutionary flood.

Chapter Four - Drawing lines between class and nation, 1957-1959

Introduction

1956 ended with the Indian Prime Minister and Chinese Premier disputing the central meaning of the Hungary crisis. Nehru believed it to have been a manifestation of nationalism, while in Beijing it was regarded as the product of class struggle. The significance of these different world-views only grew from 1957. If history was indeed driven by dialectical materialism, then non-alignment and Nehru's syncretic politics, explicitly formulated to ease class confrontation, obstructed historical progress. Furthermore, Beijing's leaders, especially Chairman Mao, believed China had a duty to demonstrate this to the world. It was a question of whether to continue with the conventional inter-state diplomacy pursued since the Korean War's end, or realign more explicitly with history, revolution and transnational class struggle.

After 1956 Mao's renewed commitment to class struggle meant continued cooperation with India was premised on the degree to which Nehru's Government was perceived as popular. Hence, Beijing's analysis of political and economic trends in India became crucial. 1957 began with cautious optimism, but Mao's dismissal of the Soviet doctrine of 'peaceful transition' revealed his skepticism of Asian leaders like Nehru. The Communist Party of India's (CPI) degree of cooperation with Nehru's Government subsequently became an important bone of contention between Moscow and Beijing. Mao's growing radical mood exacerbated his desire to see the CPI's experiment with 'peaceful transition' fail. Hence, in 1958 Beijing's interest in the intensifying political confrontation of 'reactionaries' and 'progressives' in India grew. Meanwhile, Nehru sought to defuse the real polarisation of the Indian politics of economic development and prevent it becoming a Cold War issue. He had begun to fear that the rival international camps were provoking the clash within India and preventing stabilisation of the Kerala crisis in particular. Nehru tried to reinvigorate his

middle way approach to economic policy, but the effort to do so only added to the confrontations within India.

The confrontation within India confirmed Mao's doubts about 'peaceful transition' and allowed him to gain new influence over the CPI. At the same time, Beijing's diplomacy generally shifted away from the cooperative inter-state approach symbolised by the *Panchsheel* rhetoric. Meanwhile, to Mao, India's international posture appeared also to underline the growing power of the reactionary classes. By 1958, Mao's interest in inter-class rather than inter-state politics was leading him to increasingly engage the global masses and encourage them to confront their oppressors. This meant Mao was now actively opposing central ideas in both Delhi and Moscow. By disputing the possibility that Nehruvian politics could harmonise class interests Mao highlighted Soviet blindness to the revolutionary potential in India and globally. But Mao's growing preference for class politics clashed with Nehru's understanding of nationalism in Asia.

Nehru had always imagined that Asian nationalisms could be collaborative, and the compromise with China, begun with the 1954 agreement on Tibet, had promised much. However, Delhi and Beijing's interests in the Himalayas particularly highlighted the tension within the national compromise, as these were at once collaborative, competitive and antagonistic. For instance, while China's presence catalysed India's push north, Delhi offered cooperation on Tibet. But Nehru over-estimated the extent of Beijing's commitment to an imperial concord in the Himalayas. Mao's perception that class confrontation underpinned both the growing instability across Tibetan regions, and Indian interference, led Beijing to curtail its cooperation with Delhi. Just as Nehru and Zhou disagreed over whether class or national conflict caused the Hungary crisis, so now would Delhi and Beijing disagree about the cause of the trouble in Tibet.

The instability in Tibet challenged the viability of India's border policy: the repeated public assertion that the boundary was settled, with only minor matters outstanding. Beijing had happily exploited the latent ambiguity this created to continue state-building projects in Tibet. In 1958, Chinese road-

building and reticence drove Delhi to seek reassurances, but this just made plain that major differences existed and that Beijing was no longer friendly. The possibility of a settlement remained in early 1959 however because Zhou hinted the McMahon Line could still be accepted while Nehru appeared internally to regard Aksai Chin as negotiable. Beijing had not entirely rejected the potential of a national compromise. The problem was Nehru's long-standing public assertion of certainty combined with Indian national sentiment to make him inflexible. Instead, Nehru made legal arguments which only provoked China and, by confirming his bourgeois reputation, pushed Mao further in the direction of pure class based politics.

However, it was Mao's ideologically framed response to the Lhasa uprising of March 1959 that would permanently damage relations. The Chairman used the crisis to draw clear lines of class confrontation home and abroad. The Tibetan elites, Dalai Lama, Nehru and even the Soviets would all be measured by events in Tibet. Nehru failed to solve the contradiction between national sympathy for Tibet and his friendly China stance and his political opponents exploited the turmoil to unleash attacks on his domestic and foreign policy. In contrast with Moscow, Mao preferred to see this confrontation within India escalate and so openly attacked Nehru's ideology. Mao had good reason to think India was a real ideological threat to his revolutionary plans for Tibet. No material aid came via Delhi to the Tibetans, but the thrust of Indian interaction with Tibet for several years had been to support a degree of separation from central China. But the idea in Beijing was that this attack on Nehru would help resolve his vacillations; caught between the battle of progress and reaction, he needed to choose sides. Hence, Mao believed his attack would drive the confrontation in Indian politics to a new level, but would ultimately deliver a new progressive synthesis.

This was critical to Mao's overall international strategy at this time in the middle of 1959 when he was trying to encourage the global masses to welcome at least rhetorical confrontation. Because Mao ascribed the 'anti-China wave' in India to class antagonism rather than nationalism, he was compelled to respond with confrontation, so exacerbating the tensions. In fact, from a class point of view he welcomed the conflict. Mao desired to foment tension both within India and with India. This

desire fundamentally clashed with Soviet priorities which were for both India's domestic and international stability. But Mao now wanted to inspire the global masses to confront their oppressors. Thus, while China, a nation of oppressed peoples, would confront the Indian bourgeoisie, so too would he support the Indian people in their confrontation with their oppressors

Class concerns return

Although the Hungary and Poland crises had led Mao to re-evaluate the importance of class struggle, with socialist bloc unity restored Beijing nevertheless continued to emphasise the strategic value of cooperation with Nehru and the forces of Asian nationalism. In January 1957, Zhou told Nehru socialism must join hands with nationalism. He used Nehru's term 'collective peace' and said disarmament and abolition of military blocs would improve inter-bloc relations.⁶⁴⁰ Mao emphasised Beijing followed a broad strategy of unity within the Socialist Bloc and with Afro Asia, and even some imperialists.⁶⁴¹ Clearly Beijing still wanted to maximise Third World unity as the most powerful weapon against global imperialism, and as a result continued to suggest to the Indians that a second Bandung Conference would be useful.⁶⁴² In January 1958, Chairman Mao himself chased down Indian Ambassador RK Nehru in Guangzhou and sought to persuade him to support another Asian African Conference to discuss nuclear disarmament. He explained this could be a precursor to a Great Power summit, which India should propose and join as a mediator.⁶⁴³

⁶⁴⁰ 'Talks with Chou En-lai - V', 24 January 1957, *JNSW*, 36:623

⁶⁴¹ '*Guanyu disanci shijie dazhan he guoji tuanjie wenti*', 27 February 1957, *Mao Zedong Waijiao Wenxuan (MZDWJWX)* [Collected Diplomatic Documents of Mao Zedong], edited by the Central Party Document Research Bureau, PRC Foreign Ministry, (Beijing: Central Party Documents Publishing House, 1994), 284

⁶⁴² 27 January 1957, *ZELNP*; Fic, 311

⁶⁴³ *Mao Zedong zhuxi jiejian Yindu zhuhua dashi Nihelu fufu tanhua jilu*, 23 January 1958, *CMFA* 105-00372-02

Asian unity also continued to have a local and regional importance for Beijing in 1958. In July, the Chinese wrote to Delhi requesting it repress US and GMD plotting amongst Tibetan emigres and appealed to *Panchsheel* warning that imperialists were attempting to 'create tensions in Asia and Africa'.⁶⁴⁴ The Chinese continued to discuss the US threat to South East Asia with Indian diplomats, and assured those neighbours of Beijing's essential benevolence.⁶⁴⁵ Clearly, class analysis of international affairs was not yet the dominating paradigm in Beijing.

However, Mao's internal recommitment to class struggle in 1957 meant that cooperation with Asian nationalist governments and Nehru was premised on the assumption that these were reasonably progressive. Mao's global strategy was based on his conviction that he had the world's 'people' on his side against imperialism. In April 1957, Mao had referred specifically to Nehru's leadership of the Indian freedom struggle as an example of the invincibility of the 'people' in progressive struggle.⁶⁴⁶ The implication of this was that good relations with the Indian state were only desirable if that state genuinely represented the Indian people. Otherwise, the hundreds of millions of Indians would have to be engaged via another channel. Thus, Mao's India policy, and indeed his policy for Asia broadly, was very influenced by the class analysis of these respective governments.

While some official analyses of India's development policies indicated a benign view of Delhi's class loyalties, China's leadership's attitudes to the new Soviet doctrine of 'peaceful transition'

⁶⁴⁴ 'Note from Chinese Alleging Kuomintang and US plotting from Kalimpong with Tibetan Reactionaries', *JNSW-SS*, 48:562, Appendix 1; also see 565, Appendix 2

⁶⁴⁵ 22 August 1958, *ZELNP*; '*Daguo xiaoguo yinggai pingdeng xiangdai*', 16 August 1958, *MZDWJWX*, 334

⁶⁴⁶ '*Zhi yao shijie renmin tuanjie jiu keyi zhansheng Meiguo*', 21 April 1957, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong Junshi wengao (JGYLMZDJSWG)* [The Collected Military Documents of Mao Zedong since the founding of the PRC], zhong, (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 2010),347

revealed its true assessment of India and other non-socialist states.⁶⁴⁷ At the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the traditional Marxist-Leninist concept of revolution was revised. Neither war nor a revolutionary seizure of power were now considered necessary pre-conditions. Moscow's new 'Theory of World Revolution in the Atomic Age' stated that war was now so potentially destructive as to be illogical.⁶⁴⁸ The foundations of Soviet foreign policy had thus become 'peaceful coexistence, peaceful transition and peaceful competition'.⁶⁴⁹

Mao's fundamental disagreement with this theory reflected a basic scepticism of the possibility of deferral of class confrontation in India and other such states. This in turn implied a fundamental distrust of Nehru's government. The Chairman's renewed sensitivity to the inevitability of class confrontation meant that despite the re-commitment to socialist bloc unity, he disagreed with the Soviets' neat elimination of the practicality of war and doctrinal insistence on peaceful methods. Therefore, Mao's major published response to events in Hungary, otherwise supportive of Moscow, deleted reference to 'peaceful transition'.⁶⁵⁰ The Chairman shared his reading of the Soviet's *Concise Philosophical Dictionary* with senior party cadres in January 1957. The entry for the term 'identity' troubled him:

The dictionary states: "Phenomena like war and peace, capitalist and proletariat, life and death etc can share identity because they are in basic opposition and mutually exclusive."

That is to say, these fundamentally antagonistic phenomena have no Marxist unity, they are only mutually exclusive, they cannot connect with each other, and they cannot under certain conditions transform into the other. This understanding is a fundamental error...

⁶⁴⁷ *Qi nian lai Zhongguo Yindu wenhua youhao huodong gaikuang 1957nian dui Yindu wenhua youhao gongzuo guihua*, 18 March, 1957, CMFA 105-00535-02

⁶⁴⁸ Fic, 1969, 171

⁶⁴⁹ Shen, 2013, 55

⁶⁵⁰ Shen, 2013, 291-4

Mao gave then gave his view:

Lenin quoted Clausewitz: "War is the extension of politics by other means." Struggle in a time of peace is politics, war is also politics, but simply with special means. War and Peace on the one hand exclude each other, and on the other are linked to each other, and under certain conditions, they can transform into one another. If preparation for war does not occur under peace, then why does war suddenly occur? During war if there is no preparation for peace, then why does peace suddenly happen?⁶⁵¹

Mao was therefore highly sceptical of 'peaceful transition' as a strategy for non-governing communist parties. Moreover, by contrast with Moscow, and Delhi, Mao believed it was illogical and irresponsible to rule out the possibility of war and violent conflict.

So despite Beijing's sincere desire to maintain cooperation with Nehru a profound scepticism of his ultimate class loyalties persisted. India became a testing ground for this Sino-Soviet doctrinal dispute and the Communist Party of India (CPI) the lab rat. Electoral success in April 1957, winning the state of Kerala, had convinced the CPI to embrace the Soviet position on 'peaceful transition'.⁶⁵² The CPSU and CCP compromised on the question at the Moscow Conference of December 1957, suggesting the case of Kerala might indeed prove Moscow right while alternatives may also exist.⁶⁵³ But Mao still privately tried to persuade the Indians 'peaceful transition' could

⁶⁵¹ *Zhanzheng yu heping ji huxiang paichi you huxiang lianjie*, 27 January 1957, *JGYLMZDJSWG, zhong*, 338.

⁶⁵² Lieten, Georges Kristoffel. China and the Undivided Communist Party of India', *Social Scientist* 3, no. 12 (July 1975 1975), 5; see also, Fic, 232, 287

⁶⁵³ Fic, 329-330; Also see Shen 2013, 8, 80-84, 349-397

only be tactical.⁶⁵⁴ In 1958 however the CPI would uphold the Soviet doctrine, despite Moscow's compromise with Beijing and growing political instability in India. The Indian comrades felt the party was performing well in Kerala and so should not change approach. Moscow made no attempt to hold the CPI to the compromise with Beijing.

Beijing's antipathy for Moscow's theory of 'peaceful transition' was accentuated by Mao's personal radicalisation of Chinese domestic politics and development policy in 1957. The Chairman would come to see Moscow's doctrinal preferences as a restraint on his own ambitions for China. The CCP's Eighth Congress in 1956 had appeared a retreat from rule by revolution to a more technocratic style of government. The party had declared that the conflict between capitalism and socialism in China had been resolved and the chief contradiction was now that between backward and advanced socialist production. But after Hungary Mao's internal reassessment of the persistent threat of class contradictions had led him to rethink. His anxiety at the threat posed by internal and external class enemies led Mao to believe that the CCP needed to pay closer attention to maintaining intimate relations with the masses. It was this concern that prompted the invitation for external criticism that is referred to as the Hundred Flowers campaign. But the overwhelming scale of attacks on the party and top leadership seemed to Mao evidence that class enemies were more entrenched than he had feared, and in July 1957 he counter-attacked with the Anti-Rightist Campaign. Mao felt that Khrushchev was wrong to react to the growing sense of strength in the socialist bloc, what he labelled the 'East Wind', with a policy of co-existence with the West. Concerned at this strategic error Mao felt that China needed to accelerate its economic growth past the USSR in order to assume leadership of their bloc. The consolidation of the party's, and Mao's, ideological monopoly meant that the Chairman's subsequent calls for more rapid development met little opposition.⁶⁵⁵ In March 1958, the Chengdu Conference laid out the policies

⁶⁵⁴ *'Geming defazhan zongshi jingguo yuhui daolu zhubu shangsheng'*, 16 November 1957, *JGYLMZDJSWG*, zhong, 355

⁶⁵⁵ Shen, 2013, 1-9; Also see, Liu, 'Friend or Foe', 130

for a sharp break with Soviet policies, and what would become known as the Great Leap Forward.⁶⁵⁶

This new radical mood intensified the CCP's desire to repudiate 'peaceful transition' and gave Beijing a critical interest in identifying any evidence that aggressive reactionary power in India was growing. In short, the CCP had an interest in escalating class confrontation in India because this would highlight the naiveté of 'peaceful transition'. An extensive array of official analyses by officials in Beijing charted a growing perception through 1957, and particularly in 1958, that 'feudal forces' were obstructing once moderately progressive economic policies in Delhi, increasing Indian dependency on US economic aid, and triggering an intensifying confrontation of reactionary and progressive forces in India, with Nehru under immense pressure to choose sides.⁶⁵⁷ Particularly ominous were the examples of warming ties between Indian and US military figures in May and September 1958.⁶⁵⁸ Indeed, in addition to aid, the US was regarded as actively supporting the Indian reactionaries.⁶⁵⁹ Chinese analysts suggested that the growing alliance of the US with reactionary forces in India would threaten Sino-Indian cooperation.

These analysts did not dwell on the paradox that a basic international loss for the PRC, namely the significant improvement in India's relations with the US, took place within the favourable context of

⁶⁵⁶ Chen Jian & Yang Kuisong. 'Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance', In *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963*, Odd Arne Westad (ed.), (Washington, USA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press 1998), 267

⁶⁵⁷ *Muqian Yindu guonei zhengzhi douzheng de xingshi jiqi yingxiang*, 26 April 1958, CMFA 105-00891-10; *Yindu jingji qingkuang*, 5 September 1958, CMFA 105-00891-01;

⁶⁵⁸ *Yindu Meiguo guanxi*, 31 March-14 November 1958, CMFA105-00892-02, 5-16

⁶⁵⁹ *Yindu guodadang neibu maodun he douzheng*, 5 November 1958-19 January 1959, CMFA 105-00891-07

Mao's prevailing 'East Wind'.⁶⁶⁰ But this contradiction can be understood if one grasps that 'East Wind' did not simply include the socialist states, but progressive classes everywhere. Class confrontation in India was growing with the right wing and progressive forces both advancing on each other, with the middle being squeezed between. Similarly, in international politics the class confrontation was intensifying. India's right wing elites were drawing closer to the US, but this was no loss to Beijing. On the contrary it was a great advance. In the context of dialectical materialism heightened class confrontation was a very good thing, as this would trigger inevitable revolution and a new progressive synthesis. The waverers, domestically and internationally, would have to choose sides. So US aid to India only contributed to this process and the growing confrontation demonstrated to Moscow the facile naiveté of 'peaceful transition'.

Chinese official perceptions of a growing polarisation of India politics were not totally misguided. Nehru was indeed contending with an intensifying confrontation of left and right and trying to prevent international influence from exacerbating this contest. On the one hand Nehru ridiculed CPI criticisms that India's economic problems were due to 'monopoly capitalists'.⁶⁶¹ And, on the other, he dismissed fears on the right that India would collapse without Western aid and revolution would sweep Moscow and Beijing's influence to the heart of India.⁶⁶² Nehru was trying to depoliticise the question of economic policy.⁶⁶³ The corollary to this was the defence of India's international posture of non-alignment, which Nehru realised was threatened by Western aid.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶⁰ Liu Xiaoyuan highlights this contradiction within official Chinese analyses of India between 1956-1958, see Liu, "Friend or Foe", 132-5

⁶⁶¹ 'The Difficulties of Advancing Economy,' 20 November 1957, *JNSW*, 40:69

⁶⁶² 'Cable to TT Krishnamachari', 23 September 1957, *JNSW*, 39:115

⁶⁶³ Chatterjee, Partha, 'Development Planning and the Indian State', in *State and Politics in India*, Chatterjee, Partha (ed.), (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 271-297

⁶⁶⁴ 'US Foreign Aid Policy', 18 March 1957, *JNSW*, 37:560

But, throughout 1957, he continued to deny that India was closer to the US than it appeared, that nonalignment was under threat, or that the Congress Government was retreating from socialism.⁶⁶⁵

Nehru attempted to reinvigorate his 'middle way', syncretic approach to development in order to counter India's economic woes and growing domestic polarisation and thereby re-assert his country's non-alignment in the Cold War.⁶⁶⁶ He chose the issue of land reform for the practical reason that agricultural production was a major problem and for its symbolic value in relation to the feudal past. Nehru genuinely drew inspiration from either side of the Cold War. He was inspired, for example, by the apparent relationship between social reform in China and increased rural production.⁶⁶⁷ On the other hand, he wanted India to study the US ability to use productivity growth to offset social inequality.⁶⁶⁸ As a result, beginning in 1957 and leading to the resolution at the Nagpur Congress in January 1959, Nehru developed the idea of a unique Indian form of rural cooperatives that he labelled 'joint-farming'. In effect, Nehru imagined India could reproduce the apparent dynamism of Soviet and Chinese cooperatives without the coercion involved in those states. Thus, India would demonstrate a peaceful, democratic route to a classless society, dissolving the need for class confrontation. A 'new spirit' in the Indian peasantry would stimulate a revival in agricultural production.⁶⁶⁹ However, Nehru's insistence that peasants were not to be coerced and that the 'service cooperatives' were entirely voluntary could not disguise the obvious contradictions.⁶⁷⁰ On the one hand he claimed there was no real change of land ownership, but on

⁶⁶⁵ 'National and International Issues', 21 October 1957, *JNSW*, 39:768

⁶⁶⁶ Brands, 90-96

⁶⁶⁷ 'Tribute to DK Karve', 18 April 1958, *JNSW*, 42:850

⁶⁶⁸ 'To PCC Officials: Speech - II', 19 March, 1959, *JNSW*, 47:181

⁶⁶⁹ see 'Community Development Schemes', 27 April 1957, *JNSW*, 37:195; 'Cooperative and Scientific Farming', 29 April 1957, *JNSW*, 37:202; 'Note 68', 3 September 1957, *JNLCM*, Vol. 4, 554; 'Note 2', 23-24 January 1958, *JNLCM*, Vol. 5, 9; 'Village Cooperatives of Landless Labourers', 10 January 1959, *JNSW*, 46:227;

⁶⁷⁰ 'In the Lok Sabha', 19 February 1959, *JNSW*, 46:72

the other Nehru roamed philosophically across the face of a future scientific society of 'abundance' and common ownership.⁶⁷¹ It was all too easy for his critics on the right wing of Congress and elsewhere to hurl dire warnings of violence and collectivisation at his plans.⁶⁷² As a result, the divisions in India only grew.

For all his attempt to hold the middle ground, Nehru's perception of renewed Sino-Soviet rigidity aggravated his concern at the growing political confrontation in India, especially in Kerala. He had observed in May 1958 that Moscow and Beijing had turned on Yugoslavia once more, attacking its moderate policies and reducing the emphasis on different roads to socialism. Nehru remarked that the hundred flowers had 'become weeds to be pulled out' and the CPI had been caught out by the reversal of policy.⁶⁷³ Nehru thought the 'cold-blooded' execution of Nagy was another gloomy portent and China's response and language appeared even worse than the Soviets.⁶⁷⁴ As a result Nehru sought reassurances that Kerala's CPI Government upheld the constitution and gave no special role to Moscow.⁶⁷⁵ Meanwhile, clashes between supporters and opponents of the CPI government continued to grow in July.⁶⁷⁶

India's intensifying class confrontation in late 1958 brought gains for Beijing as it allowed the CCP to shift the debate with Moscow and the CPI over 'peaceful transition' in its own favour. Firstly, this facilitated Beijing's restoration of more influence over the CPI. During a visit to Beijing, the CCP

⁶⁷¹ 'To CPP', 16 March 1959, *JNSW*, 47:167

⁶⁷² 'In the Lok Sabha', 19 February 1959, *JNSW*, 46:72

⁶⁷³ 'The Indian Path to Socialism', 12 May 1958, *JNSW*, 42:525

⁶⁷⁴ 'Note 10', 30 June 1958, *JNLCM*, 5:63

⁶⁷⁵ 'To EMS Namboodiripad', 30 June 1958, *JNSW*, 42:397; Also see, 'To EMS Namboodiripad', 15 June 1958, *JNSW*, 42:394

⁶⁷⁶ See *JNSW*, 43:329-40 for documents related to the growing tension in Kerala

persuaded the CPI leader Ghosh to revive a focus on a broad rural strategy, rather than allow the party to be distracted by an exclusive concentration on peaceful parliamentary efforts.⁶⁷⁷ Secondly, Moscow joined in Beijing's criticism of Nehru's development methods in December 1958. The Soviet Ambassador in Beijing penned a critique of an article by Nehru titled, *The Basic Approach*, in which the Soviets supported Beijing's lambasting of the Indian claim to a unique model of socialism and ridiculing the notion that land reform need not be violent.⁶⁷⁸ The Soviets now publicly acknowledged that there may well be violence in India.⁶⁷⁹

Accumulating evidence of India's increasingly reactionary foreign policy only cemented Chinese gains in the contest to define the feasibility of 'peaceful transition'. Even early in 1957 it was known that Nehru had told the Americans that his basic goal was to weaken the Sino-Soviet alliance.⁶⁸⁰ Furthermore, Nehru in general seemed to be taking a softer line on colonial issues also.⁶⁸¹ By 1958 the predictions of China's foreign policy bureaucracy that Indian ties with the West would continue to improve seemed confirmed. Nehru was dead against a second Bandung.⁶⁸² He was also obstructing Beijing and Hanoi's basic goal of national elections in Vietnam and appeared to be recognising the Southern regime. To Ho Chi Minh's request that India provide aid to Laos, the Indians had suggested the socialist countries curtail their activity there to avoid provoking the US.

⁶⁷⁷ 'Yindu jingji fazhan zhong suo cunzai de wenti jiqi muqian dasuan caiqu de xin zuofa', 30 December 1958, CMFA 105-00891-01, 4

⁶⁷⁸ *Cong Nihelu muqian de kumen kan Yindu zhengju*, 9 December 1958, CMFA 105-00891-09; 'Yudin's Article', 26 December 1958, JNSW, 45:722

⁶⁷⁹ Fic, 410-412

⁶⁸⁰ 'Nihelu fang Mei qingkuang', 5 February 1957, *Yindu zongli Nihelu fangwen Meiguo*, 15 January-20 February 1957, CMFA 105-00837-01

⁶⁸¹ *Dangqian Yindu yu Yingguo guanxi zhongde jige wenti*, 25-27 June 1957, CMFA 105-00837-05

⁶⁸² 'To SWRD Bandaranike', 20 April 1958, JNSW, 42:704

Furthermore, India had equated the Warsaw Pact countries with the 'invasive military groups' under US imperialism.⁶⁸³

Beijing intensified its support for national liberation movements in 1958, partly to displace India as the leading anti-colonial Asian state, but also in order to burnish moral leadership over international communism.⁶⁸⁴ While Beijing suspected Moscow's attempts to dominate the PRC militarily and economically,⁶⁸⁵ it was equally resistant to attempts at ideological domination. Just as confrontation within India bolstered Beijing's claim that 'peaceful transition' was an insufficient doctrine, so too did growing global confrontation support Beijing's argument that class confrontation was inevitable. Moscow had already made some concessions to Beijing on this question, such as joint criticism of Yugoslavia. Mao now wanted to seize leadership of global revolution to exploit the 'East Wind' that prevailed while the Soviets were paralysed by 'peaceful transition' and peaceful coexistence. In July 1958, Mao admonished an African Youth Delegation that nationalism was an insufficient force, they must confront their domestic oppressors.⁶⁸⁶ In December 1958, representatives from the recently formed Provisional Government of Algeria (GPRA), unrecognised by Moscow, visited Beijing, Hanoi and Pyongyang. In Beijing, the Algerians said 'sarcastically' that India will only recognise their government once we are independent.⁶⁸⁷ In February 1959 Mao hinted to visitors from the Moroccan Communist Party that 'peaceful transition' may be an insufficient strategy, as it

⁶⁸³ 'Guanyu Yuenan minzhu gongheguo he Yindu guanxi zhong de mouxie wenti', 1 March 1958, CMFA 106-00404-08

⁶⁸⁴ 'Zai huanying Yindu fuzongtong Ladakelixinan yanhui shangde jianghua', 29 September 1957, MZDWJWX, 289; Beijing also supported the more radical Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation Conference in Cairo in December 1957, see Lawrence, 'The Rise and Fall of Non-Alignment', 145

⁶⁸⁵ Shu, 'The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the Cold War in Asia', 361-4

⁶⁸⁶ 'Dui diguozhuyi de "wenming" yao pochu mixin', 12 July 1958, MZDWJWX, 319

⁶⁸⁷ '8 December 1958', A'erjiliya linshi zhengfu daibiaotuan fanghua jiedai jianbao, 5 December 1958, CMFA 107-00165-02; See also, Connelly, Matthew, 'Rethinking the Cold War and Decolonization: The Grand Strategy of the Algerian War for Independence', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no. 2 (2001): 233

could lead to tragic complacency and give an opportunity to the party's capitalist enemies.⁶⁸⁸ Mao told another African delegation: "We [China] can restrain imperialism, dissipate its strength, so it cannot concentrate its strength and suppress Africa."⁶⁸⁹ The Chairman was placing China at the head of radical anti-colonial movements.

Chairman Mao was now bypassing bourgeois Asian governments such as Nehru's and seeking to engage, support and inspire the people of the world directly. The Taiwan Straits crisis of August 1958 helped build enthusiasm for the Great Leap and demonstrated to the Soviets the impossibility of peaceful coexistence with the US, but Mao also made clear that by aggravating the US and dispersing its forces he was supporting revolution in the Middle East.⁶⁹⁰ In addition, and underpinning his return to a foreign policy predicated on transnational class alliances, Mao saw the Taiwan Crisis as of explicit value in educating the global masses, including the Chinese and American peoples, that US imperialist aggression, and nuclear weapons, were not to be feared.⁶⁹¹ Mao thought that US imperialism simply stimulated the revolutionary passions of the people everywhere, including India and even in America, hence he welcomed confrontation. Although some scholars regard this, and Mao's apparent encouragement of a return to confrontation in Indochina in 1958 as evidence of full retreat from the 'Bandung Spirit',⁶⁹² others point out that for reasons of national security Mao still counselled restraint in Indochina in late 1959.⁶⁹³ But Beijing's

⁶⁸⁸ 'Liangci shibai shi women xuehuile dazhang', 1 February 1959, *MZDJGYLJSWG*, xia, 5

⁶⁸⁹ 'Feizhou de renwu shi fandui diguozhuyi', 21 February 1959, *MZDWJWX*, 369

⁶⁹⁰ 'Mei diguozhuyi yi bei ziji zhizao de jiaosuo taozhu', 8 September 1958, *MZDWJWX*, 348

⁶⁹¹ 'Ba zhanzheng wenti xiangtou jiu bu haipa zhanzheng', 13 March 1959, *JGYLMZDJSWG*, xia, 16

⁶⁹² Guan, 'The Bandung Conference and the Cold War International History', 38-40

⁶⁹³ Yang Kuisong, 'Mao Zedong and the Indochina Wars', 68-69

rhetoric had shifted back to one based on vast and global class struggle to inspire opposition to the US, challenge Soviet diffidence and highlight Nehru's betrayal of national liberation.⁶⁹⁴

If the Taiwan Crisis was about encouraging the masses not to fear confrontation then Mao had set himself up in direct opposition to Delhi and Moscow. Moscow's public cooperation during the Taiwan Crisis of 1958 masked private shock at Beijing's belligerent challenge of peaceful coexistence, and it was from this point that the precipitous decline in Soviet nuclear aid to the PRC began.⁶⁹⁵ But the gloomy prognosis for Sino-Soviet relations was compounded by Soviet endorsement of Indian syncretism. Nehruvian socialism, democratic planning and non-alignment were all synonyms for class harmony. If these approaches were successful they would add lustre to Moscow's campaign for peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition. In Beijing, the Soviets appeared oblivious to the revolutionary possibilities emerging in the crucible of Indian class confrontation. Despite Yudin's criticism of Delhi's economic policies, Nehru and Khrushchev corresponded warmly in February 1959 about a high-powered Soviet planning delegation due in India, and Nehru thanked the Soviets for the offer of long-term credit.⁶⁹⁶ Such Soviet support for Indian development efforts would have been viewed with immense suspicion by Beijing, wary of propping up a bankrupt system in which the reactionary class was rampant and viciously circling the progressive outpost in Kerala. Moscow and Beijing's unified criticism of Nehru's socialist delusions had been short-lived.

Mao's renewed sensitivity to class had a profound impact on relations with India and Moscow and on the PRC itself. Beijing's persistent appreciation for the strategic value of cooperation came under great strain in 1957 and 1958. Mao's firm belief in the inevitability of class struggle meant he

⁶⁹⁴ See, *JNSW*, 48:528-38

⁶⁹⁵ Shu, 'The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the Cold War in Asia, 1954–1962', 363-4

⁶⁹⁶ 'To NS Khrushchev', 5 April 1959, *JNSW-SS*, 48:539

was profoundly sceptical of Moscow's theory of 'peaceful transition' which in turn underlined a fundamental distrust in governments such as Nehru. India in fact became a test case for the viability of 'peaceful transition' in this period. Mao's skepticism intensified as he interpreted the response to the 'Hundred Flowers' campaign as shocking evidence of the ongoing class contradictions in China and decided that 'peaceful transition' constrained his desire to speed up Chinese development. The perception that class confrontation in India was actually growing had a big impact on China's own domestic trajectory and relations with the Soviets. In addition, Chinese analysts predicted that the growing collaboration of Indian reactionaries with US imperialism would also damage Sino-Indian relations. But, in an environment in which transnational class dynamics are key then an alliance with the Indian State itself would anyway become less important. Nehru responded to the crisis by trying to reboot his development model, with an eye on both the domestic and international sphere. Nehru's effort failed and the perception of growing polarisation in India only boosted Mao's faith and brought very concrete gains to Beijing in terms of influence over the CPI and concessions by Moscow. India's apparently more reactionary foreign policy further confirmed Mao's contention that class dangers continued and must be confronted. The Chairman began to offer more rhetorical support to national liberation movements to underscore his more revolutionary approach to Moscow, turning away from the inter-state approach of the Bandung era and partnership with India. Moscow was privately shocked at Beijing's challenge to peaceful coexistence, but Soviet endorsement of Nehru's syncretic development approach seemed equally shocking to Beijing for its betrayal of revolution.

The strains of collaborative nationalism

The Sino-Indian national compromise forged with the 1954 agreement on Tibet, and symbolically continued with the Bandung Conference, had been based on China's apparent acceptance of Nehru's idea that Asian nationalisms were not conflictual but cooperative and mutually supportive.

Mao's growing preference, through 1957-58, for proceeding in international, and domestic, affairs on the basis of class analysis exerted increasingly heavy pressure on this effort however. Nevertheless, this compromise had always contained fractures related to regional influence, the border and limits of sovereignty. The simple clash of national interest would increasingly test the sustainability of these ambiguities. Regionally, and bilaterally, the complex brew of national cooperation, collaboration and antagonism between Delhi and Beijing would ferment until Beijing decided that clarity was required, and a new basis for relating to each other should be found. National sentiment in India and Tibet became an increasingly disruptive factor particularly as Beijing's sensitivity to this declined and its perception of the interrelationship of class hostility in Tibet and India grew. The silences over the border were a particular focus for this tension as Delhi's public projection of certainty slowly unravelled. Despite growing suspicions, and the increasing influence of class calculations in Beijing, nation based inter-state cooperation did not entirely collapse, and there was still the possibility of a settlement of national interests on the border. But Nehru was unable to seize this opportunity, trapped by his public claims about the border and aroused national feelings across India.

Delhi and Beijing's respective imperial projects in the Himalayas continued to be simultaneously collaborative, competitive and antagonistic. From the mid-1950s, Delhi extended British legal structures into previously un-administered zones such as Tuensang, in the Naga region.⁶⁹⁷ On the one hand, Nehru explained the importance of the British 'inner line' concept, which restricted regular travellers and foreigners from entry to the border zones, as preventing trouble for neighbouring 'friendly regions'.⁶⁹⁸ His explanation revealed Nehru's sense that the new Asian states should collaborate with each other's imperial designs. But on the other hand, the extension of Indian administration north to the McMahon Line, a major inheritance of British imperialism, was

⁶⁹⁷ *Chin Hills Regulation: 1896 - And the Tuensang Frontier Division Regulation, 1955 Amendment, F11(16)NEBA/56, NAI.* (Tuensang was the administrative centre of the Naga region).

⁶⁹⁸ 'Object of the "Inner Line"', 8 March 1957, *JNSW*, 37:449

both a response to the emergence of a new and powerful China and a direct challenge to Beijing and Lhasa's irredentism. In November 1957, Nehru said that the emergence of China and Burma, 'strong and independent', beyond Assam and the North East, increased these areas' importance and the need for administration there.⁶⁹⁹ Thus, China's shadow stimulated Indian state-building efforts in its northern border areas. In March 1958, Nehru proposed that one special committee supervise development of the hill regions and noted China had built 4,000km of basic roads in Tibet.⁷⁰⁰ Nehru's 1958 trip to Bhutan was also partly conceived as a response to the publication in Beijing of maps showing Bhutan and Sikkim as Chinese territory.⁷⁰¹

So a new and powerful China justified Indian imperialism. But Nehru also used China to scare the objects of his imperial ambition. He was generally happy to threaten Himalayan states to get his way, warning the Maharaja of Sikkim in January 1958 that any retreat from reform might result in Indian annexation.⁷⁰² But he particularly brandished the China bogey to intimidate the independent minded. Following his tour of Bhutan in September 1958, Nehru was quite clear that the Indian Government must use the growing tension in Tibet to pressure Bhutan into accepting submission to Indian supervision, and in fact he said the trouble in Tibet helped India's cause. Bhutan must choose between China or India.⁷⁰³

While Nehru pursued India's own interests in the Himalayas he also sought to maintain a form of collaboration with Beijing over Tibet. Nehru seemed to expect that the cooperative nature of Asian

⁶⁹⁹ 'Importance of the North-Eastern Region', 12 November 1957, *JNSW*, 40:356

⁷⁰⁰ 'To Govind Ballabh Pant', 23 March 1958, *JNSW*, 41:446

⁷⁰¹ *Fic*, 377-8

⁷⁰² 'The Situation in Sikkim', 19 January 1958, *JNSW*, 41:653

⁷⁰³ 'Note on Visit to Bhutan', 26 September 1958, *JNSW*, 44:311-22; Also see, 'The Position of Bhutan vis-a-vis India', 28 September 1958, *JNSW*, 44:324-5

nationalism meant that Beijing recognised India's national feelings for Tibet and would respect the region's autonomy. Nehru certainly had reservations and acknowledged that Tibet was under 'forcible occupation'. But nor did he admire Tibet's social system and thought geography would muffle Beijing's impact. So he cooperated, taking steps to prevent arms being smuggled into the region from Nepal.⁷⁰⁴ He also told exiled Tibetans to forget the idea of resistance, India would not supply arms, they must instead cooperate with Beijing.⁷⁰⁵ In fact, in mid-1957, Nehru thought Beijing's moderate policy in Tibet was a generally positive sign for the CCP in general.⁷⁰⁶ He interpreted Beijing's respect of Tibetan autonomy to mean endorsement of Indo-Tibetan cultural relations, and he sought to cultivate this in partnership with the Dalai Lama. They corresponded about work on new Tibetan monasteries in India, and Nehru indicated he would accept the Dalai Lama's ecclesiastic authority to appoint the Abbot at Tharpa Choling monastery in Kalimpong.⁷⁰⁷ He did this despite the credence such authority might give to Tibetan territorial claims. But this demonstrated Nehru's sense of fluid sovereignty across the Himalayas. Nehru's expectation that Delhi and Lhasa could maintain direct relations was further indicated by his correspondence with the Dalai Lama about a possible visit to Tibet.⁷⁰⁸

Beijing buttressed Nehru's confidence by continuing its tactical adherence to an implicit imperial settlement with India in the Himalayas. Despite Mao's suspicion that ultimately only class struggle could secure the CCP's position in Tibet, and despite resistance from local CCP officials, Beijing insisted on a moderation of policy in the province, confirmed in May 1957 as the 'great contraction'.⁷⁰⁹ The policy accommodated Indian sensitivities about Tibetan autonomy and

⁷⁰⁴ 'A Perspective on Tibet', 26 December 1957, *JNSW*, 40:617

⁷⁰⁵ 'Advice to the Tibetans', 13 January 1958, *JNSW*, 41:671

⁷⁰⁶ 'China, Tibet and South-East Asia', 28 June 1957, *JNSW*, 38:612

⁷⁰⁷ *Yindu zongli Nihelu zhihan Dalai*, 8 May-13 August 1957, *CMFA* 105-00373-01

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 12

⁷⁰⁹ Goldstein, 2014, 469-471

assurances to the the Dalai Lama about the timing of reforms.⁷¹⁰ Mao held his revolutionary rhetoric of liberation in abeyance, wary of provoking Tibetan 'local nationalism', and choosing to slowly build popular support instead.⁷¹¹ Beijing therefore reassured the Tibetan elite in August 1957 and stressed that Tibet policy was an aspect of the PRC's policy towards India.⁷¹² Beijing even sought to acquiesce in India's domination of Nepal in this period, despite Kathmandu's complaints.⁷¹³

In January 1958, the mood of imperial collaboration induced Beijing to expand on the Dalai Lama's invitation for Nehru to visit Tibet and propose a joint tour of the region with Zhou.⁷¹⁴ Nehru seized on the idea with alacrity.⁷¹⁵ Despite some suspicions of Nehru's intentions, the Chinese proposed in March that Zhou and Nehru could fly together from Delhi to Lhasa in the autumn.⁷¹⁶ U Nu had perhaps given the idea to Zhou in 1954 when he had explained how he and Nehru had once toured the tribal areas either side of the Indo-Burmese border and suggested he and the Chinese Premier might make a similar tour of Yunnan.⁷¹⁷ Nehru and Zhou imagined that this tour would assist in the stabilisation of the region, reflecting the imperial aspect of the Bandung Spirit, in which the new Asian states cooperated with each other's internal colonialism.

⁷¹⁰ 1 January 1957, *ZELNP*

⁷¹¹ 'Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti', 27 February 1957, *MZDWJ*, Vol. 7, 204

⁷¹² 3 August 1957, *ZELNP*

⁷¹³ Yang, 1999, 224

⁷¹⁴ 12 January 1958, *ZELNP*

⁷¹⁵ 'Cable to RK Nehru', 21 January 1958, *JNSW-SS*, 41:653

⁷¹⁶ *Yindu zongli Nihelu fangwen Xizang shijian, mudi he woduce*, 3 March-2 May 1958, *CMFA* 105-00373-03

⁷¹⁷ 'Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Burmese Prime Minister U Nu', June 29, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, *PRCFMA* 203-00007-03, 46-57. Translated by Jeffrey Wang. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120364>

Beijing's reasons for accommodating Indian concerns in Tibet were declining however. Cooperation with India over Tibet assumed that the intrinsic moderation of this approach would placate Tibetan 'local nationalism' and so deliver stability in the province. But stability was undermined by various factors. The Dalai Lama returned to Tibet in early 1957 to help curb the Khampa revolt, but simultaneously he endorsed the continuing relations of the Tibetan resistance with the US.⁷¹⁸ By September 1957 the first group of CIA trained Tibetans was parachuted into the province.⁷¹⁹ Limited in material terms, nonetheless, this encouraged the Tibetan rebels. Furthermore, Beijing's own insensitivity to Tibetan national sentiment aggravated the instability. While moderation was pursued in the province of Tibet, 'reform' in outer Tibet, where the Khampa rebellion was centred, was regarded as a tool of pacification.⁷²⁰ Thus Beijing's policy ignored the relationship between 'political' and 'ethnographic' Tibet.⁷²¹ The mood of rebellion therefore spread from ethnic kin in outer to inner Tibet. In early 1957, there had already been thousands of refugees camped outside Lhasa, and the ongoing violence in Kham and Amdo only increased their numbers.⁷²²

Furthermore, the value of Indian material cooperation in Tibet was diminishing. By 1957, the success of Chinese state-building projects in Tibet made Indian support less vital than it had been and allowed Beijing to be more assertive about its sovereignty. Two new highways into Tibet promised to overturn India's domination of Tibetan trade and economy, accepted previously from

⁷¹⁸ Goldstein, 480-486

⁷¹⁹ Knaus, 139-147

⁷²⁰ 'Guanyu tongyi Ganzi zangzu zizhizhou jixu jinxing minzhu gaige de piyu', 7 March 1957, *JGYLMZDWG*, Vol. 6, 368; Goldstein, 2014, 473-479

⁷²¹ Chen, 'The Tibetan Rebellion', 56 and 68, he highlights Goldstein's use of this distinction

⁷²² Knaus, 142-144

necessity.⁷²³ As a result, Chinese officials began squeezing Indo-Tibetan border trade.⁷²⁴ Nehru thought Beijing was sensitive only because of the ongoing Khampa trouble.⁷²⁵ But the local CCP wanted to contain India's commercial influence now.⁷²⁶ In fact, by late 1957, Chinese officials were clear that Delhi was using trade to support Tibetan reactionaries.⁷²⁷ Now China could supply Tibet itself the political threat of Indian trade could be eliminated. Power in the province had irrevocably shifted to Beijing.

It was not just India's trade with Tibet that was viewed as threatening, but increasingly Beijing perceived India to be supportive generally of the spreading Khampa rebellion. Indian interference seemed related to the growing aggression of the reactionary class in India and the anti-China mood they were stirring up. Therefore, Beijing cancelled the mooted joint tour in July 1958 and signalled an end to cooperation in the Himalayas. The Hungary crisis had long since aggravated China's sensitivity to US subversion, and the Kalimpong Tibetans' links to the US now seemed clear.⁷²⁸ Beijing was convinced that Indian agents also cooperated with the various agents of subversion in Kalimpong.⁷²⁹ Nehru had always appeared reluctant to clamp down on the dubious activities in Kalimpong.⁷³⁰ Now, in the middle of 1958, the general aggression of India's reactionaries provided Beijing with an explanation for Nehru's reluctance. The Indian media's

⁷²³ Yang, 1999, 204-206, 227-229

⁷²⁴ 'Ill-Treatment of Indian Traders in Yatung', 24 August 1957, *JNSW*, 39:697

⁷²⁵ Kalinga Air Service to Tibet, 31 August 1957, *JNSW*, 39:698

⁷²⁶ *Jujue Yindu ni zai Yadong she guoying shangdian shi*, 8 October 1957-31 July 1958, *CMFA* 105-00890-01

⁷²⁷ *Yinfang zai Xizang guanfang jigou qianfa qiyou chukuozheng shi*, 23 December 1957-19 March 1958, *CMFA* 105-00890-02

⁷²⁸ 6 January 1957, *ZELNP*; Yang, 1999, 281-286

⁷²⁹ *Yin guanfang he baojie dui wo buyouhao de yanlun huiji*, 7 July 1958, *CFMA* 105-00590-01

⁷³⁰ Though he admitted it was a 'nest of spies', see, 'Object of the Inner Line', 8 March 1957, *JNSW*, 37:449

coverage of Nehru's forthcoming trip to Tibet had also projected an anti-China and anti-communist tone.⁷³¹ The Chinese also feared that rebels exploited the liberal movement of pilgrims across the border.⁷³² Thus, the Khampa rebellion undermined Beijing's capacity to tolerate Nehru's notion of flexible sovereignty across the Himalayas.

As ethnic sympathy between Tibetan regions undermined Beijing's policy, so too did national sentiment in India complicate Nehru's management of the growing crisis in Tibet. On the one hand, it is clear that India was not materially supporting the Tibet rebels.⁷³³ Furthermore, aware of Chinese suspicions, Nehru continued to try and accommodate Beijing's interests in Tibet. He was keen, for example, that Chinese suspicions regarding Kalimpong be allayed.⁷³⁴ Nehru defended China's claims of sovereignty in Tibet, refuting various British newspapers' rejection of this.⁷³⁵ He accommodated China despite his personal observation, as he passed through Yatung on route to Bhutan, that Tibet was occupied territory and subject to 'the brutal methods of Chinese communism'.⁷³⁶ However, Nehru's desire to placate Beijing was not widely shared. He was accused in Parliament in March 1958 of betraying Tibet and that Panchsheel was 'born in sin'.⁷³⁷ Nehru was acutely aware of the pan-Tibetan potential of the Khampa rebellion.⁷³⁸ But he was even more aware of the intense sympathy for Tibet within India. He therefore sought to restrict any

⁷³¹ *Youguan qita Yindu fanhua an*, 22 April - 28 June 1958, *CMFA* 105-00590-05

⁷³² *Yindu xiangke lai Lasa chaofu shi*, 31 May 1958, *CMFA* 105-00889-04

⁷³³ see Knaus, 255; Goldstein, 2014, 484

⁷³⁴ 'To Humayun Kabir', 26 June 1958, *JNSW*, 42:661; 'To Apa B Pant', 11 July 1958, *JNSW*, 43:534

⁷³⁵ 'Chinese Sovereignty and Tibetan Autonomy', 7 August 1958, *JNSW*, 43:535

⁷³⁶ See, 'Note on Visit to Bhutan', 26 September 1958, *JNSW*, 44:311; see also, 'Cable to VK Krishna Menon', 5 October 1958, *JNSW*, 44:570; see also, 'To Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit', 12 October 1958, *JNSW*, 44:329.

⁷³⁷ 'International Situation - II', 20 August 1958, *JNSW*, 43:437

⁷³⁸ 'Entry of Khampa Rebels in India', 8 October 1958, *JNSW*, 44:570

public discussion of the trouble in Tibet which would inflame Indian sympathies, encourage Tibetan rebels and provoke Beijing.⁷³⁹

National sentiment also constrained Nehru's response to the new context of his border policy effected by the increasing movement of Tibetan rebels and refugees. India had been operating a diplomacy of certitude, assuming that the border was largely settled, and proclaiming this in public, when in fact it was entirely ambiguous. The public projection of clarity meant that Nehru had mortgaged his own reputation domestically to China's willingness to maintain the pretence. It was a highly risky strategy given that modern nation states prioritise clear, unambiguous territorial limits. Tibetan instability meant China now had an interest in clarifying the border. However, once national feeling was aroused against China by the instability in Tibet, Nehru's inflexibility on the border grew. Delhi's projection of certainty served China by making clear what India's claims were, while Beijing could hold its counsel. Beijing's silence gave it more flexibility eventually as it was not committed to upholding any particular claim.

Delhi's policy of projecting public certainty about the border was increasingly unsound. Nehru thought he had secured Zhou's informal acceptance of the McMahon Line in early 1957, with some small matters, like the Bara Hoti plains, agreed to be negotiated.⁷⁴⁰ Chinese delay on the Hoti talks for a year and a half was itself one reason for anxiety.⁷⁴¹ But, far worse, a series of encounters with Chinese patrols in Ladakh at points well south of the mountain passes, which had been opened under the 1954 agreement, suggested that the Chinese did not agree that those passes formed the

⁷³⁹ 'Press Conference', 7 September 1958, *JNSW*, 44:101; 'The Khampas', 4 November 1958, *JNSW*, 45:698; 'India and the World', 7 November 1958, *JNSW*, 45:224

⁷⁴⁰ 'The Border with China', 30 July 1957, *JNSW*, 38:693

⁷⁴¹ 'Problems between India and China', 24 January 1958, *JNSW*, 41:672; The talks only took place in April, 1958, see, Raghavan, 245

general boundary line.⁷⁴² In fact, the 1954 agreement did not state that the opening of these passes equated to recognition of a border.⁷⁴³ Furthermore, in the 1954 negotiations, the Chinese had actually first proposed the formula that 'China opened' the various passes. India objected and the agreement stated instead that "both sides agree".⁷⁴⁴ All of this should have made Delhi very wary of claiming too much certainty with regard to the border, in the West, or indeed the East.

India's policy of border certitude was doubly dangerous because China operated deliberately on a basis of ambiguity to conceal its own understandable uncertainty about the border. Beijing created a special boundary commission in 1958 to investigate all of the PRC's borders and possible disputes thereon. The commission has been called a 'confession of ignorance'.⁷⁴⁵ It is true that Beijing did not know exactly where the border with India should run, but they had plenty of material already on huge Tibetan claims to the south.⁷⁴⁶ Beijing was not ignorant of its potential claims but was researching what was ultimately viable. Meanwhile, India's own certainty made it clear to Beijing what Delhi's claims were, while the Chinese could hold their counsel and proceed with road-building in key areas before any border dispute emerged.

When concerns about the border became more concrete 1958, Nehru's long-standing projection of certainty complicated Delhi's response. Despite reports of a Chinese highway having been built in Ladakh, through the Indian claimed territory of Aksai Chin, Nehru decided, in February 1958, that

⁷⁴² *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged and Agreements Signed Between the Governments of India and China 1954-1959, White Paper I*, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 1-25; 'Aide Memoire given to the Chinese Charge d'Affaires in India', 24 September 1956, *Notes, Memoranda etc., White Paper I*, 18; 'The Fate of Shipki La', 8 October 1956, *JNSW*, 36: 517

⁷⁴³ See note 428

⁷⁴⁴ Yang Gongsu, 2001, 267

⁷⁴⁵ Khan, 2015, 28-30

⁷⁴⁶ Yang, 1999, 199-200; Also see Chapter 2

they could not protest without clarifying the road's alignment. Instead they might simply mention Aksai Chin in other correspondence, to record India's interest. In June, Delhi sent out two patrols to investigate the road's route.⁷⁴⁷ The long-delayed talks on Bara Hoti, held in April-May 1958, had indicated a newly obstructive attitude because the Chinese officials had refused to share material or discuss their claims at all. Indian anxiety then became acute in July when *China Pictorial* published a small map showing large areas of Ladakh, NEFA and Uttar Pradesh within China.⁷⁴⁸ Nehru decided they could no longer allow Chinese maps to go unanswered.⁷⁴⁹ Delhi protested to Beijing about cartographic incursions on India, Bhutan and Sikkim and reminded the Chinese that Zhou had previously said their maps were old and needed revising.⁷⁵⁰ Beijing made no reply. Thus Delhi elucidated its own territorial claims, and maintained its public certainty, but remained ignorant of China's conception of the border. In early September, the political vulnerability created by the consistent claim that the border was settled was shown by the pressure MPs exerted on the government, worried that Chinese maps indicated a major territorial dispute existed.⁷⁵¹

When India took a more direct approach the belief that there were only minor points of dispute on the boundary crumbled. One of the two Indian patrols to Aksai Chin returned in October and confirmed that the road ran through Indian territory. On 18 October, Delhi expressed its 'regret' to Beijing but added it was keen to 'settle these petty frontier disputes'. Beijing was also asked if it had any idea of the whereabouts of the second, missing patrol.⁷⁵² The Chinese reply on the 1

⁷⁴⁷ Raghavan, 2010, 246; Also see, 'Reconnaissance of the Sino-Indian Border', 4 February 1958, *JNSW*, 41:674

⁷⁴⁸ Raghavan, 2010, 246

⁷⁴⁹ 'A Repetition of Inaccurate Maps', 12 August 1958, *JNSW*, 43:536

⁷⁵⁰ 'Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Counsellor of China in India', 21 August 1958, *Notes, Memoranda etc., White Paper I*, 46; See also, 22 January 1959, *ZELNP*, fn.

⁷⁵¹ 'Indian Territory Shown in Chinese Maps', 4 September 1958, *JNSW*, 44:567

⁷⁵² 'Informal Note Given by the Foreign Secretary to the Chinese Ambassador', 18 October 1958, *Notes, Memoranda etc., White Paper I*, 26

November showed that the border disputes were more than petty and that relations were no longer friendly. The Indian patrol, Beijing's note explained, was arrested on Chinese territory conducting 'unlawful surveying activities' and had been returned to India via the Karakoram pass on 22 October.⁷⁵³ The treatment of the patrol and lack of notice on their arrest struck Delhi as extremely unfriendly.⁷⁵⁴

It was now clear that the earlier obstinacy at the Bara Hoti talks and cancellation of the joint tour of Tibet had heralded a shift in China's India policy. Clearly, the growing instability in Tibet caused by the Khampa rebellion meant that Delhi's apparently new claim on Aksai Chin had to be quickly crushed, given the critical military importance of the new road there. The new communications infrastructure in Tibet made Beijing less tolerant of Delhi's ambiguous attitude to Tibet. Furthermore, the claim on Aksai Chin just seemed another instance of aggression emanating from the Indian reactionaries, which Chinese analysts were so sensitive to in 1958. These developments all took place after the March leadership conference in Chengdu at which a new radical direction had been set for domestic and foreign policy, and at which Zhou had offered a self-criticism for his neglect of struggle with the nationalist countries such as India.⁷⁵⁵

With the Ladakh dispute now acknowledged on both sides and the Indians outraged at the offhand treatment of their patrol, Beijing also decided to reply to India's complaint about China's maps on 3 November. The note reiterated the consistent reassurance that the maps were old and needed revising. But the final statement added that following surveys and consultations with neighbouring states, a 'new way of drawing the boundary of China will be decided.'⁷⁵⁶ The explicit statement that

⁷⁵³ Memorandum Given by the Foreign Office of China to the Counsellor of India', 3 November 1958, *Notes, Memoranda etc., White Paper I*, 28

⁷⁵⁴ 'Arrest of Indian Reconnaissance Party', 4 November 1958, *JNSW*, 45:697

⁷⁵⁵ See note 657

⁷⁵⁶ 'Memorandum Given by the Foreign Office of China to the Counsellor of India', 3 November 1958, *Notes, Memoranda etc., White Paper I*, 47

the border itself needed redrawing seemed an alarming development to Delhi, especially as the actual extent of Chinese claims remained unclear.

A few days later, on 11 November, Nehru told the Foreign Secretary that with regard to this dispute in Ladakh they must bear in mind an additional point. He had been told that the area they claimed was marked in their maps and was also within the McMahon Line, to make a concession in the West on the McMahon Line would undermined its credibility in other places. Also, Nehru said they should remind Zhou Enlai that he had indicated a willingness to accept the McMahon Line, though not its name, when he was last in Delhi.⁷⁵⁷ In December, despite the growing sense of crisis Nehru continued to keep the dispute from the public and avoided press questions about China's attitude to the border.⁷⁵⁸

The pretence of certainty unravelled entirely at the beginning of 1959 but the possibility of compromise nevertheless remained. In December, Nehru sought reassurances direct from Zhou that the overall border alignment remained certain. He explained the various reasons why he thought China accepted this, such as the 1954 agreement, and Zhou's previous comments about the McMahon Line, and explained why therefore the recent map was so puzzling with its inclusion of large areas of India within China.⁷⁵⁹ His goal was to confirm China was not making the large claims on NEFA implied by that map. Aksai China was not mentioned however indicating Nehru did acknowledge some dispute.⁷⁶⁰ Nehru's attitude to Aksai Chin was not absolute, privately his concern at the treatment of the arrested patrol was that this was in territory acknowledged to be in dispute.⁷⁶¹ India's note of 8 November, specifically complained at the treatment of this patrol, but

⁷⁵⁷ 'Indian Frontier in Ladakh', 11 November 1958, *JNSW*, 45:699

⁷⁵⁸ 'National and International', 10 December 1958, *JNSW*, 45:225

⁷⁵⁹ 'To Chou En-lai', 14 December 1958, *JNSW*, 45:702

⁷⁶⁰ Raghavan, 2010, 248

⁷⁶¹ 'Arrest of Indian Reconnaissance Party', 4 November 1958, *JNSW*, 45:697

said a second note would address the actual territorial dispute.⁷⁶² India's communications, by admitting dispute existed, and also labelling them petty, implied negotiations were possible regarding the Western Sector of the boundary.⁷⁶³ Zhou replied in January 1959 saying the 1954 agreement had nothing to do with the border and ignored Nehru's reference to his earlier comments about the McMahon Line, and only repeated that it was illegal. He also insisted Aksai Chin had always been under Chinese administration. However, Zhou hinted that the McMahon Line was still acceptable.⁷⁶⁴ Although unstated, both sides still thought that there was some basis for a national compromise on border interests.

However, Nehru clung to his border policy of certainty ignoring Zhou's hints. For domestic political reasons he could not reveal the vulnerability of his border policy. Furthermore, Delhi feared that Beijing might exploit the confusion to pursue rebels across the border and seize disputed territory, hence Nehru wanted to minimise the entry of Tibetan refugees into India, Bhutan and Sikkim.⁷⁶⁵ Delhi's concern was that China's position implied that the whole border, except Askai Chin which Beijing insisted was unambiguous, should now be subject to negotiation.⁷⁶⁶ But rather than consider the veiled political bargain, on 22 March 1959, Nehru presented the Chinese with a detailed historico-legal case for India's conception of the border.⁷⁶⁷ While it might have been true that Delhi regarded the case in the East as irrefutable and the West as open to negotiation, the

⁷⁶² 'Note given by the Ambassador of India to Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of China', 8 November 1958, *Notes, Memoranda etc., White Paper I*, 29

⁷⁶³ Raghavan, 2010, 247-8. This is Raghavan's key point, that Nehru was not excluding negotiations on the Western sector and Aksai Chin

⁷⁶⁴ 22 January, *ZELNP*; see also, 'Chou En-lai to Nehru', 23 January 1959, *JNSW*, 47:557, Appendix 2

⁷⁶⁵ 'Entry of Khampa Rebels in India', 8 October 1958, *JNSW-SS*, 44:570

⁷⁶⁶ Raghavan, 2010, 248-9

⁷⁶⁷ 'To Chou En-lai: Indo-Tibetan Border', 22 March 1959, *JNSW*, 47:451

Chinese cannot have known that.⁷⁶⁸ This approach had several drawbacks for India. Nehru might have hoped that clearly presenting India's claims to China would generate a like response, but once again China did not deign to offer such clarity. Furthermore, the legal argument made India appear uncompromising. But worst of all, by basing territorial claims on treaties from the age of European imperial domination of Asia, Delhi confirmed the conclusions of Beijing's analysts through 1958, presenting itself as a bourgeois collaborator with imperialism, and therefore an opponent of revolutionary China.⁷⁶⁹

So the competing forces of class and nation were bound together in ever tighter knots. A dilemma faced Beijing: embrace the class confrontation that was offered by the wave of reactionary hostility sweeping India, or cling to the single possibility of national compromise that remained on the border. The possibility of a settlement of national interests in order to pursue broader international goals was severely compromised by the beginning of 1959. Traditional national interests increasingly clashed. Imperial projects that once seemed potentially collaborative were strained. The problem of national feeling across the Himalayas caused instability and ill feeling. And yet, in January 1959 the chance of a compromise remained. Beijing might still put aside the accumulating evidence of class antagonism with Delhi to make a traditional settlement of national interests. But Nehru needed Beijing to accept the McMahon Line and overall alignment of the border before he could compromise in Ladakh, he could not submit to overall renegotiation of the border for domestic reasons. The possibility of cooperation would be lost completely however when Mao decided that the CCP's class enemies in Tibet and abroad must be confronted.

Drawing Lines

⁷⁶⁸ Raghavan, 2010, 249

⁷⁶⁹ Deshingkar, 'India-China Relations: The Nehru Years', 2005, 15

Mao saw the climaxing of the Tibet rebellion as an opportunity to test class loyalties not just in Tibet, but in India, the USSR and indeed globally. It was a familiar Maoist tactic to allow opponents to isolate themselves before counter-attacking, as he had explained with the relaunch of the Hundred Flowers campaign in January 1957.⁷⁷⁰ In effect, Mao had decided the time had come to draw definite lines of class confrontation and establish clearly where his enemies lay. In turn, the Dalai Lama and Nehru each failed Mao's test and so placed themselves in the opposing formation. However, rather than stimulating the class antagonism of the Indian people against their domestic enemies, Beijing's counter-attack against the Dalai Lama, Nehru and associated reactionaries only exacerbated national sentiment in India. Thus, the shift to a class dominated management of relations with India caused a collapse in trust between Beijing and Delhi. The incompatibility of Mao and Nehru's visions of history's motive force as either class or nation asserted itself, dooming the prospects for continued cooperation. Despite Beijing's vitriol, Nehru sought to maintain Chinese sympathy for India's syncretic approach to domestic and international politics. Moscow was therefore required to choose between Indian non-alignment and loyalty to the comrades in Beijing. However, following a brief detente between the socialist allies, Moscow resumed its tacit support for Nehru's political experiments, further cementing Mao's conviction that the CPSU was rotten and that Nehru's hypocrisy must be exposed.

Mao increasingly felt that a crisis in Tibet would facilitate more thorough integration of that region by allowing him to draw clear lines of class confrontation and then counter-attack the isolated reactionaries. The growing organisational strength of the CCP made this more realistic.⁷⁷¹ The new roads also would help this process. In addition, this was also a question of asserting Beijing's absolute sovereignty in Tibet and satisfying the CCP's claim to be the liberators of all the Chinese people. With India appearing more and more hostile there was less and less reason to continue to accept these political limitations simply to accommodate Delhi's sensitivities.

⁷⁷⁰ Shen, 2013 308-9

⁷⁷¹ Chen, 'The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959', 68-70

The unrest in Lhasa that built up in March 1959 was therefore an opportunity to establish loyalties and so Beijing's initial strategy after 10 March was 'not firing the first shot' to allow the reactionaries and rebels to fully reveal themselves.⁷⁷² The confrontation escalated after the Dalai Lama's departure on the 17 March and on the 20th the PLA were ordered to return fire on the rebels. The instruction to begin suppression of the disorder emphasised class struggle also. For Mao, class struggle was the pre-eminent political tool for catalysing economic development.⁷⁷³ Now, counter-insurgency would also be optimised by combining it with social revolution. But class struggle is most effectively prosecuted once one's class enemies are clearly categorised and isolated. Hence, some caution was maintained and an order given to make no charge of treason yet against the Dalai Lama, he also had to reveal where he stood.⁷⁷⁴

Chinese leaders also used the crisis to delineate China's enemies in India. Despite certainty that India and Nehru were involved in the rebellion, there was no public attack.⁷⁷⁵ On the 25 March, Deng Xiaoping explained that to attack India now would mean a public debate, so he asserted, 'we are now letting the Indian authorities do more unjust things, and, when the time comes, we certainly will settle accounts with them.' Mao agreed that they must closely watch India's response to events in Tibet.⁷⁷⁶ India's response to events north of the Himalayas would reveal the class allegiances within its government and society. Mao believed that a key CCP strength had been its historical success in identifying comprador capitalists, those elite collaborators with foreign

⁷⁷² 17 March 1959, *ZELNP*

⁷⁷³ Shen, 2013, 286

⁷⁷⁴ Chen, 'The Tibetan Rebellion', 72-78

⁷⁷⁵ 17 March 1959, *ZELNP*, Zhou Enlai had pointed out that events in Lhasa were related to the Indian authorities

⁷⁷⁶ Chen, 'The Tibetan Rebellion', 85-86

imperialism.⁷⁷⁷ Delhi's actions now would reveal how much power Indian compradors had over Nehru's Government. At the end of 1958 Chinese analysts had observed that Nehru was under huge pressure to crush the CPI.⁷⁷⁸ Crisis in Tibet would only intensify Nehru's dilemma, forcing him, like the Dalai Lama and everyone else, to take sides.

The Tibet crisis would also test the Soviet position regarding 'peaceful transition'. First of all, the intensified political struggle within India caused by Tibet continued to challenge the notion that the CPI should pursue 'peaceful transition'. Secondly, the actual situation in Tibet also served Mao's refutation of Soviet doctrine. The incorrigible hostility of Tibetan elites confirmed the need for violent struggle. On the 19 April, Mao explained to a delegation from Italy that the CCP no longer needed to delay the reform programme in Tibet. He invited his guests to consider a theoretical issue: 'The problem now is to take the arms from the shoulders of the serf-owners and give them to the labourers. This problem leads to a theoretical problem, namely class struggle in the end always needs a war, to transition peacefully is very difficult.'⁷⁷⁹

The Tibet crisis was of such critical domestic, international and ideological importance that Mao personally calibrated Beijing's public presentation of events in order to carefully test the various constituents. The Chairman corrected the first media response to events in Lhasa, published by Xinhua on the 28 March. There was no accusation against the Dalai Lama or Nehru, or even India directly. The statement announced that the Preparatory Committee of the Autonomous Region of Tibet had replaced the local government and the PLA had begun pacification. Mao satirised the rebels' confidence in their strength and support of India and the US, but said that only Jiang Jieshi

⁷⁷⁷ 'Liangci shibai shi women xuehuile dazhang', 1 February 1959, *JGYLMZDJSWG*, xia, 8

⁷⁷⁸ *Cong Nihelu muqian de kumen kan Yindu zhengju*, 9 December 1958, *CMFA* 105-00891-09

⁷⁷⁹ 'Guangda de Xizang qunzhong yu jiefangjun zhanzai yiqi', 19 April 1959, *JGYLMZDJSWG*, xia, 31

was actually aiding the rebels. Mao welcomed Nehru's 'friendly' statement of the 23rd that India would not interfere in China's domestic affairs, hypocritically remarking that China had never intervened in India's domestic politics.⁷⁸⁰ More provocatively however, the article charged that Kalimpong was the 'commanding centre' of the rebellion.⁷⁸¹

While this accusation provoked outrage in India, Nehru's dilemma over Tibet was best encapsulated in the holy figure of the Dalai Lama. Delhi had always struggled to craft a Tibet policy that sufficiently reassured Beijing of India's disinterest. How now was the Indian Prime Minister to reconcile the extraordinary level of popular Indian veneration for this god-king with the harsh political reality that Beijing believed that this man had thrown in his lot with the reactionary rebels in Tibet? On 15 March, once early intimations of the growing crisis in Lhasa had reached Nehru, he had told his officers in Lhasa and Gangtok that Delhi would offer the Dalai Lama asylum if it was sought.⁷⁸² Armed with this reassurance, the Dalai Lama had slipped out of Lhasa on the 20 March travelling south, incognito, light and fast in a small party. Approaching the Indian border, an advanced group was sent ahead to confirm that sanctuary was available.⁷⁸³ The main party then crossed into India on the 31 March and Nehru sent a note of welcome on the 3 April. The Indian Prime Minister knew he had no choice other than to welcome the Dalai Lama. However, to avoid provoking Beijing and limit the public excitement, he ordered the Indian officials meeting the party that the Lama was to be kept away from the media and not allowed to make any statements.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁸⁰ 'Dui Xizang panluan shijian gongbao de piyu he xiugai', 27 March 1959, *JGYLMZDJSWG*, xia, 20

⁷⁸¹ 'In the Lok Sabha', 30 March 1959, *JNSW*, 47:469, fn.

⁷⁸² 'MEA to Political Officer, Gangtok, and Consul General India, Lhasa', 15 March 1959, *JNSW*, 47:584, Appendix 14

⁷⁸³ Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet, *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), 156

⁷⁸⁴ 'To the Dalai Lama: Welcome', 3 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:438; for Subimal Dutt's instructions regarding the Dalai Lama and the press, see, *ibid*, fn.

As Mao had expected, the crisis in Tibet dramatically raised the temperature of Indian politics and Nehru, acutely aware of how shackled he was, strained every sinew to cool passions.⁷⁸⁵ The pressure on Nehru was well illustrated by Pandit's telegram to him regretting that there had been no statement on the 'tragic happenings in Lhasa.'⁷⁸⁶ Consular officials in Lhasa had twice turned away Tibetans seeking sympathy in mid-March and foreign press were warned against sensationalist reporting.⁷⁸⁷ As the crisis exploded, Nehru refused on 23 March pressure for a parliamentary debate saying it was a 'novel' idea to discuss another country's affairs in such fashion.⁷⁸⁸ He was forced to return to the house on the 2 April again rejecting calls for a debate but also dismissing Chinese charges about Kalimpong and rubbishing the more outlandish Indian scaremongering. He pled with MPs to bear in mind the different understanding of public comment between China and India.⁷⁸⁹ Nehru was caught fast between his public and Beijing's suspicion.

Nehru's efforts to reconcile his China policy with Indian national sentiment for Tibet was partly impeded by his personal feelings. He regularly admitted private sympathy for the Tibetans.⁷⁹⁰ But Nehru could not exclude this sympathy from his public pronouncements. So, on 2 April, while appealing for calm, and recognising Beijing's rights, he talked of the 'cultural kinship' between Tibet and India based on 'vast numbers of pilgrims', and veneration of the Dalai Lama by 'large numbers of people', which meant 'our reaction to anything that happens in Tibet is bound to be very deep'. Nehru said such reactions have to be borne 'in mind'.⁷⁹¹ That he actually shared this sentiment

⁷⁸⁵ 'To Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit: The Situation in Tibet', 26 March 1959, *JNSW*, 47:459

⁷⁸⁶ 'In the Lok Sabha: Tibet', 30 March 1959, 47:474, fn. 'Telegram from Pandit, 29 March 1959'

⁷⁸⁷ 'In the Rajya Sabha', 4 May 1959, *JNSW-SS*, 49:551; 'In the Lok Sabha', 17 March 1959, *JNSW*, 47:431

⁷⁸⁸ 'In the Lok Sabha: The Situation in Tibet', 23 March 1959, *JNSW*, 47:455

⁷⁸⁹ 'In the Lok Sabha: Tibet', 2 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:421

⁷⁹⁰ 'Note 33', 25 March 1959, *JNLCM*, 5:218; 'To Saiyid Fazl Ali: Public Feeling about Tibet', 3 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:437

⁷⁹¹ 'In the Lok Sabha: Tibet', 2 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:421

was suggested at a press conference dominated by news of the Dalai Lama's arrival: 'Tibet, culturally speaking, is an off-shoot of India, that is to say Buddhism - not of India politically - and we may be Hindus, we may be anything in India but Buddha is the greatest Indian that ever lived, and we still in India are under the umbrella of this feeling for the Buddha. Tibet, of course, is far more so and there is this tremendous bond.'⁷⁹²

The insistence on India's right to express cultural solidarity with Tibet underpinned the confused and provocative tone on Tibetan autonomy. Nehru told a crowd in Allahabad on 6 April that, 'Tibet should regain their [*sic*] freedom and at the same time, our friendship with China should remain unbroken.'⁷⁹³ All Nehru's public talk of Tibetan 'national feelings' indicated a muddled policy, an inability to face up to the choice he had to make between Tibet and China.⁷⁹⁴ Nehru told crowds in mid-April that Beijing had given Tibet autonomy because they were a separate people, and formed a state within a state.⁷⁹⁵ Thus, Nehru defended himself to the Indian public by saying his policy had been based on the understanding that Tibet was autonomous. On the other hand, to some he privately acknowledged this autonomy had never really existed.⁷⁹⁶ To others, Nehru complained that Zhou had several times reassured him about Tibetan autonomy.⁷⁹⁷ However, if Zhou had conceded Tibetan autonomy previously, it was annulled on the 28 March, and Indian talk of a 'broad revolt' there or 'national uprising' only angered Beijing.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹² 'Press Conference', 5 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:219

⁷⁹³ 'At Allahabad: Public Meeting, Speech at KP Intermediate College Grounds, Allahabad', 6 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:40

⁷⁹⁴ 'To CPP: Tibetan Refugees', 9 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:447

⁷⁹⁵ 'Gurukul Kangri University, Hardwar: Convocation Address', 13 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48: 386-410; See also, 'At Marina Beach: Public Meeting', 14 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:89

⁷⁹⁶ 'To C Rajagopalachari: Khampa Revolt', 8 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:445

⁷⁹⁷ 'Note 33', 25 March 1959, *JNLCM*, 5:228

⁷⁹⁸ 'In the Lok Sabha: Statement on Situation in Tibet', 27 April 1959, *JNSW-SS*, 48:503; 'In the Raja Sabha', 4 May 1959, *JNSW*, 49:549-554

Nehru's problem was that the right wing used Tibet to launch a comprehensive attack on his political position. He had himself welcomed the domestic political lines drawn following the Nagpur Congress session and his party's renewed rhetoric of progressive land reform.⁷⁹⁹ However, because the end of Tibet's autonomy seemed to prove the total failure of Nehru's friendly China policy, the whole package of related domestic and international policies could now be challenged. Therefore, it was imperative for Nehru to contain the fallout with Beijing. A first step was to prevent the Dalai Lama from operating politically, against right wing demands.⁸⁰⁰ Nehru knew that strong language about China aimed deliberately to embarrass his government.⁸⁰¹ This pressure combined with continuing assaults on economic policy and trapped Nehru between the left and the right.⁸⁰² Nehru fought India's internal Cold War, ridiculing the fear that cooperatives meant 'red ruin' for India. Riding through a barrage of attacks from right and left, he said some fear US imperialism and others say China will 'swallow us'. Nehru countered: 'No country, great or small, is going to swallow India. If it attempted to do so, it would have most violent indigestion.'⁸⁰³

International opponents of Indian non-alignment also sought to exploit Sino-Indian discord. Nehru perceived a Western attempt to effect a realignment of India's posture in a way that they had failed to do during the Hungary crisis.⁸⁰⁴ He was clear that the US was behind a Pakistani attempt to transform Indo-Pakistan relations. Prime Minister Ayub Khan had pointed to the 'danger from the north' in his appeal for a policy of 'common defence'. Nehru entirely rejected such talk as implying

⁷⁹⁹ 'Implement Congress Policies', 24 February 1959, *JNSW*, 46:295; see also, 'Note 33', 25 March 1959, *JNLCM*, 5:218

⁸⁰⁰ 'To Subimal Dutt: No Political Activity by the Dalai Lama', 9 May 1959, *JNSW*, 49:569

⁸⁰¹ 'To G Parthasarathi: China Policy', 10 May 1959, *JNSW*, 49:571

⁸⁰² 'At Delhi: Press Conference', 14 May 1959, *JNSW*, 46:183

⁸⁰³ 'Public Meeting: Cooperative Farming, Rajaji's New Party', 1 June 1959, *JNSW*, 49:41

⁸⁰⁴ 'To Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit: On Western Press Reports', 15 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:457

a retreat from non-alignment, casting aside Pakistani inducements that they could settle the thorny question of canal waters in the Punjab and that even Kashmir 'was not such a difficult problem.'⁸⁰⁵

Instead, Delhi quietly appealed first to Beijing and then Moscow to help preserve Indian non-alignment and, implicitly, Nehru's domestic programme. On the 23 April, RK Nehru, India's Ambassador to Egypt, and formerly to China, met his Chinese counterpart Chen Jiakang. 'Little Nehru' told Chen that the Prime Minister could not control the opposition and Beijing should support Nehru because he adhered to *Panchsheel*.⁸⁰⁶ Subsequently, in early May, the Soviets were asked to exert themselves in Nehru's favour also. An Indian diplomat at the UN told the Soviets that if they succeeded in their attempt to use the current furore to oust Nehru, then Indian nonalignment would fall with the Prime Minister.⁸⁰⁷

Beijing's firm rejection of reconciliation with Nehru indicated a continued desire to test his class loyalties and also underlined and contributed to the widening fractures in the Sino-Soviet alliance. While Moscow and Beijing had recently united to dismiss Nehru's development ideas in his article, *The Basic Approach*, the Soviets had nevertheless continued its practical endorsement of Nehru's policies by sending a delegation to discuss new aid for India in February 1959.⁸⁰⁸ By contrast, rather than protect Nehruvian non-alignment, Beijing upped the ante by directly attacking the Indian Prime Minister. Mao had hesitated about taking this step for fear of driving Nehru into the imperialist camp. But reading Indian newspapers on 7 April convinced him of Delhi's sustained

⁸⁰⁵ 'Rajeshwar Dayal to Nehru', 2 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:573, Appendix 6; 'To MJ Desai: Joint Defence with Pakistan', 2 May 1959, *JNSW*, 49:525

⁸⁰⁶ *Wo zhu Aiji dashi Chen Jiakang yu Yindu zhu gaiguo dashi xiao Nihelu tan Xizang wenti*, 23 April 1959, 105-00656-01, *PRCMFA*

⁸⁰⁷ 'Bocailuobuzhikelikufu han: guanyu Zhongyin guanxi wenti', 6 May 1959, *Guanyu zhongyin bianjie chongtu de e'guo dang'an*, (*GZBCED*) [Soviet Documents on the Sino-Indian boundary conflict], ed. Shen Zhihua, Unpublished Chinese translations

⁸⁰⁸ 'To NS Khrushchev', 5 April 1959, *JNSW*, 48:539-541

involvement in the Tibet rebellion. The Dalai Lama's public call for independence on 18 April also bolstered Mao's resolution. The Chairman ordered a propaganda campaign:

'We will begin a counteroffensive against India's anti-China activities, emphasizing a big debate with Nehru. We should sharply criticise Nehru and should not be afraid of making him feel agitated or of provoking a break with him. We should carry the struggle through to the end.'

Mao explained that the attack on Nehru would highlight his obstruction of reform in Tibet, his territorial ambitions and confused desire that Tibet be a buffer. This would educate the Indian people and justify both China's international position regarding Tibet and the crushing of the rebellion and promotion of reform. Friendship with India would be preserved and Nehru compelled to adhere to *Panchsheel* in dealings with China. Eventually on 6 May 1959 the *People's Daily* published, 'The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy'.⁸⁰⁹ This attempt to confront Nehru in order to restore friendship with India was the first salvo in a developing diplomatic strategy of struggle.⁸¹⁰

Beijing's suspicions of Nehru and India were not delusional and the idea that India wanted to create a buffer in Tibet was not 'absurd'.⁸¹¹ The perception that India manipulated the Dalai Lama was certainly exaggerated.⁸¹² But as seen above, Nehru always had trouble crafting a Tibet policy that fully reassured Beijing. And at this moment, the Indian Government's relationship with the Dalai Lama was certainly provocative. As Chinese diplomats pointed out, one of the Lama's

⁸⁰⁹ Chen, 'The Tibetan Rebellion', 86-88

⁸¹⁰ I am indebted to a conversation with Lorenz Luthi for the origin of the idea of diplomacy as struggle.

⁸¹¹ Luthi, 142, Raghavan, 2010, 251

⁸¹² Dalai Lama, 165

statements attacking China was distributed by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.⁸¹³ Furthermore, Nehru had even met Tibetan rebels at his official residence.⁸¹⁴ Nehru's daughter and sister, Indira Gandhi and Mrs Pandit, had both appealed publicly for support for Tibetan independence.⁸¹⁵ The sum of many Indian words and actions over the last several years pointed to a desire that Tibet be a buffer. China's Ambassador in North Korea explained that the anti-China clamour in India was a product of the elites' desire to quarantine the Indian people from the example of progressive politics in China, and that they hoped to pressure Beijing to abandon progressive reform in Tibet.⁸¹⁶ The Indian media's constant harping on Tibetan autonomy appeared in Beijing to reflect an attempt to obstruct social revolution in Tibet.⁸¹⁷ Indian leaders were indeed obsessed with Tibetan autonomy, hence the excitement when Zhou had assured Nehru at Bandung that communism would not be imposed on the province. Furthermore, some Indian officials, such as Apa Pant in Sikkim, had consistently sought to encourage a spirit of psychological opposition to the Han, and Nehru's own promotion of cultural relations was an implicit defence of Tibetan autonomy. So China's suspicion cannot be dismissed just because India was not materially assisting the Tibetan rebels. In the worldview of Beijing's leaders in 1959 India's ideological threat to China's hold on Tibet was real.

Mao did not want a military confrontation with India. He saw an ideological threat and responded in ideological terms with diplomacy as a form of struggle. The handling of India and Tibet on pure class terms did irreparable damage to relations with Delhi however. In April and May Mao had still sought to accommodate India's security concerns and appealed to a shared strategic interest in

⁸¹³ 'Statement made by the Chinese Ambassador to the Foreign Secretary', 16 May 1959, *Notes, Memoranda etc., White Paper I*, 73

⁸¹⁴ *Xizang panluanfenzi zai Yindu de huodong qingkuang*, 27 May 1959, *CMFA* 105-00944-01

⁸¹⁵ Puzhannuofu yu Qiao Shaoguang huitan jiyao: Xizang pingpan yu Zhongyin guanxi, 7 May 1959, *GZBCED*

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid*

⁸¹⁷ *Xizang panluanfenzi zai Yindu de huodong qingkuang*, 27 May 1959, *CMFA* 105-00944-01

remaining friends.⁸¹⁸ Mao was worried that Jiang Jieshi was going to exploit the Tibet crisis to attack Yunnan.⁸¹⁹ The polemical attack on Nehru was the Leninist pursuit of unity through struggle.⁸²⁰ Zhou and Mao told a Soviet delegation they wanted to demonstrate to the people of the world the links between some of India's big capitalists and the Tibetan rebels. Nehru was left some 'leeway' and relations with India would be friendly again as there was no argument with the Indian people as a whole.⁸²¹ Similarly, Tibet was now being pacified and reformed along strict ideological grounds based on class analysis.⁸²²

Mao's attempt to draw clear lines of class confrontation and pressure Nehru and other vacillating elites in India, Tibet and elsewhere ignored the power of nationalism. Nehru, Mao told Soviet visitors, was a middle bourgeoisie, but India's prospects remained good because 'Nehru had no option but to reflect the will of those 400 million [Indian] people.' Mao welcomed the instability in Tibet, suggesting it would give the Third World's 'labouring people a little education, and have the communist parties of these countries also learn how not to fear ghosts.'⁸²³ Mao understood the 'anti-China wave' in India as a product of class antagonism rather than national sentiment. His little sympathy for ethnic, cultural and religious relationships had exacerbated the instability in

⁸¹⁸ 'Xizang pingpan hou de youguan fangzhen zhengce', 7 May 1959, JGYLMZDJSWG, xia, 39; 'Xizang renmin qunzhong yonghu renmin jiefangjun pingpan, qinru jieren', 28 April 1959, JGYLMZDJSWG, xia, 35; 'Statement made by the Chinese Ambassador to the Foreign Secretary', 16 May 1959, Notes, Memoranda etc., White Paper I, 75-76; For Mao's original draft of section that he added to this statement see, 'Yindu bushi woguo de duidizhe, ershi woguo de youren', 13 May 1959, MZDWJWX, 376

⁸¹⁹ 'Guanyu zhunbei yingfu tiao mian jiangjun keneng zai wo bianjing fadong baoluan de piyu', 4 May 1959, JGYLMZDJSWG, xia, 38; See also, Khan, 2015, 71-72.

⁸²⁰ Yindu fuzongtong dengren tong Sulian dashi tan Xizang wenti, CMFA 105-00657-03, 9-12; Chen, 'The Tibetan Rebellion', 87

⁸²¹ 6 May 1959, ZELNP

⁸²² 12 May 1959, ZELNP; 'Guanyu Xizang pingpan', 15 April 1959, JGYLMZDJSWG, xia, 24 ; also see, 'Xizang pingpan hou de youguan fangzhen zhengce', 7 May 1959, JGYLMZDJSWG, xia, 39

⁸²³ 'Shijie shang you ren pa gui, ye you ren bu pa gui', 6 May 1959, MZDWJWX, 374

Tibet. However, while Nehru was constrained by Indian public opinion, it was nationalism and religious sympathy for Tibet, not class allegiance to Mao's programme that drove Indian feeling.

Sino-Indian relations therefore became an acute problem for Sino-Soviet relations. In Beijing it was thought that Delhi exploited the Tibet issue to divide Moscow and Beijing. New Indian requests for Soviet aid, the pleading that Nehru was in a dilemma and his nonalignment under pressure were all perceived as attempts at influencing the Soviet view of Beijing. The Indian media was even publicly claiming that the USSR was neutral in the Sino-Indian dispute.⁸²⁴ The Soviets seemed to be trying to mediate between Beijing and Delhi.⁸²⁵ In May, Chen Yi agreed with Yudin that Nehru wanted help fending off the right wing attacks, but Chen said the Chinese were not inclined to do so.⁸²⁶ The difference was clear. Beijing wanted Nehru pressured and Indian politics reduced to a crucible of contradictions. The Soviets did not, they were content with Nehru and his nonalignment.

The Tibet crisis prompted Mao to restore class to the centre of his prescriptions for political problems. A framework of analysis privileging the nation-state had proved insufficient to deal with a growing array of threats to revolutionary China. Therefore, he had seized on the Lhasa uprising to clarify and redefine those threats in the idiom he preferred, class confrontation. The crisis proved a fruitful testing ground of class loyalties. While Nehru tried to maintain cooperation and confound the narrative of inevitable class confrontation, Beijing believed he, his Government and the Dalai Lama had all demonstrated their basic sympathy for reaction and therefore made themselves targets for Beijing's ideological struggle. In addition, the Soviets had fatefully underscored their lack

⁸²⁴ *Zhu Sulian he zhu Yindu shiguan bao Suyin guanxi xin dongxian deng*, 3 April - 19 December 1959, CMFA 109-01935-02

⁸²⁵ *Yindu, Zhongguo youxie zhuxi tong Sulian dashi tan Xizang wenti*, 23 April 1959, CMFA 105-00657-01

⁸²⁶ *'Chen Yi fuzongli jiejian Sulian zhuhua dashi Yujin'*, 8 May 1959, CMFA 105-00657-03

of ideological rigour and conviction with their continued sympathy for Indian non-alignment, a posture that Beijing now regarded as simple cover for Delhi's stance on the wrong side of history.

Conclusion

The dramatic deterioration in Sino-Indian relations in the spring of 1959 was caused by the incompatibility of a politics based on class with one based on the nation. The years of cooperation in the mid-1950s had been predicated on Beijing's agreement to conduct a genuinely *inter-national* foreign policy based on an acceptance of the legitimacy of the Indian Congress and other governments of non-socialist Asia. Beijing had renounced a revolutionary policy that implicitly rejected others' claims to absolute sovereignty and permitted intervention in other states' politics to foment class confrontation. This posture had produced an agreement to operate on the basis of *Panchsheel* and had resulted in India's enthusiastic support for Beijing's role at Bandung. Beijing's desire to cooperate with India had also led to moderate rule and assurances of autonomy for Tibet.

But from the end of 1956 Chairman Mao's underlying tendency to perceive the world in terms of class formations gradually returned to the centre of his calculations. The Hungary crisis had sharply brought home the danger posed by class enemies clinging on in socialist countries who might seek the support of overseas allies. Mao's continual anxiety about the undying hostility of reactionaries in general made him profoundly sceptical of new Soviet theories such as 'peaceful transition' to socialism and revealed an intrinsic suspicion of governing elites in states like India. Mao's commitment to the ongoing necessity to deal with the class problem, including in China, was solidified by his shock at the attacks against the CCP that emerged during the 'Hundred Flowers' movement, and he responded in July 1957 with thorough suppression of all reactionary thinking in his 'Anti-Rightist Campaign'. The fact that Indian politics in 1957 and particularly in 1958 seemed to be increasingly defined by class confrontation confirmed the basic trend in Mao's thinking but also suggested that relations with India were going to become more difficult. Political trends in India

only added to the sense that the Soviets were labouring under fundamental ideological misapprehensions in their growing support for the Indian state and embossed Mao's sense that Moscow was retreating from its responsibilities towards global revolution. So, in 1958, to underline his domestic departure from Soviet development policy, but also to burnish his qualifications for international revolutionary leadership, Mao shifted to a far more provocative foreign policy posture of passionate rhetorical support for non-state resistance movements, implying also that he had discarded the inter-state foundation of Sino-Indian partnership.

Mao's appetite for cooperation with Delhi in regard to Tibet also declined in 1958 due to his perception of spreading class confrontations in general. For some time, Beijing and Delhi had been collaborating, if somewhat ambiguously, across the Himalayas, in a form of inter-state compromise. The Chinese leadership had agreed to accommodate Indian sensibilities about Tibet by protecting its autonomy and deferring radical social change. In return, the Indians had accepted Tibet's integration to the PRC and assisted with its consolidation by encouraging trade for instance. Delhi even hoped that the Chinese were acquiescing in its special relationship with the Himalayan border states. But the growing tendency in Beijing to view events in class terms destabilised this pattern. Any cooperation with Delhi anyway looked dangerous now as India's rising comprador class was allying with the US. But given that Tibetan elites were spreading instability across their region with US support, the danger from India seemed even more pervasive. In addition, Beijing saw less reason to tolerate limitations on its sovereignty in Tibet now because state-building projects had better integrated it with the rest of the PRC. Hence, the Chinese started to clamp down on this collaborative policy to limit the influence of Indian reaction in Tibet.

In 1958, Beijing also became less inclined to tolerate Delhi's continued public claims that the border was largely settled. In this case, it was less collaboration than Beijing's simple desire to avoid making the border an issue, which had permitted Nehru to maintain the belief that China accepted his conception of the boundary. But in 1958 in particular, Indian doubts accumulated as Beijing's attitude became markedly less cooperative. The Chinese perception of Indian elites' class

enmity and sympathy for the Tibetans was undoubtedly at play also, but the problem of Tibetan instability meant that India's apparent claim to the strategically vital new Chinese road in Aksai Chin had to be soundly rejected. With this, Nehru's whole projection of public certainty about the border became highly vulnerable.

Beijing's class scepticism of Nehru and his government was heightened by the way in which the Indian Prime Minister, driven by national sentiment, expressed sympathies for the rebels in Tibet, and defended his legal view of the border. The uprising in Lhasa in March 1959 seemed to Mao a way to more clearly identify the lines of class confrontation within Tibet and India. Careful delineation of the antagonisms between different social groups had always been the basis of Maoist politics, and this would enable him now to consolidate control of Tibet by unleashing those hungering for revolution against the recalcitrant elites. Clearly this would transform relations with India also, as a pillar of Sino-Indian partnership had been moderation in Tibet. But confrontation in Tibet would serve as a test not just of the Tibetan elite and Dalai Lama's loyalties but also of Delhi, as everyone would be required to choose sides. Moreover, the Soviets too would be tested because the crisis in Tibet would demonstrate the limitations of peaceful, non-class methods of politics and development. More profoundly, the expected political crisis in India would only add to the impression of class confrontation there further underlining the naiveté of Khrushchev's theory of 'peaceful transition'.

The contradictions of Nehru's Tibet policy then became acute. Delhi had always had difficulty forging a policy towards Tibet that genuinely reassured Beijing that India had dropped any ambition for influence in the region. But the escape of the Dalai Lama and suppression of the Tibetan uprising made it almost impossible for Nehru to reconcile Indian popular regard for Tibet's cultural independence with the political need to get along with Beijing. Nehru's own sympathies could hardly be concealed and India continued to project a confused stance on Tibetan autonomy. Nehru's problem was that his right wing opponents seized on the crisis to attack his central political positions. And in truth, it did appear that a key justification of his China policy, light rule in Tibet,

had collapsed. The West also tried to use the crisis to lure Delhi away from non-alignment. Nehru failed to realise that his attempt to confound all this, in terms of reinvigorating his syncretic development policy and appealing to Beijing to help him preserve non-alignment was not regarded as a conciliatory act. Rather it was a manifest provocation to a worldview that rejected harmony and synthesis and sought to intensify political contradictions everywhere as the precursor to revolutionary progress.

So Nehru was failing Mao's test. The Chairman perceived a profound level of threat emanating from India. Delhi was not materially aiding the Tibetan rebels, but Beijing measured Indian interference in terms of public and private rhetoric, and this revealed a desire to obstruct the Tibetan people's liberation under the revolutionary mandate of the CCP. Now operating in terms of transnational class dynamics, Mao launched an ideological attack against Nehru's ideological challenge. So, Beijing deployed Leninist tools against Nehru, a diplomacy of struggle that sought to restore ultimate, ideological unity. This shift paralleled Mao's conviction that reactionaries globally must be confronted to more actively advance the revolution which the Soviets seemed to be retreating from. Indeed, confronting Nehru might illustrate to Moscow its errors. Mao assumed that the unity derived from his struggle with Nehru would deliver the Indian people to Beijing's side of the argument and compel Nehru to return to a more progressive posture. Mirroring Zhou Enlai's analysis of the Hungary crisis, Mao failed to realise that what he actually achieved was the incitement of Indian nationalism against China.

Chapter Five - Diplomacy, imperialism and war, 1959-62

Introduction

Two essential questions excite those who lend any time to reflection on the origins of the Sino-Indian war of 1962. Why was the Indian Government so unreasonable in its management of the border crisis, so obstructive, stubborn and obtuse, when a practical deal appeared available to settle relations with China, for so long identified as a critical concern of Nehru's foreign policy? And why did China act as it did when it resolved to transform the confrontation with massive deployment of force in a theatre spanning the entire length of the border? China's eventual use of overwhelming force is usually regarded as the reluctant resort to a forceful resolution in face of Indian recalcitrance, recklessness and irrationality. But if India's response to the border crisis that developed in late 1959, and which proved impervious to solution, was more reasonable than usually allowed, then surely we need also to reappraise China's decision for war.

In fact Nehru was more reasonable than often assumed and Beijing was more ideological than allowed. Nehru's private diplomacy following the eruption of the border crisis was constructive and an effort to steer around the severe limitations created by the Indian public's excitement and widespread domestic criticism of Nehru. It was Nehru's endeavours which led to serious talks between the Prime Ministers and at which India proposed the division of Ladakh. The subsequent Forward Policy was ill-conceived but was a rational attempt to improve the prospects of diplomacy. On the other hand, Beijing's ideologically framed handling of India on class lines, Leninist struggle to achieve unity, was deliberately provocative and a continuation of the attacks on Nehru begun after the Dalai Lama's flight in 1959. Beijing then was competing with Nehru to influence Indian public opinion. Events at the international level served to confirm the colossal mistrust that had congealed around Sino-Indian relations, and so reinforced the mutual perception of the other as posing a local imperial threat. Nehru tried to fashion a strategy to circumvent the restraints of public opinion and seek a compromise on the border. This failed largely because by the middle of 1962

Mao had decided confrontation with India served his most pressing political needs. By escalating hostility with Delhi, Mao sought to inflame political divisions within India and test the level of Moscow's betrayal before an audience of global revolutionaries.

Strikingly different diplomatic methods had first emerged from the contention over the Tibet rebellion and Dalai Lama's flight to and asylum in India, but evolved further in response to the major border clashes in autumn 1959. The Indian leadership and public's shock at these events is well known, and is often presented as the cause of what was thereafter an often obstructive and irrational approach to a territorial dispute with a powerful neighbour. What is clear however, is that, despite the public and government's disquiet, Delhi conducted a series of private diplomatic initiatives to seek an understanding with Beijing and contain the disruption to the relationship. Concerned to a great extent with the domestic political consequences of a collapse in his friendly China policy, Nehru explicitly sought Beijing's help to undercut his domestic critics. Furthermore, if Indian governmental and public distrust of China was indeed a crucial obstacle to stabilising relations with Beijing, then it is clear Beijing's specific diplomatic strategy for handling the border dispute with India was to a great extent responsible for this distrust. China's leaders were clear that they adopted a form of diplomacy as struggle, conceived as an intervention in India's political battles. For Beijing, public discourse in India was a field of battle. Ironically, while Nehru sought Beijing's understanding for his domestic travails and difficulties with public opinion, the PRC's diplomacy was fashioned by the CCP's ideological interest in exacerbating political conflict in India. The great diplomatic set piece of April 1960, when Zhou Enlai came to Delhi for talks, foundered on these differing concerns.

The distrust and exasperation resulting from the failed talks of April 1960 were inflamed by the resumption of Cold War tensions that erupted soon after Zhou Enlai left Delhi. Beijing and Delhi observed closely how the other reacted to the crisis in superpower relations caused by the U2 Spy Plane incident in May and drew conclusions that intertwined with their local conflict. Beijing's

contention was that India's response to events illustrated its growing collaboration with global imperialism, but even worse, it showed Delhi's active encouragement and even manipulation of Moscow to follow suit and shelve world revolution. In the context of the unprecedented crisis that Beijing faced as the Sino-Soviet alliance began to crumble and economic disaster swept across China, Delhi's attitude was viewed as a profound threat. Meanwhile, Delhi was equally alarmed by Beijing's apparent delight at the possibility that the Soviets would turn away from constructive engagement with the US. These perceptions accentuated the suspicion each felt for the other's approach to the border and the narrower region. The Chinese saw a parallel between India's obstruction of independent movements internationally and its more active regional imperialism and aggression on the border, underscoring its overall loss of anti-colonial virtue. The Indians similarly saw China's anxiety to disrupt Moscow's peaceful coexistence with the US as reflecting a more assertive projection of revolutionary goals in Tibet and the wider region. A cycle of imperial anxiety therefore ensued, with each more actively pursuing its interests, and so confirming the suspicions of the other. The conviction that India had become an imperial power gave China the opportunity to align more closely with key neighbours Nepal and Pakistan, intensifying the general insecurity created by the border crisis.

Growing insecurity and the public opposition to any attempt to make a reasonable deal with the Chinese led Nehru and his advisers to produce a new strategy in 1961. Delhi's much maligned 'Forward Policy' was part of a strategy to create the conditions for more flexible diplomacy by alleviating the Indian public's concern at lost territory. This approach had some flaws. It assumed that the Indian public could be placated sufficiently to make concessions but also that Beijing did not factor Indian public discourse into its calculation of threat. Furthermore, this approach presumed that the Chinese would not be sufficiently provoked militarily to make a major strike back against Indian incursions. This latter premise was the height of military folly but reflected thinking at the absolute centre of Nehru's political world. The Indian leadership's binary understanding of war and peace as absolute opposites blinded it to the creative use that Mao could make of limited warfare for political ends. Furthermore, Delhi was misled by confidence in Moscow's ability to

restrain Beijing, a sense that Indian non-alignment placed it beyond reproach and a racial prejudice for a Chinese lack of valour. However, while Delhi was entrapped by public bellicosity, Mao decided that a more acute confrontation with India would bring major political benefits. Not least, India was again seen to be threatening Beijing's grip on Tibet, particularly with the wave of popular support and interest in the Tibetan cause. Beijing's turn against India in summer 1962 was partly motivated by the desire to fracture public discourse in India. Despite the more cooperative diplomatic tone regarding the border the Indian Government had also confirmed its inveterate hostility by its attitude to Indochina and links to Taiwan. But, for Mao the value of confronting India lay most of all in the meaning this would have for relations with Moscow. Beijing had come to believe that India was now a vehicle for Soviet hostility towards China. This meant that, at the moment when Mao was storming back to political centrality in Beijing, he could use hostility with India to demonstrate the utter corruption of Soviet revisionism. The higher Mao could raise the temperature of Sino-Indian confrontation the more would Moscow's treachery stand exposed before the Indian people and the global masses yearning for true revolutionary leadership.

Diplomacy

The border crisis that began in late summer 1959 set off a critical diplomatic phase of Sino-Indian relations. There was in fact an acute clash in terms of two diplomatic methods that were both crafted to influence India's domestic politics. Beijing intensified its attempt to conduct diplomacy with India as a form of political struggle. This was a pre-eminently ideological approach because it was framed as an intervention in the class confrontation underway within India. As an ideologically conceived and managed form of diplomacy it was also closely related to Beijing's growing dissatisfaction with Soviet foreign policy in general and specifically towards India. Beijing believed its diplomacy towards India had a crucial wider meaning in that it illustrated to Moscow, and the rest of the socialist bloc, a superior principled approach to global politics. In India, Beijing's

diplomacy provoked already aroused nationalist sentiment and seriously damaged trust in Beijing amongst Indian leaders, and so compounded Nehru's difficulty in seeking a resolution of the border. Nehru nevertheless responded to the challenge and sought to manage the problem of popular opinion by taking a hardline in public while pursuing Beijing's understanding in private. The resulting high-level talks that were held in April 1960 ran aground however on Indian distrust and China's refusal to relent in its struggle.

The clash at Longju on the Eastern sector of the Sino-Indian border, on 25 August 1959, began this new diplomatic phase. The fighting seemed in Delhi to indicate a new level of Chinese threat. Many in India were already exasperated by Chinese charges of Indian collusion with the rebels in Tibet. Now, in August 1959, the Indians clearly believed that the location of these latest clashes were south of the McMahon Line in Indian territory.⁸²⁷ Nehru thought the fighting signalled the 'culmination of progressive Chinese unfriendliness'.⁸²⁸ The Indians were particularly shocked because they had warned the Chinese of a planned air-drop at Longju to aid a sick officer. The Chinese had reacted by forcing back Indian troops and occupying the post.⁸²⁹ The violent encounter also activated a residual distrust of China caused by the integration of Tibet to the PRC. The Indian military's secret enquiry into the 1962 war, the Henderson Brooks-Bhagat Report (HBBR), characterised the Longju conflict as having 'militarily upset the status quo on the INDO-TIBETAN Border' for the first time since the 'occupation of Tibet'.⁸³⁰ Use of the term 'occupation' emphasised that China's presence in Tibet was regarded in some quarters in India as illegitimate and evidence of expansionist and aggressive tendencies.

⁸²⁷ 'Dutt to Prime Minister', 31 December, 1959, Dutt, 38, *NMML*

⁸²⁸ Raghavan, 2010, 252-5

⁸²⁹ 'Talks between the two Prime Ministers', 21 April, 1960, 4pm, PN Haksar Papers 1 & 2 Instalment, Subject File 24, *NMML*

⁸³⁰ Lieutenant General Henderson Brooks & Brigadier PS Bhagat, *Henderson Brooks-Bhagat Report: Operations Review 1962 China War (HBBR)*, New Delhi: Indian Army, 1963, 36-7

But it was Zhou Enlai's note to the Indian Government, of 8 September 1959, repudiating the legality of the McMahon Line and apparently laying claim to much of NEFA, that especially caused widespread outrage in India and a collapse of trust in China. The impact was compounded because it coincided with Nehru's release of the first *White Paper* on correspondence with China, revealing to the Indian public the extent of Beijing and Delhi's outstanding differences regarding the border.⁸³¹ Beijing appeared duplicitous because Zhou's note seemed to renege on earlier oral assurances about the McMahon Line.⁸³² Repetition of the Chinese claim in other arenas accentuated Indian shock. For example, Zhou told a Chinese audience that the incidents on the Eastern border were 'due to Indian occupation of China's territory and [India] *even went north of McMahon Line*'. The implication of such a comment being that territory south of the McMahon Line was claimed to be Chinese.⁸³³ Nehru labelled the claim on NEFA 'absurd' and sent a written rejection on 26 September.⁸³⁴

Zhou's provocative communication signalled a new stage in diplomacy as struggle with India. Nominally speaking, the note continued an earlier exchange with Nehru about the McMahon Line in which the Indian Prime Minister had in March made a detailed explanation of the legal and historical basis of the McMahon Line.⁸³⁵ No doubt Beijing had been irritated then by Delhi's resort to, in Chinese eyes, utterly illegitimate legal argument.⁸³⁶ But clearly the long delay since March meant there were more proximate concerns in September. Beijing believed that Delhi was trying to

⁸³¹ Raghavan, 'Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute, 1948-60', 3888

⁸³² *Yindu zhu Yilang dashi tong wo zhu Yindu daiban tan Zhongyin guanxi*, 20 August-9 September 1959, *CMFA* 105-00656-03, 1

⁸³³ 'Press Indinfo', undated, New Delhi, Dutt, 37, *NMML*, 50

⁸³⁴ Raghavan, 2010, 255-6; 'Note 39', 1 October 1959, *JNLCM*, Vol. 5, 282

⁸³⁵ Raghavan, 2010, 246-9

⁸³⁶ Deshingkar, 'India-China Relations: The Nehru Years', 2005, 14-16

use incidents such as that at Longju to pressure it into accepting the McMahon Line.⁸³⁷ Given this perception, and despite the ongoing instability in Tibet, Beijing had to make clear they would not submit to bullying. Furthermore, Beijing may well have been laying the basis for the future proposal that India and China simply make a swap deal of India's claim on NEFA for China's claim in Ladakh, vital now given the Tibet situation.⁸³⁸ But the significance of this new bout of diplomacy as struggle went well beyond the security sphere.

The 8 September note was also a deliberate intervention in Indian public politics and an escalation of transnational class conflict. Diplomacy as struggle targeted Nehru's recent efforts to win the support of the Indian public: his claims in Parliament that the McMahon Line was India's border and that China was guilty of aggression, and the deposition of the *White Paper* on 7 September, which had warmed up the debate about the border in India.⁸³⁹ Beijing was deliberately taking sides in Indian politics, in line with global class alignments. As Chinese diplomat Fu Hao explained to the Soviet comrades in Delhi on the 9 September, Zhou's written refutation of Delhi's claims was tailored to support Indian 'progressive' forces and weaken the 'reactionaries'. Fu made clear the international significance of this intervention by explaining that hostile elements in India sought to destroy Sino-Indian relations because of China's development success, and these efforts to upset India's relations with the Sino-Soviet bloc was aimed at demolishing Indian non-alignment.⁸⁴⁰ This perception of the Indian elite's hostility to the example of Chinese economic development closely mirrored Beijing's notion that India's policy towards Tibet had been governed by the desire to forge an ideological buffer in that province to shield the Indian people from the dynamic example made by CCP guided progress.⁸⁴¹ Mao was now operating actively on the basis of global class alliances,

⁸³⁷ *Beineidiketuofu yu Pan Zili huitan jiyao: tongbao Zhongyin guanxizhuangkuang*, 25 September 1959, *GZBCED*; 11 September 1959, *ZELNP*

⁸³⁸ Fravel, 2008, 83-84

⁸³⁹ 8 September 1959, *ZELNP*

⁸⁴⁰ *'Beineidiketuofu yu Fu Hao huitan jiyao: guanyu Zhongyin chongtu qingkuang tongbao'*, 9 September 1959, *GZBCED*

⁸⁴¹ Raghavan, 2010, 251-2

so his sense that Indian elites were attacking China made it logical to intervene to support those elites' domestic opponents.

Diplomacy as struggle was always crafted to deliver 'unity'. But this 'unity' had a very specific meaning. It either meant the object of struggle gave in and made concessions accepting the principles of the subject of struggle. Or else, no concession emerged and the object revealed itself to be recalcitrant and beyond reform, in which case it was an enemy to be destroyed. If Nehru responded to Beijing's principled stand and made concessions then the PRC could continue to cooperate with him and his government. Otherwise, Nehru would reveal himself as aligned with reaction, and the PRC's alliance with India's revolutionary forces would be cemented. Nehru's Government was not yet anathema to Beijing because its non-aligned foreign policy was still useful in Indochina. Despite Chinese concerns over the last year that India was blocking its interests through the International Control Commissions (ICC) in Indochina, it was still making enough positive contributions in autumn 1959, despite Longju, to justify some respect for Indian non-alignment.⁸⁴² Beijing's concern with the survival of Indian nonalignment was further underscored by the perception that the US and UK wanted to use the border dispute to chaperone an entente between Delhi and Islamabad.⁸⁴³ So, cooperation with the Indian state still retained attractions for China's leaders if Nehru would compromise.

Beijing's intensification of the diplomacy of struggle with Delhi was also a response to Moscow's deeply unsatisfactory posture regarding India and the border clashes. The Chinese wanted to show the comrades that relations with India could not be conducted at the cost of principle. The Soviets had been very unsupportive of Beijing's approach to the border so far in 1959 and after

⁸⁴² SarDesai, DR, *Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, 1947-64*, Berkeley: University of California, 1968, 211-222, & chapter 7; Also see, Gaiduk, Ilya V., *Confronting Vietnam, Soviet Policy toward the Indochina Conflict, 1954-1963*, Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003, 129-37; *Yindu dui Laowo jushi deng wenti de taidu*, CMFA 106-00485-21, 64-66; 'Yin dui Laowo wenti taidu', 14 August, 1959, *Ibid*, 62-63; 7 September 1959, ZELNP; 'Su dashi gao wo qingkuang', 11 September 1959, CMFA 106-00485-21, 67

⁸⁴³ 'Beineidiketuofu yu Fuhao huitan jiyao: guanyu Zhongyin chongtu qingkuang tongbao', 29 August 1959, GZBCED

Longju had ignored both a request to withhold a planned statement of neutrality and Chinese admonitions that Delhi was trying to manipulate Moscow.⁸⁴⁴ While Moscow's subsequent TASS statement of 8 September did give China priority as the USSR's brother, with India only designated a friend, it still horrified Beijing for failing again to highlight Indian errors. It seemed to Beijing that Moscow did not want to offend Delhi for fear of upsetting the forthcoming summit with Eisenhower.⁸⁴⁵ That the dispute with India became, in Chinese eyes, a test of Moscow and Beijing's relative ideological rectitude, only added to the resolution to stick to diplomacy as struggle. By late September, the Chinese official assessment was that while the Soviet attitude towards India had not improved, diplomacy as struggle had indeed delivered some unity because it had forced Nehru to soften his position.⁸⁴⁶ Chinese confidence in their approach contributed to a bitter row with Khrushchev on 2 October, at which they complained that he only emphasised their threats, and not the softer side of Beijing's treatment of Delhi, such as the invitation for the Indian Vice-President to visit Beijing.⁸⁴⁷

However, Beijing's attempt to achieve unity through diplomacy as struggle mainly resulted in provoking Indian nationalism. Broad Indian hostility to any concessions placed severe limits on Nehru's options. As the Chinese embassy in Delhi noted, not even the CPI was fully supportive of Beijing's stance.⁸⁴⁸ The huge loss of trust that Beijing had created with the NEFA claim was then

⁸⁴⁴ 'Jin jinian Sulian dui Yindu de zuofa', June 1962, *Sulian dui Zhongyin guanxi de taidu*, 10 September 1959-1 June 1962, CMFA 109-03216-04; Also see, Ray, 1980, 59-63

⁸⁴⁵ 'Dui Su jiu Zhongyin bianjing shijian de shengming de kanfa', 10 September 1959, *Yindu Sulian Guanxi*, CMFA 105-00946-04, 3

⁸⁴⁶ 'Sulian dui Yin zhengce de yixie juti biaoqian', 30 September 1959, *Zhu Sulian he zhu Yindu shiguan bao Suyin guanxi xin dongxiang deng*, 3 April-19 December 1959, CMFA 109-01935-02, 12; *Yindu xianqi di'erci fanhua gaochao de yinmou*, 29 September 1959, CMFA 105-00944-07

⁸⁴⁷ *The Khrushchev-Mao Conversations, 31 July-3 August 1958 and 2 October 1959*, Vladislav M Zubok, Bulletin 12/13, Fall/Winter 2001, Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center

⁸⁴⁸ 'Yindu guanfang ji gejie dui Zhou Enlai zongli fuxin de fanying', 23 September 1959, CMFA 105-00944-05; also Ray, 1980, 59-63

compounded by the Kongka La clash of 21 October on the western sector of the border. This incident seemed to show that the Chinese had advanced in Ladakh through the summer because the previous year an Indian patrol had gone unhindered through the pass at Kongka all the way to Lanak La, at the border line claimed by Delhi.⁸⁴⁹ Beijing now said Kongka La marked the border and warned that if India continued to cross this line in the west then China would retaliate by crossing the McMahon Line in the east. Nehru believed this was a warning to Delhi to relinquish Ladakh.⁸⁵⁰ Ill-treatment of Indian prisoners further inflamed public ire and Nehru became defiant in face of domestic opposition, public uproar and China's claims.⁸⁵¹ He boldly told his Chief Ministers that any major invasion on the border would be successfully met.⁸⁵²

Despite the growing perception of Chinese hostility and loss of trust in Beijing, Nehru had consistently tried to circumvent public sentiment, defuse tensions and persuade Beijing it was in China's interest to support his position against his domestic opponents. Shortly after Longju, the Indians had resolved not to return to that post if the Chinese would also withdraw and repeated an invitation for China to join an agricultural exhibition in Delhi.⁸⁵³ The Indians tried to get a message to Beijing via Polish diplomats that Nehru's statements on the border were only due to the domestic uproar but nevertheless non-alignment and Delhi's friendly China policy were threatened by ongoing pressure.⁸⁵⁴ TN Kaul had already explained to Chinese diplomats in Delhi that the border crisis weakened Nehru and Krishna Menon relative to those opposed to sound Sino-Indian relations.⁸⁵⁵ Even after the apparent claim on NEFA, discreet appeals for Beijing's support had

⁸⁴⁹ Raghavan, 2010, 256-8; Hoffman, 1990, 77

⁸⁵⁰ Raghavan, 2010, 256-8

⁸⁵¹ Hoffman, 1990, 78; Raghavan, 2010, 257-9

⁸⁵² 'Note 46', 4 November 1959, *JNLCM*, Vol. 5, 328

⁸⁵³ 'Dutt to Defence Secretary', 7 September 1959, Dutt, 37, *NMML*, 76; *Yindu yaoqing Zhongguo canjia shijie nongye bolanhui wenti*, 26 August 1958-26 October 1959, *CMFA* 105-00640-01

⁸⁵⁴ *Yindu waishi mishu Dude tong Bolan zhu Yindu dashi tan Zhongyin guanxi*, 4 September 1959, *CMFA* 105-00657-04

⁸⁵⁵ '*TN Gao'er lai tan qingkuang*', 9 September 1959, *CMFA* 105-00656-03, 3

continued. One Congress MP visited China and argued that although Nehru had perhaps mishandled the border question he had done so because he earnestly desired strong relations with Beijing and Moscow and needed protection from the capitalist press in India.⁸⁵⁶

Nehru continued to sidestep public outrage through private diplomacy. The Indian Prime Minister did not think China was seeking outright conflict on the border despite the outrageous border claims they were making.⁸⁵⁷ A major Indian diplomatic gambit begun by AV Baliga, an Indian surgeon and advocate of Indo-Soviet relations, continued despite the encounter in Ladakh. He had met the Soviets on 25 September and proposed he travel to Beijing for talks, explaining that Sino-Indian friendship must be maintained to prevent the Indian right wing from toppling Nehru's Government.⁸⁵⁸ Baliga eventually arrived in Beijing in late October and met Zhou soon after. He repeated the dire warnings of Nehru's precarious domestic situation and said that Delhi was likely to accept Zhou's suggestion of talks.⁸⁵⁹

Nehru's diplomacy simply boosted Beijing's confidence in its strategy however. First of all, Nehru's interest in discussions only confirmed that he was weakening and that diplomacy as struggle was therefore effective.⁸⁶⁰ But more profoundly, there was a contradiction at the heart of Nehru's approaches to Beijing. The general perception in Delhi was that China had reverted to a more ideologically tainted view of India and so over-estimated the impact of US aid on Indian policy. Chinese thinking had become more of 'doctrinaire rigidity' with a preference for sharp cold war divisions.⁸⁶¹ Nehru's diplomacy sought to counter this appealing to Chinese Ambassador Pan Zili

⁸⁵⁶ *Zhou Enlai zongli jiejian Yindu yiyuan a'erwa tanhua jilu*, 9 October 1959, CMFA 105-00646-01

⁸⁵⁷ 'Note 42', 26 October 1959, JNLCM, Vol. 5, 303

⁸⁵⁸ 'Su dashi gao yu Balijia tanhua neirong', 25 September 1959, *Wo yaoqing Yindu zhengfu daibiaotuan canjia woguoqing shizhounian guanli wenti*, 25 September-28 September 1959, CMFA 105-00644-01, 1

⁸⁵⁹ *Yindu Balijia daifu fanghua ji Pan Zili dashi tanhua*, CMFA 105-00647-01

⁸⁶⁰ *Yindu xianqi di'erci fanhua gaochao de yinmou*, 29 September 1959, CMFA 105-00944-07

⁸⁶¹ 'Embassy in China to Delhi', Note by SD Dasgupta, 6 August 1959, Dutt, 37, NMML, 119

in mid-October not to pre-judge the balance of forces in India and assume the reactionaries were managing to change Indian policy.⁸⁶² And yet, Nehru's consistent appeals for Beijing to consider the domestic opposition he faced only confirmed Beijing's own perception of a political crisis in India.

A growing sense of revolutionary opportunity in India also bolstered the logic for Beijing of intervening in Indian politics to exacerbate the confrontation underway. Chinese analysts believed the surging power and ambition of India's reactionary classes had positive revolutionary implications: 'This will cause India's domestic class struggle and contradictions between the ruling groups to increasingly sharpen, to the benefit of the speedy improvement of the Indian people's political awakening.'⁸⁶³ By November, Chinese analysts were concluding that India's big capitalists were forming a new comprador class whose collaboration with imperialism and feudalism was revealed by a proliferation of new joint ventures with foreign capital, growing opposition to Nehru's policies and an alliance against Nagpur's progressive land reform agenda. The moderates on India's middle ground - Nehru and his allies - were weakening and confrontation of the hard right with the progressives was escalating.⁸⁶⁴ In fact, it was thought in Beijing that there had been a general shift in India since Longju, and not only now were the right-wing using the border crisis to attack Nehru, but Nehru himself was exploiting the tension over Tibet and the border to pressure China on the McMahon Line, distract attention from his failing economic policy and discredit China's 'success', expose the CPI as unpatriotic and exert pressure on the border states to form a 'Himalayan Alliance'.⁸⁶⁵ By the end of November, the Chinese believed that even Indian

⁸⁶² *'Guanyu woguo canjia Yindu shijie nongye bolanhui de qingshi'*, 16 October 1959, CMFA 105-00640-01, 24

⁸⁶³ *Yindu longduan ziben jituan fanhuaxing jiaqiang ji dui yindu zhengju yingxiang*, 30 September 1959, CMFA 105-00999-01; *Yindu dazichan jieji he guojia zibenzhuyi de jiben qingkuang*, 14 October 1959, CMFA 105-00998-05

⁸⁶⁴ *Yindu dida zichan jieji de zhuanhua*, 27 November 1959, CMFA 105-00998-06

⁸⁶⁵ *Yindu xianqi di'erci fanhua gaochao de yinmou*, 29 September 1959, CMFA 105-00944-07

moderates were attacking the Sino-Soviet bloc and that Nehru was an impediment to revolution who only differed in tactics to the Indian right.⁸⁶⁶

Such assessments of the brewing confrontation in India and the related international hostility of Indian reactionaries, and even Nehru, impacted Beijing all the more powerfully because they were closely related to profound ideological differences with the Soviet Union. In fact, Beijing believed trends in India bolstered its ideological argument with Moscow. CCP analysts noted that the Soviets had re-evaluated the counter-revolutionary function of big and monopoly capitalists in the colonial world, subsuming these into the class of national bourgeoisie which, in India's case, had contributed to the struggle for independence and against feudalism. Just when the Chinese had identified a dangerous new comprador class in India, the Soviets had dispensed with the concept of comprador altogether and concluded that monopoly capitalists were an important source of Indian opposition to foreign capital.⁸⁶⁷ Such profound theoretical differences produced conflicting approaches to India. Naturally, the feasibility of 'peaceful transition' to socialism in India looked far more possible to Soviet eyes that believed Indian capitalists to be fundamentally benign. In Beijing, the dismissal of the CPI Government in Kerala in the summer had seemed concrete evidence against Moscow's position.⁸⁶⁸ Indeed by the end of 1959 Mao was entirely skeptical of the concept of peaceful transition.⁸⁶⁹ Furthermore, Soviet aid to India also looked increasingly dubious to Beijing given the power of reactionaries in the country, and their aggressive nationalism.⁸⁷⁰ Finally,

⁸⁶⁶ 'Yinfang dui Helushaofu youguan Zhongyin bianjing wenti jianghua fanying', 20 November 1959, *Yindu Sulian Guanxi*, CMFA 105-00946-04, 10; 'Guanyu Zhongyin bianjie wenti tanhua', 27 November 1959, *Yindu*, *Zhongguo youxie zhuxi tong Sulian dashi tan Xizang wenti*, CMFA 105-00657-01, 49-52

⁸⁶⁷ 'Yindu dida zichanjieji de zhuanhua', 27 November 1959 CMFA 105-00998-06

⁸⁶⁸ Ray, 1980, 58-9

⁸⁶⁹ 'Dui Sulian "Zhengzhi jingjixue jiaokeshu" de tanhua', (jixuan), December 1959 - February 1960, *JGYLMZDJSWG*, 67-69

⁸⁷⁰ 'Duiyu Meiyuan he Suyuan zai Yindu de zuofa, yingxiang, he zuoyong de kanfa', 26 February 1960, *Sulian he Meiguo dui Yindu de yuanzhu*, 13 February-1 September 1960, CMFA 105-01001-04, 2-5

developments in India made the Soviet absolute commitment to peaceful coexistence look naive and ineffective when the US imperialists were constructing powerful transnational class alliances with Third World capitalists.⁸⁷¹

Even as the Baliga initiative paved the way for high-level talks, Beijing kept its eye on global class formations and maintained its commitment to the logic of diplomacy as struggle and an inflexible internal position. On 7 November 1959, Zhou wrote in notably gentler tone to Delhi, not retreating on principle but formally proposing talks and mutual withdrawal.⁸⁷² Privately, the Chinese thought the Indian authorities were 'two-faced', so struggle was unavoidable, but the aim was to achieve 'unity' in order to concentrate forces against US imperialism. Therefore, attacks on imperialists and reactionaries were made to support the CPI and other progressives, but struggle would go on while Delhi refused compromise.⁸⁷³ Zhou and Chen Yi continued to explain regularly through December and January that it was foolish to expect Chinese concessions to stop Nehru's drift rightwards. Instead, principled criticism would expose Nehru's reactionary side, educate the masses and perhaps soften his stance.⁸⁷⁴

Baliga's efforts in particular put Nehru's diplomacy in a fresh light. Delhi's rejection of Zhou's 7 November proposal for joint withdrawal on the border was not unreasonable anyway, given the more challenging topography on which Indian forces were arrayed. But, it is clear now that Zhou's proposal for talks was a response to Baliga, so the idea that Nehru only agreed to talks in January 1960 is incorrect.⁸⁷⁵ Furthermore, some contend that Nehru's distinction between talks and

⁸⁷¹ 'Huanhe dui shehuizhuyi guojia he zibenzhuyi guojia de renmin dou youli', 26 October 1959, MZDWJWX, 387; also see 'Zhengqu bijiao chang de heping shijian shi keneng de', 18 October 1959, MZDWJWX, 384. See also, 3 November 1959, ZELNP

⁸⁷² 7 November 1959, ZELNP

⁸⁷³ 'Guanyu Zhongyin bianjie wenti tanhua', 27 November 1959, CMFA 105-00657-01, 49-52

⁸⁷⁴ See 10 December 1959, ZELNP; 18 January 1960, ZELNP; and, 26 January 1960, ZELNP

⁸⁷⁵ Raghavan, 'Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute', 2006, 3889-90

negotiations made it clear Delhi ruled out any thought of compromise.⁸⁷⁶ But this ignores Nehru's strategy which was to maintain a tough line in public to give him maximum flexibility while privately seeking Beijing's understanding. Nehru then sought to continue this approach in the April talks.

A key element of the April talks in Delhi was India's rejection of the apparently reasonable and highly practical offer by Zhou to exchange confirmation of the McMahon Line in the east for China's claim in Ladakh. The Chinese insisted the Indians had misunderstood their earlier note in September, it was not a claim on NEFA they now said.⁸⁷⁷ However, Zhou told Nehru, if Delhi insisted on negotiating the Ladakh boundary then they would have to discuss the eastern sector also.⁸⁷⁸ India had foreseen this offer and had ruled out it internally already.⁸⁷⁹ The offer only seemed to confirm Chinese duplicity. The Indians believed that the Chinese had long since accepted the McMahon Line, so to make it the basis of a swap deal now indicated extreme duplicity. In addition, the Chinese had previously assured India that maps showing Ladakh as Chinese were old and needed revising. Furthermore, the swap deal was premised on the notion of a long-standing status quo and Chinese occupation up to its claim line. However, the Indians felt the Chinese had only very recently seized territory in southern Ladakh, and to accept the swap meant acquiescing in this aggression. In addition, it was not even clear where exactly China was claiming the border in Ladakh should run.⁸⁸⁰

The Chinese in turn rejected an alternative compromise. Despite good grounds for affront, public opposition, constitutional impediments and new confidence in India's case, Nehru nevertheless

⁸⁷⁶ Maxwell, 1970, 154-5

⁸⁷⁷ Talks between the two Prime Ministers', 20 April, 1960, 5-7pm, Haksar 1 & 2, 24, *NMML*, 17-26

⁸⁷⁸ 'Talks between the two Prime Ministers', 22 April, 1960, *Ibid*, 40-53

⁸⁷⁹ '14 November 1959, Pros and Cons of the latest offer from Chou En-lai, a note by TN Kaul', TN Kaul, Speeches/Writing by him, Subject File No.4, *NMML*

⁸⁸⁰ 'Talks between the two Prime Ministers, 20 April, 1960, 5-7pm', Haksar 1 & 2, 24, *NMML*, 17-26

hinted that concessions were possible.⁸⁸¹ The Indian Prime Minister's closest adviser, VK Krishna Menon, had favoured a political deal, despite the difficulties.⁸⁸² Therefore, while Nehru rejected the idea of a straight swap of China's claim in Ladakh for the McMahon Line, he suggested that China need not give up all its claims in Ladakh, only those parts in the south and south east which had 'obviously come under Chinese occupation only in the last one or one and a half years.'⁸⁸³ Nehru had also made a public statement before the talks that India might be able to concede use of the Aksai Chin road to China, and the Indians also considered offering this in talks.⁸⁸⁴ However, Zhou rejected India's charge that China had only recently occupied territory in southern parts of Ladakh and insisted there was a longstanding status quo.⁸⁸⁵ The reality was then that it was China that refused a compromise where one was available in the Western sector, insisting instead that India accept an offer based on China conceding the McMahon Line - already conceded, the Indians believed, in 1957 - in return for India accepting China's new claims in the West.

The inability to define a status quo on the borders led the Indians back to the legal case and produced an impasse because Beijing's diplomacy as struggle focused on a principled rejection of the legalities. All Beijing could agree was that a joint committee of Indian and Chinese officials could meet to compare their arguments. However, Beijing had already made it clear several times in 1959 that they rejected the legal basis of the McMahon Line. Zhou now told Nehru that he advised in a 'friendly manner' that the Indians should not bring up Simla to make a legal argument, it was this that had caused a problem.⁸⁸⁶ And Chen Yi also explained to one Indian Minister that

⁸⁸¹ Raghavan, 'Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute', 2006, 3889-90

⁸⁸² Maxwell, 1970, 120

⁸⁸³ 'Talks between the two Prime Ministers', 21 April, 1960, 4pm, Haksar 1 & 2, 24, *NMML*, 27-39

⁸⁸⁴ Raghavan, 2010, 261-6

⁸⁸⁵ 'Premier Chou En-lai's Press Conference', 25 April 1960, Haksar 1 & 2, 25, *NMML*, 57-79

⁸⁸⁶ 'Talks between the two Prime Ministers', 22 April, 1960, Haksar 1 & 2, 24, *NMML*, 40-53

Simla had very problematic implications for Beijing's sovereignty in Tibet.⁸⁸⁷ The reality of entering the legal lists against Zhou was simply that he countered every argument with one of his own. When Nehru cited the history of Minsar, an enclave within Tibetan territory, from which Kashmiri authorities had collected taxes until 1950, Zhou shot back that 'we', by which he meant Lhasa, had collected taxes in the East, south of the McMahon Line, up to 1950 also.⁸⁸⁸ The agreement to have a joint committee examine the respective facts of each case was simply an agreement to wrangle endlessly over legal interpretation, and signalled no solution. For the Chinese, legal arguments were anathema, a threat to Beijing's sovereignty and legitimacy. A final note handed to the Chinese at the conclusion of the talks underlined the problem. It detailed India's provocative notion of Himalayan sovereignty. The note pertained to questions of Indian rights over Bhutan and Sikkim, the 1954 agreement, pilgrims, traders and cross-border movement, and also various enclave rights within Tibet.⁸⁸⁹ India saw this as legitimate because these hierarchical arrangements were inherited from the British, but failed to grasp how provocative this was to the Chinese, hyper-sensitive to the existence of external interference in Tibet and any limits on its sovereignty.

There were compelling reasons for Delhi to take refuge in legal argument however. Not least, asserting a strong legal case gave Nehru some cover from his domestic critics. But, in addition, the Indians just did not trust the Chinese enough to drop the legalities and move to a full renegotiation of the border. They feared an array of new claims. India could not drop the legal argument in the East partly because it was also making a legal argument in the West.⁸⁹⁰ The Government of India's research into the history of the Western sector had given it a new confidence in their rights in Ladakh by the time talks began with Zhou. Also, Delhi now found that there were constitutional

⁸⁸⁷ 'Notes on Conversation between Sardar Swaran Singh and Marshal Chen Yi', April 23, 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, P.N. Haksar Papers (I-II Installment), Subject File #26

⁸⁸⁸ 'Talks between the two Prime Ministers', 22 April, 1960, Haksar 1 & 2, 24, *NMML*, 40-53

⁸⁸⁹ 'Note to Chinese about issues not raised in the boundary talks', 25 April 1960, Haksar 1 & 2, 26, *NMML*, 19-22

⁸⁹⁰ 'Talks between the two Prime Ministers', 21 April, 1960, 4pm, Haksar 1 & 2, 24, *NMML*, 27-39

constraints to making territorial concessions.⁸⁹¹ More profoundly, the Republic of India was legally speaking, if not also in other ways, a continuity state. To reject the McMahon Line as illegitimate would throw into doubt an array of claims made by Delhi on the princely states, tribal areas and Himalayan states. And finally, Nehru, at least, saw legal argument as the only alternative to war in international politics.

Beijing and Delhi each presented the outcome of the talks in line with their own diplomatic strategy but both were most concerned with the opinion of one constituency, the Indian public. Beijing emphasised that potential unity was only obstructed by Indian reactionaries. Hence, the Chinese tried to insert to the talks' concluding joint statement Zhou's imagined 'common points' and an expression that the joint committee would progress towards a 'reasonable settlement'.⁸⁹² Zhou then reiterated his 'common points' in his one man show with the Indian press on the 25 April.⁸⁹³ The Chinese media concluded in the following weeks that the Indian people had now learnt how fair Beijing was and that Zhou's account was accurate and the limited results of talks was down to the obstructionism of Indian reactionaries.⁸⁹⁴

With India's private probing of a compromise thwarted, Delhi only wanted to make clear to the public how unreasonable China was. Hence, Dutt was content that the joint statement 'will give no false impression to public that there is hope of reasonable settlement on basis of Chinese suggestions.' Delhi's distrust of the Chinese remained strong because Beijing still avoided

⁸⁹¹ Raghavan, 2010, 261-66; Also see Kaul, TN. *A Diplomat's Diary*, (Delhi: Macmillan, 2000), 68-70

⁸⁹² 'Officials meet in Delhi, Subimal Dutt and Qiao Guanhua, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs', 24 April 1960, Haksar 1 & 2, 26, *NMML*, 51-60; See also, 'Officials discuss draft of joint communique', 25 April 1960, *Ibid*, 23-36

⁸⁹³ 'Premier Chou En-lai's Press Conference', Delhi, 25 April 1960, Haksar 1 & 2, 25, *NMML*

⁸⁹⁴ 'Indembassy Peking to Foreign New Delhi', 27 April 1960, *Ibid*, 43-44; 'Indembassy Peking to Foreign New Delhi', 3 May 1960, *Ibid*, 7

clarifying their actual view of the border and had refused to share their historical materials.⁸⁹⁵ Dutt wrote to all embassies abroad that China would not accept the McMahon Line and wanted a swap of NEFA for Ladakh.⁸⁹⁶ The fact he did not explain that China only objected to the legality of the line showed how distrust clouded Delhi's perception of China's position. Dutt simply saw Ladakh for NEFA as an outrageous attempt to secure recently seized territory. Delhi held out very little hope for the work of the joint committee because of China's apparently sly approach to sharing evidence. Therefore, India dismissed Beijing's attempts to characterise the committee as movement towards a solution.⁸⁹⁷

Beijing's diplomacy following the Longju clash was highly ideological in conception and practice. All its moves were framed as interventions in Indian political confrontations to support its class allies. Beijing's goal was to either force Nehru to make concessions or else to expose his hypocrisy before the Indian people. This diplomacy as struggle was also pursued with an eye to demonstrating to the Soviets the dubious nature of Nehru's state. The ideological importance of making that clear to Moscow fortified Beijing's resolution. The problem was that Beijing managed to provoke Indian nationalism so profoundly that Nehru would find it extremely hard to make any reasonable concessions. Nehru found that as a result he had to quietly circumvent public opinion and discreetly approach the Chinese to persuade them that he was their best hope for good relations with the Indian state. However, perversely Nehru's efforts were one reason why the Chinese maintained their approach. In addition, Chinese analysis of Indian politics was that a revolutionary tide was building and so they should do nothing to stem the flood. The Chinese believed that the Indian capitalists who were inciting the border crisis and intervention in Tibet, were increasingly allied to global imperialism and so to not confront them was to abandon Beijing's revolutionary responsibilities. The Soviets, by contrast, seemed in Chinese eyes, to have become

⁸⁹⁵ 'Delhi to Kathmandu embassy', 25 April 1960, *Ibid*, 81-82

⁸⁹⁶ 'Indian foreign secretary note to all Indian Embassies explaining outcome of talks and Chinese position', 27 April 1960, *Ibid*, 39

⁸⁹⁷ 'Dutt to Prime Minister', 29 April 1960, Dutt, 42, *NMML*, 47

so ideologically corrupted that they could not see the risks. As a result, Beijing had no intention of compromising at the talks in April. When Nehru's efforts ran aground diplomacy was left as a simple exchange of legal arguments, an empty game that barely suppressed the mounting distrust.

Imperialism

The conclusions drawn in Delhi and Beijing from the failure to secure a compromise over the border swiftly became entangled with various levels of contest around the idea and practice of imperialism. Beijing believed that India's comprador class were compelling the country to collude with global imperialism and pursue local imperialism. Indian obstinacy regarding the border was manifest Indian expansionism. Conversely, many Indians thought the territorial claims apparently made by Beijing were only reheated Chinese imperialism, long evinced by Tibet's fate. Each side then viewed the dramatic explosion of new Cold War tension in spring 1960 through this prism. Beijing thought India was manipulating the Soviets to accommodate US imperialism and thereby betray the world revolution. In effect, Beijing had decided that Nehruvian non-alignment was a sham. This perception implicated India in the absolute crisis that Beijing faced in terms of the collapsing alliance with Moscow just as China was being overwhelmed by economic calamity. Confrontation with Delhi therefore served to highlight India's true nature as an opponent of revolution and underscore Beijing's own revolutionary virtue, in order to help the Soviets rectify their own errors. Meanwhile, Indian leaders imagined that Beijing's opposition to Moscow's detente policy reflected the patent and intrinsic aggressiveness already revealed at the border. These perceptions fed into the contest of local imperialisms between China and India with a paranoid feedback stimulating further insecurity and counter-measures. Both viewed the other's local imperialism through the prism of their international image, multiplying therefore the sense of threat. Beijing believed particularly that India's defection from global anti-colonialism complemented its increasingly chauvinist regional attitude. India believed the Chinese were implementing revolution in Tibet and threatening the same more widely. India's much damaged reputation for anti-

colonialism undermined its strategic position regionally, giving Beijing the opportunity to woo Nepal and Pakistan. These accumulating insecurities only added further relief to the border dispute.

The international crisis that developed in May 1960 gave a hard-razored edge to the simmering Sino-Indian conflict and showed that there was a contest underway to influence Moscow's attitude to detente. US pilot Gary Powers had crashed his U2 spy plane in Soviet territory on 1 May and the fall-out from this incident had eventually derailed the much anticipated Four Power Summit in Paris in mid-May. Delhi regarded Beijing's welcome of renewed superpower tension as demonstrating China's inherent belligerence, preference for cold war conditions and desire to attack India and its nonalignment, and Indo-Soviet relations. Subimal Dutt noted the Indians were again labelled 'running dogs of imperialism' for being, he assumed, insufficiently critical of the US.⁸⁹⁸ Nehru thought that the Chinese 'not only expressed their pleasure at the break up, but have tried to run down India. Their attempt has been to break up the friendly relations that exist between India and the Soviet Union as this comes in the way of their own policies.'⁸⁹⁹ There was therefore relief in Delhi when Sino-Soviet differences were publicly aired at the Bucharest Conference of Communist Parties in June. Indian observers particularly relished the fact that these differences were on issues on which Delhi and Moscow were in agreement: peaceful coexistence, peaceful transition and the positive character of the bourgeois governments of the newly independent African Asian states. India applauded the criticism at Bucharest of China's support for confrontational local communist parties therefore.⁹⁰⁰ Indian leaders clearly felt they had a stake in the growing Sino-Soviet split and Nehru remained fundamentally optimistic about Khrushchev also, believing his recent disarmament proposals were sincere.⁹⁰¹

⁸⁹⁸ 'India-China relations - U 2 plane incident and failure of the Summit Conference', 27 May 1960, Dutt, 42, *NMML*

⁸⁹⁹ 'Note 51', 8 June 1960, *JNLCM*, 358

⁹⁰⁰ 'Indian note on Bucharest Conference of Communist Parties', Dutt, 22, *NMML*, 1-13

⁹⁰¹ 'Note 54', 18 June 1960, *JNLCM*, Vol. 5, 376

Beijing interpreted India's response to events as evidence that Delhi was hostile and implicated in the collapse of the Sino-Soviet alliance due its encouragement of Moscow's accommodation of global imperialism. In Beijing it seemed that Indian anxiety at the failure of the Summit Conference was linked to fear that this would lead to an improvement in Sino-Soviet relations.⁹⁰² Beijing believed there was a vicious Indian media campaign to attack China, in cahoots with US imperialism, and the collaboration of senior ministers.⁹⁰³ Indian President, Rajendra Prasad's, June visit to the USSR was held to be a spoiling effort prior to the Bucharest Conference.⁹⁰⁴ The Indian media's subsequent focus on the disagreements at Bucharest therefore looked hugely provocative and aimed at forestalling Sino-Soviet rapprochement.⁹⁰⁵ That Khrushchev publicly doubted, before the international comrades, China's account of Indian aggression on the border suggested Indian manipulation was successful.⁹⁰⁶ China's sense that Delhi was toying with Moscow was heightened by the impression that India had a fundamental partiality for the US.⁹⁰⁷ Therefore, India seemed to be actively exacerbating the first order crisis that Beijing now faced as the alliance with Moscow crumbled and Khrushchev recalled Soviet experts from China while the country confronted vast economic damage.⁹⁰⁸

In a major change from just the end of 1959, Beijing now regarded Indian non-alignment to be a complete charade and an obstacle to national independence movements. Soviet support for India

⁹⁰² 'Yin jiajin lalong Sulian', 19 June 1960, *Yindu yu Sulian zhijian de yiban guanxi*, 19 June-5 August 1960, CMFA 105-01001-06, 1

⁹⁰³ For extensive reports on the Indian media through the summer of 1960 see CMFA 105-00995-09; 105-00995-02; 105-01001-07

⁹⁰⁴ 'Yin zongtong fangsu mudǐ', 16 July 1960, *Yindu zongtong Pulashade fangwen Sulian*, 20 June-17 July 1960, CMFA 105-01001-05, 4

⁹⁰⁵ For example see, *Yinbao duotan Yinsu guanxi jiajin tiaobo Zhongsu guanxi*, 28 June 1960, CMFA 105-01001-07, 1

⁹⁰⁶ Ray, 1980, 71

⁹⁰⁷ 'Yin zongtong fangsu mudǐ', 16 July 1960, CMFA 105-01001-05, 4

⁹⁰⁸ Dikotter, Frank. *Mao's Great Famine*. London: Bloomsbury, 2011, 104-5

was therefore a huge error and in stark contrast to Beijing's own activism. First of all, India had switched voting patterns on the ICC in Vietnam, supporting, it seemed, US interests.⁹⁰⁹ But more generally, India's whole policy to the Third World had taken a reactionary turn. India's press was undermining China's reputation in Africa, especially Algeria, and Indian advocacy of non-violence and economic 'reformism' only encouraged compromise with capitalism and imperialism there and in Latin America. Furthermore, India had shamelessly rushed to supply the US's sugar shortfall when Washington had imposed an embargo on Cuba.⁹¹⁰ While in Beijing's eyes India's reputation for anti-colonialism had collapsed, Mao was increasingly proclaiming a vision of a global revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The Chairman sought to frame his own foreign policy action as supportive of resistance movements such as in Algeria or Lebanon.⁹¹¹ He told Latin American and African visitors in May that they 'all stood on one front line together', and though everyone wanted peace one cannot trust imperialists.⁹¹² He lectured an FLN delegation on the power of cross-border popular alliances, and, hinting at the problem of working with the Indian Government he added, 'The only people we do not ally with are feudal landlords and compradors.' Mao also subtly sidelined the Soviets pointing out that their relations with France meant they could not recognise Algeria's provisional government.⁹¹³

Soviet support for India's foreign policy was one aspect of its revolutionary treachery but Moscow's burgeoning relations with Indian state elites further evinced its infamy at a moment when revolution beckoned. To Beijing, the massive strikes of July and rumours of a right wing coup signalled that

⁹⁰⁹ SarDesai, 1968, 193

⁹¹⁰ *1960nian Yindu duiwai guanxi zhong de jige wenti*, 30 January-31 December 1961, CMFA 105-01001-09, 1-14

⁹¹¹ 'Fandui Meiguo jinxing "liangge Zhongguo" de zhengce', 1 October 1959, *JGYLMZDJSWG*, xia, 57; For China and Algeria see, Connelly, Matthew. 'Taking Off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North-South Conflict During the Algerian War for Independence.' *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (June 2000): 766, and Connelly, 'Rethinking the Cold War and Decolonization', 221

⁹¹² 'Xianzai shi diguozhuyi pa women de shidai', 3 May 1960, *MZDWJWX*, 398

⁹¹³ 'Bei yapo de renmin shi yaobu fuqu', 17 May 1960, *MZDWJWX*, 416

India teetered on the edge of ultimate class confrontation.⁹¹⁴ Feudalism, monopoly capitalism and dependence on US imperialism had sabotaged the Second Five Year Plan (FYP) and the newly unveiled Third Five Year Plan appeared to be an abject capitulation to reactionary pressure.⁹¹⁵ Rather than rally the revolutionary ranks, Moscow was canoodling with the compradors. In June, 'even the comprador capitalist Birla' was to visit the USSR to discuss 'the possibility of some investment in India's private sector by the Soviet's'.⁹¹⁶ Cooperation with Birla was shocking. Mao had recently ascribed the CCP's long term success to its ability to distinguish comprador capitalists and nationalist capitalists.⁹¹⁷ So, not only had Moscow recalled its expert advisers from China, it was obstructing India's revolution by channeling support to those very reactionary elites who were blocking progressive economic policies.

Beijing had some brief success in dragging Moscow away from Delhi, but the recovery was short-lived, and the Chinese soon concluded that the Soviets had abandoned Marxism under Indian influence. In the latter half of 1960, mass starvation in China created an acute desire for Soviet economic aid and softened Beijing's treatment of Moscow.⁹¹⁸ But Khrushchev had also indicated a more revolutionary view of the Third World by literally embracing the Algerian nationalists at the UN in October.⁹¹⁹ As a result, the Moscow Conference in December saw more warmth in Sino-Soviet

⁹¹⁴ 'Indembassy to Foreign', 1 July 1960 & 'Indembassy to Foreign', 30 June 1960, Haksar, 1 & 2, 25 *NMML*, 4-5; 'Zhou zongli jiejian Yindu shuxuejia gaoshanbi de tanhua jilu', *Yindu Gaoshanbi jiaoshou fanghua he Zhou zongli jiejian de tanhua jilu*, 13 February 1960-13 March 1961, *CMFA* 105-00721-01, 23-39; Also see, *1960nian Yindu duiwai guanxi zhong de jige wenti*, 30 January - 31 December 1961, *CMFA* 105-01001-09, 1-14

⁹¹⁵ *Yindu di'erge wunian jihua de zhixing qingkuang*, 3 December 1960, *CMFA* 105-00998-04; *Yindu disange wunian jihua*, 30 September 1960, *CMFA* 105-00998-03

⁹¹⁶ *Yin jiajin lalong Sulian*, 19 June 1960, *CMFA* 105-01001-06, 1

⁹¹⁷ *Liangci shibai shi women xuehuile dazhang*, 1 February 1959, *JGYLMZDJSWG*, 5

⁹¹⁸ Niu, '1962: The Eve of the Left Turn', 22

⁹¹⁹ Connelly, 'Rethinking the Cold War and Decolonization', 221

relations, and the CPSU supported Deng Xiaoping in his spat with the CPI.⁹²⁰ But, even while Beijing and Moscow largely agreed that India's contribution to the UN intervention in the Congo was wrong, Chinese judgement was far harsher, regarding India now as having lost its anti-colonial reputation entirely.⁹²¹ In May 1961 Zhou warned the Soviets of Indian greed for US aid: 'China has an old saying: "Who has milk is mother." Children can be forgiven for this, they are puerile, but Nehru is no child, he is consciously acting as the running dog of imperialism.' Zhou urged a more revolutionary line on India. If Nehru became even more reactionary, or even died, then the ruling group in India might split, inciting the revolutionary mood of the Indian people.⁹²² The Chinese leadership believed that Nehru no longer opposed imperialism and his views had infected the Soviets. Liu Shaoqi explained to Albanian guests that Nehru had forgotten that 'war follows imperialism', and now some among 'the ranks of communists' think like this representative of the 'capitalist class', showing that 'in our revolutionary ranks there are people who have cast off Marxism.'⁹²³ As the glaring fissures within the Sino-Soviet alliance collapsed, Beijing refused to see Nehru's seizure of Goa in December 1961 as anything but a shameful fig leaf shielding his defection from anti-colonialism, while the Soviets defended the action resolutely as a great victory.⁹²⁴

These perceptions of each other at the international level, of India as defector from the anti-colonial camp, and of China as inherently belligerent and opposed to detente, intensified the spiral of imperial anxiety at the local and regional level, in turn reinforcing those wider views. The border

⁹²⁰ Ray, 1980, 73-4

⁹²¹ Dutt, 1977, 268-73; 'Nehru talks with Mr Kosygin', 20 February 1961, Dutt, 95, *NMML*, 3-7; 'Feizhou shi douzheng de qianxian', 27 April 1961, *MZDWJWX*, 463

⁹²² *Zhou Enlai zongli huijian Sulian zhuhua dashi Qi'erwonianke tan laowo, yindu wenti*, 9 May 1961, *CMFA* 109-03757-01, 5-8

⁹²³ *Liu Shaoqi zhuxi huijian A'erbaniya buzhang huiyi diyi fuzhuxi Mufutiwu tanhua jilu*, 17 October 1961, *CMFA* 109-0378-02

⁹²⁴ 'Special report from Madras, India, 25 December 1961: Kremlin's Conspiracy in India against Portugal,' CIA-RDP80B01676R002600040003-9; *Zhu Yindu shiguan: '1961nian Yindu duiwai guanxi gaikuang'*, 1 January 1962, *CMFA* 105-01519-01

dispute was seen on both sides as serving a wider extension of power across the region, with India pursuing a 'Himalayan alliance', while the Indians once again tried to stimulate development projects in the border regions to compete with the progress of the 'dynamic Chinese'.⁹²⁵ But Beijing and Delhi often reacted as much against the others *method* of securing assumed imperial objectives as against the simple fact of the other's presence.

Nehru's increasing anxiety to gain Beijing's acceptance Delhi dominance of the border states, only underlined his imperial image in Chinese eyes. Since the border clash at Longju in August 1959, and the newly acute sense of a Chinese threat, Delhi had been making fresh efforts to tie Bhutan and Sikkim into a subservient relationship.⁹²⁶ Various efforts were made to secure Beijing's recognition of these arrangements.⁹²⁷ At the end of the April 1960 talks Delhi's supplementary note had included its rights over Sikkim and Bhutan. However, it was only in July 1961 that the Indians finally managed to wrench an oral reassurance from the Chinese to 'respect' India's relations with Sikkim and Bhutan. Despite this the Chinese said they thought it strange India used China to pressure these states.⁹²⁸ The Chinese expressed puzzlement at Indian treatment of Sikkim as a 'protectorate' and said such practice 'is rare in Asian and African countries'.⁹²⁹

Beijing's resumption of revolutionary techniques to consolidate peripheral zones confirmed Indian perceptions that the Chinese had turned away from moderation and opposed Moscow's detente policy. Following the Lhasa rebellion and Dalai Lama's flight, Mao had explicitly, and almost with

⁹²⁵ *Yindu xianqi di'erci fanhua gaochao de yinmou*, 29 September 1959, CMFA 105-00944-07; 'The problem of the frontier areas', 16 November 1959, Dutt, 39, NMML

⁹²⁶ For example, 'Dutt to DS(E)', 28 August 1959, Dutt, 37, NMML, 104-6; 'Note 41', 25 October 1959, JNLCM, 301; 'Dutt to PM', 7 November 1959, Dutt, 38, NMML; 'Dutt to JS/DS', 13 October 1959, Dutt, 38, NMML, 311

⁹²⁷ 'Untitled note to Chinese, undated', Dutt, 37, NMML, 111

⁹²⁸ *Yindu waijiaobu mishuzhang Laku Nihelu fanghua: Gengbiao fuwaizhang, Zhang Wenji sizhang tong Yindu zhuhua dashi Patalati tanhua jilu*, 19 July 1961, CMFA 105-01774-04

⁹²⁹ 'Yindu waijiaobu mishuzhang Laku Nihelu fanghua: Zhang Wenji sizhang tong Yindu zhuhua dashi Patisalati sancu tanhua jilu', 17 July 1961, CMFA 105-01056-03

relief, deployed the tools of class struggle and radical social transformation to secure Tibet, dispensing with the idea of autonomy in the process. Indeed, at the end of 1959, as the border crisis broke, Chinese officials had assumed that only thorough 'democratic reform' in Tibet would resolve the border problem.⁹³⁰ Indian observation of this change to revolutionary methods in Tibet only heightened the general sense of a Chinese threat. One official remarked that China's strategy was to use the Himalayas to project a communist transformation onto India.⁹³¹ This Indian insecurity had the concrete effect - common in the Cold War - of leading Delhi to jettison more progressive preferences in favour of securing the allegiance of Himalayan elites, such as the Maharajkumar of Sikkim, in order to secure his opposition to the Chinese.⁹³²

Beijing exploited Delhi's declining reputation for anti-colonialism and presented itself as the defender of the victims of Indian chauvinism. In particular Beijing was able by the end of 1961 to have made great progress in vastly improving its ties to Kathmandu and Islamabad.⁹³³ Delhi's rejection of Pakistan's proposal of joint defence in 1959 allowed Beijing to develop ties so that it began talks with Islamabad in summer 1961 on a border settlement, deliberately seeking to create tension between India, the US and the Pakistanis.⁹³⁴ India's reputation for being a regional bully permitted Beijing to lever these key regional actors further away from it.

In 1960 the realisation in Beijing and Delhi that their keenest international ambitions were in acute conflict sharpened the already well developed sense of local and regional conflict. The border crisis

⁹³⁰ 'Guanyu Zhongyin bianjie wenti tanhua', 27 November 1959, *Yindu, Zhongguo youxie zhuxi tong Sulian dashi tan Xizang wenti*, CMFA 105-00657-01, 49-52

⁹³¹ 'Pant to Dutt', Apa B Pant 1st Instalment, Subject File 6, NMML, 42-48

⁹³² 'Dutt to Pant', 16 December 1960, Pant 1, 6, NMML, 41

⁹³³ Dutt, 1977, 263-267; Fravel, 2008, 93; *Tong Nibo'er guowang Mahengdela he wanghou de tanhua*, 5 October 1961, MZDWJWX, 478

⁹³⁴ 'Guanyu Yin waibu mishuzhang lai huashi', 3 June 1961, *Yindu waijiaobu mishuzhang Laku Nihelu fanghua:fangwen mudi he xieshang jingguo*, 3 June-7 July 1961, CMFA 105-01056-01, 1-2

had led both Delhi and Beijing to increasingly perceive the other as aggressive and imperialist, but in 1960 the wider Cold War crisis added a layer of suspicion to Sino-Indian relations by testing, it appeared to both, where each stood on the question of international peace. Delhi interpreted Beijing's welcome of the crisis in superpower relations as proving both its desire to wreck Moscow's detente policy and its inherent preference for conflict. Meanwhile, Chinese leaders thought that India had abandoned anti-colonialism and was encouraging Moscow to break from revolution and collaborate with global imperialism. Furthermore, Beijing was shocked that although India teetered on the verge of revolution, and its Government had shifted towards a reactionary foreign policy, the Soviets were perversely increasing aid. In Beijing, this perspective underlined the absolute crisis they faced as their alliance with the Soviets crumbled while economic disaster engulfed the country. Confrontation with India, and Mao's more active revolutionary foreign policy, were a way of exposing Nehru and highlighting Beijing's revolutionary virtue to educate the Soviets about their errors. These negative perceptions of each other at the global level fed into the suspicion of each other's local and regional aims, adding to the paranoia about the border. But the specific, contrasting approaches that Beijing and Delhi each took to their respective imperial projects were particularly provocative because these seemed to confirm, and so reinforce, those impressions formed at the wider international level. Nehru's efforts to secure Bhutan and Sikkim's submission only compounded his reputation in Beijing's eyes. Beijing by contrast was pursuing revolutionary imperialism in Tibet and therefore underscoring, from Delhi's perspective, the Chinese retreat from Moscow's moderation. Delhi soon discovered that its declining reputation for anti-colonialism and more assertive regional policy provided China the chance to draw away Nepal and Pakistan further compounding and deepening the security crisis that defined Sino-Indian relations by the middle of 1961.

War

In late 1961, Delhi conceived the 'Forward Policy' as a counter to China's advance and a way to reframe the public mood to create domestic political conditions more conducive to Nehru's efforts to solve the border problem. The new policy was enabled by a change in military leadership and by a broad-based conviction that China would not respond in force. This confidence lay in a matrix of overlapping views related to Nehru's binary understanding of war and peace as absolute opposites, his trust that Moscow would restrain Beijing's belligerence, his conceit that India was protected by its unassailable reputation for non-aligned virtue, and racial prejudice about Chinese cowardice. But Nehru's strategy was undone by the failure to grasp both Beijing's capacity for deploying limited warfare and its tendency to view public discourse, whether in terms of media, parliament or public events as objects of political struggle. It was less Indian advances on the border that prompted Beijing to escalate the confrontation, but more the public reception of this advance. Furthermore, Beijing's observation of a renewed and public Indian challenge to its legitimacy in Tibet further underlined the importance of again intervening in India's public debates. Meanwhile, as India's general hostility was further confirmed by its dalliance with Jiang Jieshi and hostile tone at the ICC in Vietnam, China's overall security crisis had eased, giving Beijing more flexibility to deal with India. But the most critical factor in Beijing's turn against Delhi would be the conviction that the Soviets were making India the vanguard of their hostility to China. Cooperation with Moscow, tenuous as it had been, lost its final value once the Laos Accords were signed in July 1962. This meant that Mao was free to stir the cauldron of Sino-Indian confrontation and thereby highlight the woeful sins of Soviet revisionism, Moscow's turn from revolution and embrace of China's enemies in India.

Delhi began 1961 by combining a hard public line with a new bout of private diplomacy. The Joint Committee, set up during the April 1960 talks and tasked to compare each sides' border arguments, had produced the Officials' Report. This document - essentially divided between China's and India's separate cases - reinforced Nehru's confidence regarding Ladakh but therefore

also increased Delhi's outrage at Beijing's new expanded claim in that sector.⁹³⁵ One Indian historian says India's misrepresentation of historical facts in the report related to the West was a 'disgrace'.⁹³⁶ As a result, Beijing unsurprisingly rejected Nehru's initial demand that China accept India's case as a precondition of talks. The Chinese later explained that they avoided public comment to temper the controversy but for India to claim an irrefutable case 'does not hold water at all'.⁹³⁷ Despite the public confidence in the Indian arguments contained in the Officials' Report, Delhi nonetheless accepted the former Ambassador to the PRC, RK Nehru's, plan in early 1961 for 'quiet talks' with the Chinese. RK said they must exit the 'collision course' they were on and prevent the developing entente of Pakistan and China. He warned against the assumption that poor relations with China buttressed Indian ties to the US and USSR. He pointed out the Officials' Report had been put in 'cold storage' in Beijing while India's parliament was denouncing the Chinese as 'expansionists and aggressors'.⁹³⁸ RK's advice that Delhi again use private diplomacy to sidestep this public furore was accepted.

Although RK Nehru's July 1961 trip to China overcame intense Chinese suspicion to achieve what he called the possibilities of a 'grand bargain', nevertheless, public protest and opposition in India again proved insurmountable. Chinese skepticism perceived an array of ulterior motives behind Indian action and no real sign it was ready to end the 'anti-China' policy.⁹³⁹ Zhou's personal assessment was that the US 'brazenly made use of India' while India 'shamelessly supported the

⁹³⁵ Raghavan, 2010, 266

⁹³⁶ Noorani, AG. 'A Nehru's Dissent.' *Frontline*, June 30 - July 13 2012

⁹³⁷ 'Memorandum of Conversation between Director Zhang Wenji and Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy (1),' July 17, 1961, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 105-01056-03, 51-59

⁹³⁸ Noorani, 'A Nehru's Dissent'

⁹³⁹ *Yindu wajiaobu mishuzhang Laku Nihelu fanghua:fangwen mudi he xieshang jingguo*, 3 June-7 July 1961, CMFA 105-01056-01

US', and Nehru was 'treacherous and extremely cunning'.⁹⁴⁰ Regardless, Beijing's desire for 'unity' meant detente with India was welcome and RK was told the quiet diplomacy 'which India had initiated should be continued either on the basis of the reports, or on the basis of new proposals.' On the principle of 'recent administrative control' China might concede 'Southern Ladakh' and NEFA, with some adjustments, in return for India conceding Aksai Chin and Lingzhitang. Indian 'treaty rights' in Bhutan and Sikkim and even Indian sovereignty in Jammu and Kashmir might also be recognised.⁹⁴¹ After RK left Beijing, the Chinese told Ambassador Parthasarathi that Delhi could not claim the US's stance on Kashmir was worse than China's,⁹⁴² and nor did Chinese diplomats reject the mooted ceding of *use* of the Aksai Chin road.⁹⁴³ But public opinion and Parliamentary pressure forced Nehru to dismiss the talks as 'infructuous' and RK's visit to Beijing was widely derided as appeasement.⁹⁴⁴

Not only did Delhi continue to face the vast impediment of public opposition to a deal, but there was also a very real sense in 1961 that India's security position was deteriorating, as China advanced on the border. Already, in January 1961, the Indian military was acutely aware of how vulnerable they were in both Eastern and Western sectors of the border.⁹⁴⁵ This situation continued to decline through the year. By September, China had twenty two new posts in the West, an interconnected road system and 4,600 square km of new territory. China's total number of posts was unclear but India had only twenty seven and few were in disputed territory. In the East, China

⁹⁴⁰ Zhou Enlai zongli huijian Sulian zhuhua dashi Qi'erwonianke tan Laowo, *Yindu wenti*, 9 May 1961, CMFA 109-03757-01, 5-8

⁹⁴¹ Noorani, "A Nehru's Dissent"

⁹⁴² *Yindu wajiaobu mishuzhang Laku Nihelu fanghua: Gengbiao fuwaizhang, Zhang Wenji sizhang tong Yindu zhuhua dashi Patalati tanhua jilu*, 19 July 1961, CMFA 105-01774-04

⁹⁴³ Memorandum of Conversation between Director Zhang Wenji and Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy (2)', July 17, 1961, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 105-01056-03, 60-66.

⁹⁴⁴ Noorani, "A Nehru's Dissent"

⁹⁴⁵ *HBBR*, 6, 39-41; see also, Raghavan, 2010, 271-3

had twenty five new posts along the McMahon Line.⁹⁴⁶ But, not only were the Chinese consolidating powerfully, the activity also suggested they were pushing up to the new claim line in the West, presented during the officials' talks.⁹⁴⁷ The extent to which Indian officials commented on this new claim line showed the anxiety over China's reputation for duplicity.⁹⁴⁸

Facing the combination of an intractable security problem, made worse by Nepal and Pakistan's warming relations with Delhi, and the limitations dictated by public sentiment, Nehru shifted to a more active defence of the border to complement diplomatic efforts. The ultimate goal was to placate public opinion sufficiently to make a deal with Beijing in a less pressured political environment after the 1962 elections. Indeed, Ambassador Parthasarathi hinted to the Chinese in Summer 1961 that such was Delhi's thinking when he told Vice Minister Geng Biao that, 'the era of making use of the problem of Sino-Indian relations as an electoral trick is already over'.⁹⁴⁹ The new approach on the border was outlined on 2 November 1961 in a meeting of Nehru and his senior advisers and became known as the 'Forward Policy'. This shift called for a more assertive posture with the army to patrol, in both East and West, as far up to the - Indian defined - international border as possible, and set up posts to block further Chinese advance. Concentrated forces were also to be built up in deep strategic positions to back up this advance.⁹⁵⁰ The exact origins of this policy are unclear, but it was certainly facilitated by changes at the highest level of the Army.⁹⁵¹ The change was complemented by a combination of diplomatic pressure and some private flexibility. In December 1961, Delhi rejected Beijing's request for talks to renew the 1954

⁹⁴⁶ Fravel, 177-8

⁹⁴⁷ Raghavan, 273-4

⁹⁴⁸ TN Kaul, 73-4

⁹⁴⁹ *Yindu waijiaobu mishuzhang Laku Nihelu fanghua: Gengbiao fuwaizhang, Zhang Wenji sizhang tong Yindu zhuhua dashi Patalati tanhua jilu*, 19 July 1961, CMFA 105-01774-04

⁹⁵⁰ *HBBR*, 8-10, 44-45

⁹⁵¹ *HBBR*, 8, the report states that we do not know the origins of the policy

agreement on Tibet, and would repeat this in April.⁹⁵² Then, in January 1962, Delhi deputised Burmese leader U Nu as an intermediary with a more conciliatory proposal for Beijing. If Beijing could accept Indian sovereignty in Aksai Chin then the road could be *de facto* ceded to China. Beijing only needed to show some willingness to withdraw but physical withdrawal itself was unnecessary. Although U Nu's message produced no reply, in March the Indians explained to the British that a token Chinese withdrawal in the West would lead to a settlement; or else both sides withdraw to form a vast no-man's land, with the Chinese maintaining use of their road.⁹⁵³

The 'Forward Policy' was premised on the militarily naive assumption that Beijing would not respond with major force. The previous military strategy of simply opposing a limited attack had assumed that the politicians would ensure no major attack occurred.⁹⁵⁴ But this view survived the change to a more active border posture. Some have speculated that BN Mullik, Director of the Intelligence Bureau, and BM Kaul, the new Army Chief of General Staff, were encouraged by their CIA contacts to diffuse the idea of Chinese passivity.⁹⁵⁵ Indeed, at the key meeting of 2 November, Mullik contradicted the Army HQ Annual Intelligence review of 1959-60 by saying, 'the Chinese would not react to our establishing new posts and that they were NOT LIKELY TO USE FORCE AGAINST ANY OF OUR POSTS EVEN IF THEY WERE IN A POSITION TO DO SO'.⁹⁵⁶ BM Kaul had pointed out the logistical limitations of the 'Forward Policy', but was confident that this weakness could be ignored because the Chinese would not respond.⁹⁵⁷

⁹⁵² Khan, 2015, 107-8

⁹⁵³ Raghavan, 2010, 283-4

⁹⁵⁴ Raghavan, 2010, 270-1

⁹⁵⁵ Maxwell, 'Henderson Brooks Report: An Introduction', 1189-93.

⁹⁵⁶ *HBBR*, 8 (capitals in original)

⁹⁵⁷ Raghavan, 2010, 275

Whatever the influence of the CIA, the broad confidence amongst Indian politicians that China would not respond in force was partly derived from the conception of the 'Forward Policy' as defensive and serving a clear diplomatic goal. However, Nehru was unaware that in implementation the new approach was more rash than originally conceived. On 5 December, Army Headquarters' written orders to local commands dropped one of the three key operative decisions of the new policy: 'to position major concentration of forces along our borders in places conveniently situated behind the forward posts from where they could be maintained logistically and from where they can restore a border situation at short notice.'⁹⁵⁸ Chief of the Army, General Thapar later said that such a build up would have taken years to achieve.⁹⁵⁹ The HBBR report surmised that if this element of the plan had been given to local commanders they would have made it clear that they lacked the resources to implement the policy.⁹⁶⁰ So, Nehru and his Government wanted to be more cautious, but were not fully apprised of the military restraints. Nehru's comments in Parliament suggested that he did not know that the military had modified the 'Forward Policy' in this way.⁹⁶¹

But the general insouciance about the risk of provoking Beijing also came from more profound sources. Nehru and many of his colleagues appeared ignorant of Mao's subtle understanding of war and peace. Indian leaders often remarked that fear that any Sino-Indian conflict might escalate into a major international war restrained Beijing.⁹⁶² Such confidence was hard to explain given the Korean War and crises over Taiwan, and Mao's often expressed appreciation for the progressive value of war and generally bellicose language. But Nehru did not realise that his own

⁹⁵⁸ *HBBR*, 8-9

⁹⁵⁹ Raghavan, 2010, 277, fn.

⁹⁶⁰ *HBBR*, 8-10

⁹⁶¹ Raghavan, 2010, 277

⁹⁶² 'J Nehru note regarding talks with Nepal Deputy PM in Calcutta, 17 October 1959', Dutt, 58, 278, *NMML*; Raghavan, 2010, 276-83

understanding of war and peace as binary opposites stood in stark contrast to Mao's view of these as existing on a broad spectrum on which ultimate war and ultimate peace were fairly unlikely outcomes.⁹⁶³ This in fact explained Mao's nuclear posture. It was not that he disregarded the devastation of a nuclear attack, but that he was able to imagine a confrontation encompassing such devastation and being won. A correct analysis of Mao's fomentation of the Taiwan Straits crises and regularly belligerent language should have alerted Indian leaders to Beijing's readiness to embark on carefully calibrated, limited warfare. Nehru was strategically hobbled therefore by the inability to think beyond the absolute categories of nuclear war or total peace. Delhi's reluctance to regard military action as warlike was suggested by the tendency to refer to its forceful moves on the border as 'police action', a 'nominalist fallacy' committed also in discussion of the Hyderabad campaign.⁹⁶⁴

Nehru also seemed to think that close relations with Moscow protected him from Beijing.⁹⁶⁵ Delhi knew that Sino-Soviet differences were most acute on the question of the feasibility and desirability of peaceful coexistence.⁹⁶⁶ But the assumption seemed to be that Moscow's commitment to peaceful coexistence would constrain Beijing. This was a strange view given that Nehru had always expected that Beijing would prove to be independent of Moscow. Furthermore, because Nehru misunderstood Beijing's appreciation of the possibilities of limited warfare, no one in Delhi realised that Mao's opposition to Moscow's policy of peaceful coexistence and superpower bi-polar hegemony meant that proximity to the USSR made India more, not less, of a target. In essence, Mao's growing desire for ideological and political independence from Moscow made him more likely to engage in limited warfare to underline the superiority of his strategic insights, which contrasted with a strategy based on absolute peaceful coexistence.

⁹⁶³ For just one example of Mao's thinking on war and peace see, '*Tong Menggemali yuanshuai tan guoji jushi*', 27 May 1960, *MZDWJWX*, 412

⁹⁶⁴ Maxwell, 1970, 177

⁹⁶⁵ Raghavan, 2010, 280-3

⁹⁶⁶ 'KPS Menon report from Moscow for October 1959, 4 November 1959', Dutt, 38, *NMML*

That the forward policy has been identified as having a 'flavour' of *satyagraha* seems persuasive. Delhi's sense of victimhood in Ladakh must have stimulated a desire to wield Gandhi's weapon of the virtuous weak in the hearts of onetime Gandhian warriors like Nehru.⁹⁶⁷ However, it was Nehruvian nonalignment that provided the additional moral armour necessary to confront a materially superior foe because to attack nonaligned India was surely anathema. The test of India's foreign policy, Nehru said in October 1959, ought to be 'does it keep alight the lamp of peace and spread its radiance... For the world has to face a great choice, peace or terrible and ultimate war.'⁹⁶⁸ Nehru conceded that nonalignment might have isolated the PRC but it also kept the Soviets neutral in the Sino-Indian dispute.⁹⁶⁹ Nehru's unique understanding of nonalignment precluded the formation of a bloc or alliance even on the basis of nonalignment.⁹⁷⁰ This principled stand gave India an exemplary moral stature and *a priori* demonstrated India to be bereft of any hostile intent. Hence, the 'Forward Policy' could only be regarded as the righteous response to injustice.

Delhi's confidence was finally buttressed by a hint of racial stereotypes redolent of the Raj. The Intelligence Bureau assessment of September 1961, just prior to the formal decision for the 'Forward Policy' gives some impression: 'the Chinese would like to come up to their claim line of 1960 where we ourselves are not on occupation. But where even a dozen men of ours are present, the Chinese have kept away.'⁹⁷¹ The sense that Chinese soldiers were flighty and not up to the stalwart Indian *jawan* was not uncommon. One MP complained in Parliament in 1962 that, 'Two hundred Indian soldiers are equal to two thousand of the Chinese...why should we be afraid of

⁹⁶⁷ Maxwell, 2010, 177

⁹⁶⁸ 'Note 40', 16 October 1959, *JNLCM, Vol.5*, 291

⁹⁶⁹ 'Note 46', 4 November 1959, *JNLCM, Vol.5*, 323

⁹⁷⁰ 'Note 65', 27 June 1961, *JNLCM, Vol.5*, 446

⁹⁷¹ Raghavan, 2010, 275

them?⁹⁷² This perception acted at a vital junction of Indian strategic thinking as was shown by LP Sen's reassurances to his officers in September 1962 that the army's experiences in Ladakh showed the Chinese were apt to run away if confronted.⁹⁷³ The broad influence of racism on China policy was further illustrated by efforts to disguise the fact that moves to register and restrict foreigners in India from late 1959 was motivated chiefly against the Chinese population. Dutt wanted civil officers to avoid giving the impression that there was a census of Chinese underway. However, the resolution to exclude the possibility of Indian citizenship for any Chinese of Calcutta, except in the most exceptional of cases, rather pointed to the reality of anti-Chinese paranoia within the Indian Government.⁹⁷⁴ Public statements by senior Ministers like Pant about the threat of a 'Yellow Peril' only confirmed the extent to which many Indians had imbibed European racial prejudice.⁹⁷⁵

As Spring thawed in 1962 across the Himalayas, geographic and climactic obstacles to India's 'Forward Policy' melted away and military tensions grew. New Indian posts were spread out in both Eastern and Western sectors, but the posts in Ladakh were especially provocative because they were within China's 1960 claim line and were often very close to Chinese positions in territory each side firmly believed to be its own.⁹⁷⁶ Beijing sent a series of protest notes but, with India now on the advance, it was decided in April that China also needed to resume patrolling.⁹⁷⁷ A special border meeting called by Zhou in May indicated the concern in Beijing regarding the issue of border security generally.⁹⁷⁸ Indian confidence that the Chinese feared conflict only grew when a

⁹⁷² Maxwell, 2010, 242

⁹⁷³ *HBBR*, 17

⁹⁷⁴ For Dutt's various correspondence regarding clamping down on the Chinese population in India in late 1959 see, Dutt, 59 & 38, *NMML*

⁹⁷⁵ 'Yindu youpai kanwu you dui woguo jinxing wumie', 8 May 1960, *Yindu baozhi, tuanti he fandong renshi de fanhua jiaoxiao*, 12 January-22 September 1960, *CMFA* 105-00995-09

⁹⁷⁶ Fravel, 178-84

⁹⁷⁷ Raghavan, 2010, 285

⁹⁷⁸ Fravel, 108

confrontation in early May, in Chip Chap Valley in the far West of Ladakh, ended with the PLA troops withdrawing.⁹⁷⁹

However, Indian confidence was misplaced because Beijing was fully aware of the inherent fragility of Delhi's posture and the effort to use the advance on the border to build public support. One Chinese diplomat explained to the Soviets in Delhi that India's overall position on the border was rather weak with its small posts hard to supply. Although each new advance was greeted with a 'big noise' by the Indian media, the whole strategy simply invited a final conflict to resolve matters.⁹⁸⁰ Therefore, although Beijing was skirting direct clashes on the border it was initiating moves to prepare for a much wider confrontation. Through May, planning for war was accelerated on both fronts, with an attack in the east conceived as supporting the theatre in the west. Preparations were to be completed by June. These measures were carried out in parallel with readiness to meet a possible attack from Taiwan.⁹⁸¹

Beijing had recognised a new diplomatic and media tone in India in early 1962 but despite the U Nu message of January the Chinese saw no substantive change.⁹⁸² It seemed that India was linking the border to other issues like Tibet and the visit of a union delegation to Beijing. In mid-May, Zhang Wenji complained that India only repeated the unfair demand for China to withdraw in Ladakh, but to be fair India should also withdraw in the East. Zhang said the Aksai Chin road plan was simply interference in China's domestic affairs but if India stopped advancing the situation would stabilise. He added that Delhi complicated matters by linking the border to renegotiation of

⁹⁷⁹ Raghavan, 2010, 286

⁹⁸⁰ 'Beineidiketuoфу yu Cheng Hao huitan jiyao: gaishan Yinzhong guanxi deng wenti,' 19 May 1962, GZBCED

⁹⁸¹ Fravel, 184-5

⁹⁸² 'Yindu fangchu "heping jiejie Zhongyin bianjie wenti" de kongqi,' 13 March 1962, 'Xin qingkuang' youguan Zhongyin bianjie wenti de lunwen huibian, 1 January-29 December 1962, CMFA 105-01638-01

the 1954 Tibet treaty and other questions.⁹⁸³ Nevertheless, Beijing did observe in June that the Indian media viewed Nehru's public comments that the Chinese desired to improve relations as perhaps a sign to Beijing that he would respond to a positive move.⁹⁸⁴

However, by June Nehru was confident that the Forward Policy had given him new diplomatic options and he began to lever the advantage he thought he had gained. Nehru told Parliament that India's position on the border had been improved by new posts and roadbuilding. He added, '[T]hat improvement does not justify any complacency but whether any action is contemplated or whether even apart from any action any operations are contemplated, they can only come from an improved position.'⁹⁸⁵ As a result, when Pan Zili argued on 29 June that India only repeated the argument of 1959 about withdrawal in Ladakh, RK Nehru countered that it was different now because India also could withdraw. Pan said this just showed India had been advancing over the last two years.⁹⁸⁶ Thus, the position of the April 1960 talks, when India had rejected Beijing's change to the status quo, was reversed now with Beijing objecting to India's recent advance.

India's confident probe into the Galwan Valley in Ladakh in early July led to a new phase of tension. The PLA, which enjoyed better supplies and logistics across the border, began a policy of surrounding new Indian posts such as the one in Galwan, which only increased the risks of actual violence. Beijing and Delhi both told their militaries they were permitted to fire on the enemy if required. By 10 July Chinese and Indian troops were tensely facing off at the Galwan post, but eventually the PLA troops retreated a small distance, to great fanfare in India's media. Although a

⁹⁸³ *Waijiaobu diyi yazhou sizhang Zhang Wenji sizhang jiejian Yindu zhuhua shiguan linshi daiban Bannaji tanhua jilu*, 17 May 1962, CMFA 105-01128-02

⁹⁸⁴ *Yin baoping Nihelu 6yue 13ri de jianghua*, 'Xin Qingkuang' 154, 2 July 1962, CMFA 105-01368-01

⁹⁸⁵ 'New Delhi, June 23, 1962', *PM on Sino-Indian Relations, Vol. 1, Part II*, External Publicity Division: MEA, GOI, New Delhi, 1961, 96

⁹⁸⁶ 'Yu Laku Nihelu tan Zhongyin guanxi wenti', 29 June 1962, *Zhu Yindu dashi Pan Zili liren shi xiang Yinfang cixing baihui qingkuang*, 29 June 1962-3 August 1962, CMFA 105-01807-01, 1-3

clash had been avoided at Galwan, further West the permission to open fire produced an armed encounter in the Chip Chap Valley on 21 July.⁹⁸⁷

But India's military assertiveness in Ladakh proceeded alongside a new burst of diplomacy in which Delhi made additional concessions over what was offered in January. Even while troops faced off in the Galwan Valley, Krishna Menon suggested on the 10 July that an exchange of territory was feasible:

China's final claims should be stated clearly. Some areas can go to China, at the same time China can make some symbolic concession in other areas, and making modifications in this way, we can perhaps solve the problem. In this way India can say to the public some places have been given to China, and China has in other places made concessions...The Aksai Chin road has perhaps a fairly big strategic meaning for China, or is perhaps related to Chinese face, certain places here can go to China [this sentence was not said clearly by Menon].⁹⁸⁸

Nehru reinforced this on 13 July, proposing to Pan that they could take the officials' report as the basis of talks without preconditions, only mentioning that he hoped that China would stop advancing on Indian posts in Ladakh.⁹⁸⁹

⁹⁸⁷ See Fravel, 185-7; and Raghavan, 2010, 287

⁹⁸⁸ 'Zhu Yindu shiguan jianbao Pan dashi yu Yindu guofang buzhang meinong tanhua jiyao', 12 July 1962, CMFA 105-01807-01, 10-15

⁹⁸⁹ 'Pan dashi xiang Nihelu cixing de tanhua qingkuang', 13 July 1962, *Ibid*, 16-17. Fravel says it was Pan Zili who proposed this but the Chinese document is clear it was Nehru, confirming Raghavan's account. See Fravel, 187; Raghavan, 287-8; Another Chinese document confirms that it was Nehru who proposed talks based on the joint report on the 13 July, see, 'Yindu fangchu hetan kongqi de beijing he dongxiang', *Xin qingkuang*, 185, 14 August 1962, CMFA 105-01638-01, 10-13

The hostilities in Ladakh did not prevent the evolution of a new diplomatic breakthrough, similar to RK Nehru's 'grand bargain' of 1961. Ambassador Pan had told Krishna Menon that if he went to the Geneva conference on Laos, he might there discuss the border with Chen Yi.⁹⁹⁰ Arthur Lall, an Indian participant in the talks, showed that the two sides considered a creative political solution to marry China's desire to secure unchallenged rights to the Aksai Chin road with the Indian government and public's opposition to surrender of territory. India suggested both sides could set up posts in the region but would avoid challenging each other's respective positions. The Indians kept Nehru informed and at the third meeting Chen Yi said a solution of 'intertwining posts' could be agreed. The implication being that Aksai Chin could be partially claimed by both sides and divided, leaving China the road. Chen Yi did not rule out a territorial concession to India elsewhere on the border to compensate for conceding territory in Aksai Chin.⁹⁹¹

Contrary to the some claims, Nehru was positive about the results of the Geneva talks and when public opposition exploded he tried to navigate this and salvage the progress made.⁹⁹² Lall's account made it clear that Nehru sent a positive response to Chen Yi's proposal for a joint communique, but it arrived too late and Chen had already left Geneva. When news of the talks was leaked and uproar ensued, Nehru publicly distanced himself but privately took steps to restore the situation. A note was sent to Beijing reiterating that Delhi favoured talks once tensions had eased. However, India's Charge D'affaires in Beijing, PK Bannerjee was also instructed to tell Zhou at once that Delhi sought talks 'without preconditions, [on] all bilateral problems and disputes.'⁹⁹³

⁹⁹⁰ 'Zhu Yindu shiguan jianbao Pan dashi yu Yindu guofang buzhang meinong tanhua jiyao', 12 July 1962, CMFA 105-01807-01, 10-15

⁹⁹¹ Lall, Arthur. *The Emergence of Modern India*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1981, 155-158; See also Fravel, 187; and Raghavan, 288-9

⁹⁹² Maxwell, 1972, 511-2. Maxwell claims Nehru rejected Geneva in his confidence that that victory on the border beckoned

⁹⁹³ Raghavan, 2010, 290-1

In fact it was Beijing that now turned its back on constructive diplomacy. Bannerjee's conciliatory move was harshly rejected by Chen Yi and then a week later by Zhou himself. Bannerjee's encounter with Chen Yi occurred on either the 26 or 27 July, before the uproar in India over Geneva had even begun. Chen rejected talks as impossible until India 'unequivocally and publicly withdrew all fictitious and false claims on Chinese territory.' India's proposal, Chen said, 'was loaded with ammunition for Indian propaganda against the Chinese. It was a trap and therefore not acceptable.' On 4 August, Zhou told Bannerjee that India must 'withdraw from Chinese territory and not make further excuses'. For good measure, Zhou added that India was working with the CIA to support the Tibetan rebels. Nehru either knew or pretended not to know, or else he no longer controlled the Government of India, said Zhou.⁹⁹⁴

Beijing's rejection of Bannerjee was not related to the tension in Ladakh, which had been peaking even as talks carried on at Geneva. In fact, the turn was part of a general switch to a more confrontational diplomacy. As seen, India had been using Tibet to complement the pressure applied by the Forward Policy, rejecting Beijing's requests in December 1961 and April 1962 for renegotiation of the 1954 treaty. Beijing had sought talks over the Tibet agreement despite the fact that India had been embargoing trade with Tibet since late 1959. However, in Summer 1962 as India confidently shifted into a more constructive diplomatic gear, China went the other way, and roles were reversed when India's proposal in June for talks on the Tibet treaty were roundly rejected.⁹⁹⁵

The change in Beijing was closely related to a more acute sense of an Indian threat to Tibet. The 'Forward Policy' itself was regarded as a direct threat to Tibet and the South West just as the

⁹⁹⁴ Raghavan, 2010, 290-1; Bannerjee's account of this episode complicates the chronology, and is contradicted also by the official Chinese record of Chen Yi's activities, but at least they make clear that there was a week between Bannerjee's meeting with Chen on the 26 or 27 July, and with Zhou on the 4 August, see Bannerjee, Purnendu Kumar. *My Peking Memoirs of the Chinese Invasion of India*, (New Delhi: Clarion Books, 1990), 51-54; and also, '27 July 1962', *Chen Yi Nianpu*

⁹⁹⁵ Khan, 2015, 107-8; On India's restrictions on Tibet trade see Yang Gongsu, 1999, 231-3

region had been pacified.⁹⁹⁶ However, the Chinese embassy also kept Beijing updated on a more insidious risk to Chinese control of Tibet represented by broad support for Tibetan activities within India. Media reporting on rebel activity, support for cultural activity and the Dalai Lama's unrestricted political activity were all viewed as hostile in Beijing. It was noted the Government of India had declared it wished to create a new 'centre of Buddhist activity, to replace Lhasa'. The embassy linked all this to India's forward moves on the border.⁹⁹⁷ Sly Indian attempts to hold on to their radio transmitters in Lhasa and Yatung also smacked of old style imperialism. The Chinese argued they had never given explicit approval for these, while the Indians said they had long been there, since 1936. On the 21 June the Chinese further underlined the more confrontational diplomacy and desire to sever Indian ties with Tibet by telling Indian diplomats in Beijing that they had two months to remove the transmitters.⁹⁹⁸

The perception in Beijing had long been that Indian policy was to maintain an autonomous Tibet which they could dominate and which served as an ideological buffer, insulating the Indian people from radical economic development. The rebellion in Tibet had ended Beijing's toleration of such efforts and the Chinese had moved to fully assert themselves in the region, upending the old system with land reform. Bannerjee's explanation to Zhou of India's consistent support for Chinese 'suzerainty' in Tibet was therefore highly provocative.⁹⁹⁹ The Chinese thought Nehru always 'played games with words, saying China had sovereignty over Tibet, but on the other hand saying it was suzerainty, deliberately maintaining an ambiguity between these two very different terms'.¹⁰⁰⁰ Beijing believed that once Tibetan autonomy was ended Nehru responded by seeking to pressure

⁹⁹⁶ Fravel, 105

⁹⁹⁷ 'Yin dui Xizang panfei de yixie zuofa', 27 January 1962, *Yindu congcong Dalai jituan zai Yin de huodong, wo dui ci tuchu jiaoshe*, 27 January 1962, 105-01128-01 CMFA

⁹⁹⁸ 'Guanyu fengbi Yin feifa diantai', 21 June 1962, *Wo fang fengbi Yindu zhu Lasa zonglingguan feifa diantai*, 14 May 1962, CMFA 105-01119-02, 31

⁹⁹⁹ Bannerjee, 1990, 53

¹⁰⁰⁰ Yang, 1999, 1999, 250

China via the border dispute.¹⁰⁰¹ This perception also pointed towards China's utter rejection of Indian attempts to create a zone of graded sovereignty across the Himalayas. Whenever India made any reference to this it provoked China for two reasons. Because it threatened China's absolute sovereignty in Tibet and made India appear imperialist. The Chinese were now shutting down India's links with Tibet.

The harsh rejection of Bannerjee was also a response to public discourse in India in line with the logic of diplomacy of struggle. The resumption of prominent public and official support for an array of Tibetan activities in India was always going to provoke a response from the Chinese. But the 'Forward Policy's' apparent success in recovering Indian territory was also receiving much acclaim in the Indian media, and this too was problematic for Beijing.¹⁰⁰² So when Chen Yi repudiated constructive diplomacy in late July he demanded a 'public' withdrawal of all Indian claims on the border. Here was the paradox of Nehru's strategy to placate public opinion in order to improve the conditions for diplomacy. If a sense of military advance on the border gave Nehru more leeway, the public's enthusiastic support for Nehru had to be targeted. Beijing could not tolerate this easing of pressure on Nehru and his government, they sought therefore to disrupt the public triumphalism and renew the fractures within Indian politics.

Beijing's renewed desire to confront Delhi was also related to developments surrounding Taiwan which both confirmed Indian hostility but also eased the overall pressure on China. In late May, the PLA had begun contingency preparations for war with India while plans were also being made to meet an invasion from Taiwan.¹⁰⁰³ On the 7 July while tensions built up in Ladakh, Pan Zili told his

¹⁰⁰¹ Yang, 1999, 255-9

¹⁰⁰² 'Pan dashi yu Yindu waijiaobu waishimishu Desai tanhua jilu', 13 July 1962, *CMFA* 105-01807-01, 22-24

¹⁰⁰³ Fravel, 184-5

Soviet counterpart there was a real threat of a KMT invasion, and on the 14th he revealed that the KMT and India had a consensus to threaten China.¹⁰⁰⁴ However, the US had in fact assured the Chinese in late June that they would not support any such action by Jiang Jieshi, thus that immediate risk had faded.¹⁰⁰⁵ Although Indian cooperation with Jiang would have confirmed Delhi to be a primarily reactionary actor, it did not significantly add to China's threat assessment. Telling the Soviets about the India KMT link was probably just part of efforts to educate the comrades about India's true nature, particularly when one considers that Pan denied on the 14 July that he and Nehru even discussed Sino-Indian relations, let alone that India had been making some very positive noises.

The situation in Indochina also seemed to underscore Indian hostility while alleviating the overall security crisis China faced. To be sure, Beijing and Moscow differed on the nature of India's role in the ICC and impact on their interests in Indochina.¹⁰⁰⁶ However, Delhi had largely succeeded in maintaining an image of impartiality regarding Indochina, indicated by the DRV's self-designation as an 'outsider' to the Sino-Indian dispute.¹⁰⁰⁷ The level of Indian opposition to Beijing's interests in SE Asia soon escalated however. Nehru suspected DRV subversion of South Vietnam and had begun an investigation in December 1961, and by June the following year those suspicions were confirmed.¹⁰⁰⁸ India's research led to the ICC Vietnam's report, published over Polish dissent, accusing all sides of interference and causing outrage in China's key ally, the DRV.¹⁰⁰⁹ The Laos

¹⁰⁰⁴ 'Qie'erkasuofu yu Pan Zili huitan jiyao: Zhongyin guanxi deng wenti', 7 July 1962, *GZBCED*; 'Qie'erkasuofu yu Pan Zili huitan jiyao: Zhongyin bianjie chongtu deng wenti', 14 July 1962, *GZBCED*

¹⁰⁰⁵ Raghavan, 2010, 289

¹⁰⁰⁶ Gaiduk, 146, 159

¹⁰⁰⁷ SarDesai, 202

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 203-7; 'Beineidiketuofo yu Nihelu huitan jiyao: keshemi'er jueyian deng wenti', 6 June 1962, *GZBCED*

¹⁰⁰⁹ Gaiduk, 198

Accords, signed at Geneva on 23 July then reduced pressure on Beijing by neutralising Laos.¹⁰¹⁰ But the combination of India's accusations about the DRV, and this neutralisation of Laos would have meant India now had very little to offer Beijing in Indochina. It is in fact possible that Chen Yi's talks with Krishna Menon at Geneva were more about smoothing an agreement over Laos, than genuine progress towards a border settlement. The Laos agreement also had a major impact on Beijing's need for cooperation with Moscow.

Beijing's assessment of the Soviets was a critical aspect of China's hard line after the aborted Geneva diplomacy with India. The Laos agreement had removed one major reason for Beijing to maintain a degree of cooperation with Moscow. Beijing had needed to work with Moscow to neutralise Laos.¹⁰¹¹ But Beijing and the Soviets had been rivals in Indochina since the rupture at the CPSU 22nd Congress of October 1961. Moscow's consistent attitude to Indochina through the Laos crisis demonstrated that it prioritised detente and superpower hegemony over global revolution and China's interests.¹⁰¹² After the Laos Accords, Moscow rejected Beijing's calls that they continue giving material aid via Hanoi to Laos. The Soviets advised they focus instead on political struggle and uphold the new agreements.¹⁰¹³ The Soviets lack of revolutionary ambition for Indochina mirrored its attitude to India, confirming Beijing's disillusionment.

China's assessment of the USSR, and India's relationship to that perception, had now reached an absolute nadir. Not only was Moscow failing to seize the revolutionary opportunities available in India, or Indochina, but the Soviets had made India a platform from which to project their anti-China policy. In February, Beijing's analysts had explained how the Soviets used India to attack

¹⁰¹⁰ Garver gives this as a reason for Beijing's confidence that a conflict with India would be limited, see Garver, 'China's Decision for war with India in 1962', 40. China had been hugely worried about the US build up in SE Asia in 1962, see, Chen, 2001, 207; & Niu, 'The Eve of the Left Turn', 25

¹⁰¹¹ Niu, 'The Eve of the Left Turn', 25-27

¹⁰¹² Gaiduk, 149-190

¹⁰¹³ Gaiduk, 178-80

China and that the lurid evidence of Soviet revisionism was scrawled all over Indo-Soviet relations: Moscow was close to providing credit to Indian private industry, and Birla and the Soviet Foreign Trading Company were approaching cooperation; the CPSU was bending the CPI to its revisionist ways; and the India-China Friendship Association had been broken up and was being replaced by branch offices of a new Soviet sponsored alternative.¹⁰¹⁴ Moscow's apparent destabilisation of Xinjiang's border between April to May 1962 confirmed the perception of a traitorous Soviet Union, collaborating with India.¹⁰¹⁵ Despite India's aggressive behaviour at the border, Moscow was giving Delhi public support and selling it MiG fighters and advanced military equipment for border defence. Aid for military manufacturing, research and training was also in flow. No publicity was given to China's stance on the border, and Khrushchev blamed the CPI's failure in Kerala on the border dispute. The Soviets also provided anti-China articles to the Indian press. The Soviets exploited the anti-China movement to 'break into' India and make it a test case for peaceful transition in Asia. Gallingly, experts withdrawn from China were sent to India. At the same time Moscow wanted to discredit China's claims of peaceful coexistence, 'blacken China's face in Asia' and make it submit to Moscow.¹⁰¹⁶ By the summer of 1962 India seemed to have become the leading edge of Moscow's enmity towards the PRC.

Such dire assessments meant that an intensification of Sino-Indian conflict now served Mao's ultimate priority of exposing the true face of Soviet revisionism. The more acute China's confrontation with India became, the more shameless and shocking Soviet support for Delhi would appear. Chinese analysts explained that the Soviets did not realise that 'Nehru, ultimately serves US imperialism'. The benefit of highlighting this were then made clear: 'as far as India's revolutionary wing are concerned, Moscow's brazen anti-China method is truly the best negative instructor, there are some officials of the Bengal CPI already who have clearly recognised the face

¹⁰¹⁴ *Sulian Yindu de yuanzhu he maoyi e mengzeng*, 20 February 1962, *Yindu yu Sulian de guanxi*, 7 November 1962, CMFA 105-01519-03

¹⁰¹⁵ Fravel, 101-3

¹⁰¹⁶ *Jinjinian Sulian dui Yindu de zuofa*, June 1962, *Sulian dui Zhongyin guanxi de taidu*, 1 June-10 September 1962, CMFA 109-03216-04, 1-14

of modern revisionism, therefore from the angle of the long-term benefit of India's revolution, this all has its advantages.¹⁰¹⁷ Thus, Beijing now had good revolutionary reason to privately welcome Moscow's support of India because it highlighted Soviet treachery. Beijing therefore had good cause to take a hardline with Delhi. Moscow would either have to back China in line with proletarian internationalism, or else, its true revisionist face would be revealed. In the latter case, the lines would be drawn clearly, the world's people would see where Moscow stood, and Beijing would stand as the bastion of pure revolution. Thus Beijing used confrontation with India to lay claim to leadership of the Socialist Camp.¹⁰¹⁸

The decision to exacerbate the confrontation with Delhi in order to expose Khrushchev's revisionism was not just Mao's bid for global leadership but also closely linked to his return to the centre of CCP decision making. The disasters that pursued the Great Leap Forward had rather diminished Mao's confidence and a period of more moderate and flexible policies had ensued.¹⁰¹⁹ Particularly since February 1962, Mao had been in the 'second-line' of leadership, and excluded himself from critical domestic policy.¹⁰²⁰ At the Beidaihe leaders' conference of 6-28 August, Mao upturned the agenda, much as he had done at Lushan in 1959, to ambush his opponents and focus the discussion on class struggle. Mao's chief concern may have ultimately been domestic policy and attempts to push in less radical directions. The international environment was looking fairly benign with the US having reined in the Taiwan and Laos threats, the Xinjiang border had stabilised, even the India conflict appeared limited, and the crisis in South Vietnam was only an indirect danger. Mao had hinted in January at links between international revisionists, imperialists and counter-revolutionaries and domestic enemies, and now he made this explicit. Therefore, at Beidaihe he attacked Wang Jiaxiang's moderate foreign policy proposals of compromise with the

¹⁰¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁰¹⁸ Xia, Danhui and Li, Yafeng. 'Jockeying for Leadership'. The authors give a 'multi-causal' explanation of the Sino-Soviet split, but argue competition to lead international communism was the leading factor

¹⁰¹⁹ Chen Jian, 210

¹⁰²⁰ Xia and Li, *Jockeying for Leadership*, 40

Soviets, US and India and reduction in support for overseas liberation movements.¹⁰²¹ The Beidaihe Conference was then followed by a huge increase in military aid to the DRV to demonstrate the new taste for confrontation.¹⁰²²

Having begun his transformation of Chinese politics, Mao moved to expand the conflict with India by creating confrontation in the Eastern sector. On 8 September, the PLA set up a position directly opposite India's 'Dhola' post, below the Thagla Ridge and along the north side of the Namka Chu river, in what the Indians called the Kameng Frontier Division of NEFA. This move was a new provocation for a number of reasons. India had established its 'Dhola' post back in early June. Admittedly, India's action was itself provocative as it disturbed the 1959 agreement to hold positions in the area and it came despite awareness that claims there were ambiguous.¹⁰²³ However, Beijing knew that India regarded the Thagla Ridge as the boundary, based on adjusting the McMahon Line's alignment on the map in line with McMahon's original statement that the actual boundary should run along the watershed.¹⁰²⁴ Also, India's forward move to the Namka Chu was arguably a defensive response to the consistent Chinese threat to link East and West. With India resisting China's advance to a new claim line in the West, Delhi justifiably feared China finally making good the threat to counter and cross the McMahon Line.¹⁰²⁵ Therefore, India's Dhola post was not some fundamentally aggressive move. So, even if preparatory steps had been taken since July, with a build up of Chinese forces conducted on Thagla,¹⁰²⁶ the decision to advance directly in front of India's Dhola post was a conscious move to expand the confrontation to the Eastern sector.

¹⁰²¹ Niu, 'The Eve of the Left Turn', 30-6

¹⁰²² Qiang Zhai, 112-6

¹⁰²³ Maxwell, 1970, 294

¹⁰²⁴ Raghavan, 2010, 292-3; and Maxwell, 1970, 294; also see Fravel, 189-91

¹⁰²⁵ *HBBR*, 54

¹⁰²⁶ Fravel, 189-91

China's move up to the Dhola post was regarded as very offensive therefore and the mood changed in Delhi. The crisis atmosphere produced a dynamic in which India came to appear increasingly aggressive while actually dissipating its military strength. The Indians had been fairly relaxed in early September with Radhakrishnan dismissing the risk of war and Nehru happy to leave India for London where he and TN Kaul even drafted a new proposal for talks.¹⁰²⁷ However, Krishna Menon and Nehru's desire to keep China's move out of the press failed, and calls for Nehru's resignation were heard. The renewal of this level of domestic pressure contributed to Delhi's anxiety to reinforce Dhola and the Namka Chu, which led to the dispersal of troops from more secure positions and added to the appearance of aggression. There was also a struggle between commanders on the ground in NEFA, who urged caution, with Army Headquarters and Delhi, who pushed for early action to remove the Chinese. The impasse was resolved on 4 October, when BM Kaul, Chief of the General Staff, was appointed to form IV Corps, and dispatched to lead the eviction of the Chinese forces at the Namka Chu river.¹⁰²⁸ Media coverage of Kaul's impending mission compounded the effect of the earlier publication of the 'top secret' plan to remove the Chinese from the Namka Chu area on 27 September in the *Times of India*.¹⁰²⁹ Such reporting portrayed India as aggressive and gave Beijing generous forewarning of Indian plans. It also whet the Indian public's appetite for action, further boxing Nehru in. Aware no doubt of the pressure Nehru faced, Kaul proceeded with his plan to begin the removal of the Chinese on 10 October, despite the fact that arrival in theatre had brought home to him how vulnerable India's position was.¹⁰³⁰

¹⁰²⁷ 'Beineidiketuoфу yu Ladakelixinan huitan jiyao: Yindu dui lingtu zhengduan de taidu', 4 September 1962, *GZBCED*; TN Kaul, 73-4

¹⁰²⁸ Raghavan, 2010, 293-8

¹⁰²⁹ *HBBR*, 76, 83

¹⁰³⁰ *HBBR*, 98-93

India's military incompetence and weakness combined with the newspapers display of public aggression to provide Chairman Mao with the chance to use a limited war to gain major political ends. As we have seen, Mao saw warfare as simply another form of political struggle. At the end of September at the Tenth Plenary of the CCP's Eighth Central Committee, Mao had maintained his attack on Wang Jiaxiang's moderate foreign policy proposals. Support for the DRV was one way to burnish his demand that the party 'never forget class struggle' and distinguish itself from Moscow's revisionism.¹⁰³¹ An attack on India would reinforce the message. The opportunity to strike was too good. The Indian media's advertising of forthcoming operations on the border allowed Beijing to cast itself in a defensive role.¹⁰³² In addition, the Chinese were perfectly aware of how vulnerable Indian forces were on the border. As already seen, in May, Cheng Hao had underlined this point to the Soviets. The destruction of General Kaul's ill-judged foray across the Namka Chu on 10 October confirmed Indian frailty. In particular, Indian military leadership appeared a mess. Kaul had withheld permission for a well-placed machine gun post to open fire on an attacking column of PLA troops, which might well have ended the battle of Namka Chu, and he then fled the scene while his men were given a mauling. Indian commanders had also disallowed use of mortars.¹⁰³³ Given Mao's general strategy to target small, weak forces, to 'cut off the fingers' and slowly consume the enemy, the appeal of targeting Indian forces becomes clear.¹⁰³⁴ When the war with India came, Castro criticised Beijing for not providing real relief to Cuba in the midst of the missile crisis by attacking Taiwan.¹⁰³⁵ But if one understands that Mao's strategy was to expose the Soviets to facilitate his return to power and eliminate a threat that was easy to deal with, then it is no surprise he hit India rather than Taiwan.

¹⁰³¹ Chen Jian, 2001, 210-11

¹⁰³² Raghavan, 2010, 299

¹⁰³³ *HBBR*, 93-5

¹⁰³⁴ 'Yong "gezhitou" de banfa zhansheng diren', 30 September 1962, *JGYLMZDJSWG*, xia, 149

¹⁰³⁵ Fardella, Enrico Maria. 'Mao Zedong and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis', *Cold War History* 15, no. 1 (2015): 85

The Namka Chu debacle knocked confidence in Delhi but public opinion shackled Nehru and his colleagues to confrontation with China. Kaul had rushed back to the capital to report and the immediate question became whether to withdraw from Dholu and the Namka Chu area or to hold the line. Kaul had disagreed with other local commanders and insisted that Indian forces hold their positions and those orders remained in place from the 15 October.¹⁰³⁶ But this shift to a less aggressive stance was not signalled to Beijing. Krishna Menon and Nehru had both made public comments on the 12 and 13 October that the Chinese would be pushed off the Thagla ridge eventually, but Nehru's words in particular were distorted in sensational manner by the press to suggest the orders were for immediate action.¹⁰³⁷ So public opinion and media excitement not only prevented Delhi from last minute efforts to appeal to Beijing, but in actual fact these seemed to the Chinese a declaration of bellicose intent. Not even the Soviet intervention on the 18 October, underlining a clear shift to support China and appeal for Delhi to back down on the border, had any effect now.¹⁰³⁸

Beijing also took the opportunity of hostility with India to present itself as leading the regional campaign against Delhi's imperialist chauvinism and so further disrupt its reputation for anti-colonialism and standing in the Third World. Throughout 1962 Beijing had watched Delhi's efforts to confound Nepal's independence and maintain its profound dominance of Nepal's culture and economy.¹⁰³⁹ Chen Yi now announced on 12 October that the PRC would defend Nepal from Indian aggression.¹⁰⁴⁰ In September, intimacy with Islamabad had developed to the extent that Liu Shaoqi and the newly arrived Pakistani Ambassador communed eagerly over Indian perfidy,

¹⁰³⁶ *HBBR*, 98-101

¹⁰³⁷ Raghavan, 2010, 310; For Krishna Menon's remarks see *HBBR*, 96

¹⁰³⁸ 'Sugong zhongyang zhuxituan jueyi: guanyu Zhongyin bianjie zhongtu gei Sulian zhu yindu deshì de zhishi', 18 October 1962, *GZBCED*

¹⁰³⁹ *Zhu Nibo'er shiguan*: "Yindu dui Nibo'er jingji shang de kongzhi yu Nibo'er fandui Yindu jingji kongzhi de douzheng", 31 August 1962, *CMFA* 105-01524-03

¹⁰⁴⁰ 'Note 83', 12 October 1959, *JNLCM*, Vol. 5, 526

regional ambitions and attempts to subjugate Nepal.¹⁰⁴¹ As already seen, in the final hours before China's strike against Indian border positions, the Pakistanis would plead with Chinese diplomats that they teach Nehru a lesson. Beijing did not launch its attack on India because of Nepali and Pakistani concerns, but it was careful to be sure that they gave Beijing credit for sharing their views of India.

The CCP Central Military Commission's operational order for war against India, of 18 October, gave three goals: stabilise the borders, create conditions for negotiations, and attack reactionaries.¹⁰⁴² Thus the war adhered to diplomacy as struggle within the framework of transnational class politics. Beijing now fully identified Nehru and his government with the reactionary forces that had been the main power behind India's anti-China clamouring and policies since 1959.¹⁰⁴³ But to attack these reactionaries had both broader international and narrower domestic meanings. Indian reactionaries were, as a new comprador class, now allies of global imperialism, so to attack India was to attack the global enemy. But more significantly, given Soviet support for the Indian state, the attack was also a blow against those revisionists in Moscow. Furthermore, China's strike was therefore also a lesson to Mao's own colleagues that confrontation must be embraced. Four days after China's attack, Delhi rejected the 24 October offer of a ceasefire, and Beijing resumed its attack and called for an armed uprising in India.¹⁰⁴⁴ The appeal for an Indian revolution was a final intervention in Indian politics to support Beijing's class allies. It complemented China's overwhelming attack on Indian positions along the border and burnished Mao's credentials as the leader of global radicalism, contrasting him with the spineless traitors in Moscow.

¹⁰⁴¹ "Record of Conversation following Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Raza's Presentation of Credentials to Liu Shaoqi's," September 01, 1962, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 105-01801-02, 28-34. Obtained and translated by Christopher Tang. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121571>

¹⁰⁴² Fravel, 194-6

¹⁰⁴³ 'Beineidiketufu yu Ye Chengzhang huitan jiyao: Zhongguo dui nihelu shengming de lichang', 1 October 1962, GZBCED

¹⁰⁴⁴ Fic, 12; Ray, 1985, 85

In 1961, Nehru had found himself trapped between profound distrust of China's ambitions on the border and the Indian public, press and parliament's implacable hostility to any suggestion of territorial compromise. From this predicament emerged the 'Forward Policy' and a strategy to recover enough territory to assuage the Indian public sufficiently to allow Nehru to pursue some accommodation with the Chinese. Delhi's assumption that Beijing would not authorise a major response to India's advance was based on a conviction that India was only adopting a defensive posture and that the Chinese feared risking a wider conflagration. These assumptions originated with a sense that Moscow would restrain Beijing and that anyway India's well-known non-alignment made it an inconceivable target, even if the Chinese were not racially inclined to withdraw from direct confrontation. Nehru also assumed that Indian public opinion would react to some victories on the border by giving him more support, whereas the inflamed belligerence only became a target for Chinese intervention. By July 1962, Beijing had decided that India now represented a peculiar threat and so Nehru's more flexible diplomacy was rejected. There were a number of reasons that Beijing turned against Delhi. There was a desire once again to disrupt public discourse in India related to the border and Tibet. Beijing regarded broad popular interest in Tibet's cause and the activities of the exiles in India as a renewed Indian threat to its strategic and ideological hegemony in that province. In addition, Delhi had demonstrated through its connections to Indochina and Taiwan that it was utterly hostile to the PRC, while at the same time, the overall reduction in threats to China from those areas gave Beijing more options. Mao saw an opportunity to tackle his major political enemy, Soviet revisionism. It had become clear that the Soviets were using India to attack the PRC and so Mao decided to intensify the confrontation with Delhi in order to highlight to his colleagues and the global masses how Moscow was betraying its erstwhile ally and the cause of revolution. Once Mao had chosen to intensify the conflict in September 1962, Indian tactical maladroitness made it clear that the historic political benefits of crushing Indian pretensions on the border overwhelmed any military risks.

Conclusion

A profound clash of diplomatic methods contributed to the spiral of distrust between Delhi and Beijing. The border crises of the second half of 1959 led the Chinese leadership to intensify their diplomacy as struggle with the Indians. This diplomatic approach was conceived as an intervention in the political confrontations underway in India, and was made possible by Mao's active resumption of a transnational class perspective, and a complete shift away from the inter-state, or nation based approach of the *Panchsheel* and Bandung era. Diplomacy as struggle not only reflected his sense of the need to support his class allies within India, but was also linked to class conflict within China, in Tibet, and also globally with the US, which was allied with Indian elites. This approach to India also served to highlight Soviet errors, to whom it was explained that struggle would produce unity because the Indians would either make concessions, or else the true class loyalties of the different Indian actors would be profitably revealed. The latter outcome would intensify class confrontation and prove how fatal total reliance on peaceful transition might be. It was this diplomatic method, exemplified by the apparent claim on NEFA in September 1959, and the refusal to consider any compromise of principle, that was a major cause of Indian public and governmental distrust in China. Despite this distrust, Nehru sought to cope with Beijing's approach by constructing a flexible and fairly reasonable diplomatic strategy. Nehru tried to privately engage the Chinese and appealed to their interest in supporting his leadership in Delhi against his conservative opponents to preserve non-alignment. He did this while at the same time trying to placate the Indian public and domestic critics by maintaining a firm rhetoric in public. The problem with Nehru's approach in this early stage was that his flexibility seemed to confirm the rectitude of Beijing's approach, indicating that struggle was indeed producing a degree of unity.

Sino-Indian hostility was exacerbated by competing understandings of what counted as imperialism and the prospects of international peace. Renewal of Cold War tension in 1960 brought home to Beijing and Delhi how different were their attitudes to international affairs. This recognition fed into and was in turn reinforced by the mutual perception of hostility at the local level. Beijing looked on with horror at India's apparent defection from anti-colonialism and accommodation of global imperialism in 1960, its acceptance of superpower hegemony and encouragement of Moscow's treacherous policy of detente. The fact that Beijing's relationship with the Soviet Union was collapsing at this time seemed to make India complicit in the unprecedented crisis that the PRC now faced. India's claim to moderation and non-alignment now looked to Beijing like nothing less than counter-revolution. Conversely, the Indians were repelled by Beijing's opposition to detente and continued desire for global revolution. The manner in which each pursued the consolidation of their competing spheres then seemed especially provocative because of these broader perceptions of the other as either a belligerently revolutionary state or else a collaborator with imperialism. Beijing found that Delhi's desire to subjugate smaller neighbours and limit their sovereignty to be confirmation of its general retreat from anti-colonial virtue. Indian leaders similarly were provoked by Beijing's resumption of revolutionary methods to consolidate control in Tibet, in a total rejection of the reassurances of the Bandung era. Thus the security crisis that had become acute with the border clashes of 1959 intensified.

Delhi discovered that public hostility towards China obstructed constructive diplomacy. This reality led Nehru to form a strategy in which the 'Forward Policy' was pursued on the border to recover territory and placate the public mood sufficiently to enable more flexible talks with Beijing. An initial period of flexible diplomacy from late 1959 failed because it only confirmed to Beijing that diplomacy as struggle had softened Nehru's stance. In 1962 Nehru's diplomacy was undermined because the 'Forward Policy' increased the public's belligerence. Indian strategists were also hobbled by the assumption that Beijing shared their dismissal of the possibility of limited warfare. Furthermore, just as Nehru began to confidently pursue a more creative diplomatic approach,

Beijing opted to confront India. One problem was simply that Beijing was provoked by public discourse in India regarding victories on the border, and that also seemed a renewal of interference in Tibet. However, the impression of Indian hostility had also grown in 1962 just when Beijing's leaders began to feel a slight lessening of other pressures. This created an opportunity for Mao to confront India as a way of striking against the threat which he perceived as dominating all others by the summer of 1962, Soviet revisionism.

Nehru's approach to Beijing was riven with provocative contradictions. The appeal for support against the attacks of his conservative opponents in India contradicted the claim that there was no class confrontation in India. Nehru did not realise that Mao and his colleagues regarded hostile public comment as a genuine threat and legitimate object of political struggle. The strategy of trying to satisfy nationalist opinion with some forward gains on the border was likely to just provoke Beijing. Nor did Nehru understand that Mao did not share his conviction that limited war was an unacceptable risk in a nuclear armed superpower system. While Nehru believed that peaceful coexistence was the inevitable and necessary answer to its absolute alternative of nuclear armageddon, Mao felt no such tactical restraint. Nehru failed to realise that agreement with Moscow on this question, far from making India safer, actually made it an object for demonstrating the feasibility of limited war and exposing the naiveté of total commitment to peaceful coexistence. Nehru seemed oblivious to the provocative nature of his attempt to subordinate the sovereignty of Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal, and the damage it did to his reputation for anti-colonialism. Most fundamentally, Nehru was unaware that his reassurances to Beijing that non-alignment would remain intact was no balm to Chinese ears, because non-alignment was simply regarded as a reactionary blockade of revolution.

The power of these contradictions was multiplied by the strength of ideological conviction in Beijing. Ideology is not a separate category to 'national interest', instead it is the frame in which the world is interpreted and interests are defined. Mao's understanding of global politics as most

profoundly driven by the dynamics of transnational class relations meant that perceptions of India's domestic politics created an expectation of a hostile Indian foreign policy. Reactionaries within India were perceived as a threat to China, most notably on the border and in Tibet. Even if there was no concrete material threat to Tibet, media comment and public events were considered threatening despite the fact these might have no relationship to government policy. Within the logic of transnational class dynamics, hostile public opinion was an expression of class enmity to be confronted. Diplomacy as struggle emerged from this ideological framework and was considered in 1959 to be a demonstration to the Soviets of ideological rectitude. The Soviet factor grew acute however as the split with Moscow became irreversible by 1962. It was ideology that defined India's relations with Moscow as a threat and then determined that confronting India was the best way of revealing Soviet treachery. This was a continuation of the logic of diplomacy as struggle. But in 1962 exposing the Soviets had profound domestic meaning as the means for Mao to assert not just international leadership, but also restore his primacy within the Chinese party. The war with India was no doubt understood in security terms. Yes it aimed to stop incursions and prod Nehru to negotiate the border. But it was also an attack on reactionaries. The combination of these aims was consistent with diplomacy as struggle. 'Unity' would be achieved by a firm display of principle, but this did not mean compromise. Instead it meant the enemy must give way or, even better, stand exposed and alone on the losing side of history.

Conclusion

The Sino-Indian War broke out because Mao Zedong believed a new level of conflict would be useful to him. The Chairman's basic political approach was always to identify where the 'contradictions' existed between different groups. With lines of hostility clear he could marshal his own forces and strike the enemy. By forcing the dispute with India into all out military conflict Mao believed he was able to measure the exact extent of Soviet revisionism's antagonism towards the PRC. Clear definition of Soviet hostility would have a vital domestic value because, since at least 1959, Mao had associated domestic criticism of his own economic policies with Moscow's support, so to expose it as utterly hostile would undercut his rivals within the CCP. Striking India also underlined Beijing's utter rejection of its claims to have a progressive development model or to be sincerely non-aligned. Mao was particularly reacting against the hostile tone of Indian public rhetoric, he wanted to crush the reactionary confidence of the Indian media. Mao believed this intervention would rebalance the confrontation within Indian politics and improve the possibility of a revolutionary denouement. While the PLA used the war to consolidate its hold over Tibet by improving its hold over the Aksai Chin road, the rapid retreat from NEFA also made plain that the swap deal remained on the table.

India and Nehru blundered into the war. The Henderson Brooks-Bhagat Report quoted the nineteenth century British military thinker, Field Marshal Lord Roberts, to summarise Delhi's basic error: 'The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy not coming, but in our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.'¹⁰⁴⁵ Collectively, the leadership in Delhi were handicapped by two assumptions. The first was that Beijing shared Delhi's view that limited warfare had become inconceivable in the new nuclear age. Secondly, Nehru and his colleagues believed that Delhi's practice of non-alignment placed its virtue so far beyond reproach that no one could consider

¹⁰⁴⁵ *HBBR*, 30

significant hostilities against it. The diplomatic strategy that emerged from these assumptions was problematic. Nehru tried to assuage popular opinion with the 'Forward Policy' hoping that this would allow him to make a deal, but all this achieved was to whet the appetite for belligerence and add to Beijing's impression of a hostile public mood. Operating within a framework of international class struggle once more, Mao was keen to prove that limited war was possible, that non-alignment was not simply weak or naive idealism but an insidious threat and a counter-revolutionary sham, and that the Indian media's enmity would not be tolerated. Above all Mao wanted to prove that history was a question of inevitable class confrontation, rejecting the proclaimed mission of India's first ambassador to the PRC to demonstrate that neutrality was possible.

Much of twentieth century history was driven by a basic dispute over what force determines historical progress. Do people unite and act on the basis of a collective sense of class solidarity, finding identity in either a common desire to challenge their economic exploitation or else to protect and further their own material advantages? Or, rather, is it nationhood that fuels the engine of change over time, as people coalesce around a shared sense of historical, geographic and linguistic identity to assert and defend their independent differences against external intrusion? How this question is answered will lead to very different outcomes in terms of political organisation and attitudes towards the international sphere. If one assumes that the former position is correct then it is the conflict between the exploiters and exploited and the alliances they form transnationally that counts. To many anti-colonial intellectuals and leaders, schooled by foreign and racial oppression, this latter perspective seemed a distraction from the sanctity and haven that self-rule within one's own nation would provide. To these individuals it was the suppression of national aspiration that was the major cause of global conflict and those bullied nations should rally together to collectively assert and protect their independence.

What counts then, class or nation? For a few years in the middle of the 1950s, Chairman Mao, with Moscow's encouragement, deferred to the idea of national collaboration with non-socialist Asia and

Nehruvian India because it offered Beijing the opportunity to draw breath after decades of war. But Mao and his colleagues' entire political experience showed them that what really counted was the support of the masses and their hunger for social revolution. This was not idealism but practical politics. The CCP's own history had proved that once aroused the masses were invincible and could defeat any enemy. It was only a question of determining where the enemy lay.

Beginning on the night of the 19-20 October, PLA units sliced through Indian positions in the Eastern sector of the border and drove all the way to the Buddhist town of Tawang. On the 24th a ceasefire proposal was sent to the Indians but was rejected. The Chinese forces remained where they were in the East while in the West they continued removing India's grip on its forward posts. Although India soon accepted US military aid, Delhi had made a general appeal for assistance, not excluding the USSR, and Nehru argued Indian non-alignment remained secure.¹⁰⁴⁶ During this lull in activity, the 17th Session of the UN General Assembly debated again the question of China's representation at the UN. The UN Yearbook of 1962 records India's contribution:

The representative of India asserted that the People's Republic of China had committed flagrant, massive and premeditated aggression on the eastern and western sectors of India's territory, while glibly talking of peaceful negotiations. His delegation believed that the only effective way to check Chinese military adventurism was to make it accept its responsibilities as a Member of the Organization and thereby be subject to the views and disciplines of the United Nations.¹⁰⁴⁷

The idiosyncratic defence of the PRC's case at the UN was not simply because India's confidence had recovered during the 'phoney war' after the PLA's initial advance into Indian territory. The

¹⁰⁴⁶ Maxwell, 1970, 377-387

¹⁰⁴⁷ UN Yearbook 1962, Part 1: The United Nations. Section 1: Political and Security Questions, Chapter IX: Questions Concerning Asia and the Far East: The Representation of China in the UN, 114-117

following year, and after the Indian army had experienced further humiliation at Chinese hands in Ladakh and NEFA, Delhi again voted in favour of the PRC's admission to the UN.¹⁰⁴⁸

Nehru's international support for Beijing was underpinned by his sense of history as driven by the rise of nations. This worldview combined with his pan-Asianist sympathies and led him to place profound significance on the PRC's place in the international system. He had therefore often given Beijing unconditional support despite sharp rhetorical attacks on Delhi, or its obvious appetite for confrontation. Now, even when it was India that had suffered Chinese aggression, Nehru maintained his argument that the way to eliminate the danger posed by Beijing's belligerence was to socialise it, to integrate the PRC to the international system, ease its isolation and temper its disruptive ambitions. Furthermore, Nehru's underlying hopes for the UN meant that just as in 1950 when he had ruled out India entering the UN Security Council before the problem of China's representation had been solved, so now he continued to uphold the principle of a genuinely representative UN, even though that meant supporting a state that had recently battered India's military. Support for Beijing at the UN was also about demanding global respect for the self-determination of Asian states. No one had the right to countermand the Chinese people's decision to reject the GMD and chose the CCP. To support and engage the PRC in this way was also a profound assertion of India's rejection of the logic of the Cold War, a clear demonstration of the sincerity of non-alignment, and hence also of India's own independence. At the very broadest level, Nehru's policy towards China was an exemplary expression of his non-aligned posture and an encouragement to others that a middle way could illuminate a path out of the dark terrain of the Cold War. This policy was both highly idealist but also served practical ends. Placating China would generally serve India's interests by defusing the overall level of international tension and reducing the security dilemma related to Tibet and the border. Furthermore, the consistent and principled assertion of Indian non-alignment in face of all provocations would give India a moral armour and stature in international politics in excess of its objective, material power. A similar effect

¹⁰⁴⁸ UN Yearbook 1963, Part 1: The United Nations. Section 1: Political and security questions. Chapter 3: Questions concerning Asia and the Far East: The Representation of China in the UN, 31-34

would be felt within India where Nehru would benefit from standing above the Cold War divisions that disrupted domestic politics.

But Nehru's efforts to earn Beijing's trust and reassure it were always undermined by the ambiguities of his policy towards Tibet and the border. Nehru struggled to cooperate with Beijing on Tibet. He accepted Delhi must give up British India's rights in the region and recognise Beijing's primacy, he helped feed the PLA in Tibet by transshipping Chinese grain from Calcutta, and he several times pressured the Dalai Lama to work with Beijing. But Nehru never gave up his idea that Tibet should preserve a degree of separation from the rest of China, and furthermore that special cultural ties with India ought to be protected. Having conceded China's rights he paradoxically always insisted on autonomy for Tibet and regarded the Chinese presence as an occupation. Important Indian officials encouraged the Tibetans to resist Chinese authority non-violently, and Indian officers in Tibet displayed obvious reluctance to accept the end of Indian influence. Furthermore, while he imagined that Beijing might acquiesce in Delhi's own imperial ambitions in the Himalayan border states, his hope that the Chinese would thereby cooperate in a system of limited sovereignty which included Tibetan autonomy was hugely misguided. Nehru's border policy was also problematic. Having briefly flirted with the idea of seeking a candid discussion of the border, Delhi moved instead to a policy in which they would avoid the issue and instead claim in public that the borders were settled and then try and consolidate India's physical position in the meantime. But the projection of public certainty was never matched by progress on the ground, so Nehru had created popular expectations of what the border should be without ensuring the means to guarantee it. And once the need for a compromise became apparent, the Indian public were not prepared for concessions. His fundamental error was to not use the good atmosphere that existed in Sino-Indian relations to clarify and then settle their respective border claims.

However the key variable in Sino-Indian relations was Beijing's faith that class confrontation powered history. The CCP's ideology meant that India, with the revolutionary potential of its massive impoverished population, was always an important state. But India's size and claim to stand above the Cold War also meant that, as the Korean War ended and Beijing made the strategic decision to drop its revolutionary rhetoric in order to engage non-socialist Asia, Delhi was the obvious first target. India had after all consistently shown a willingness to engage with Beijing since October 1949. But cooperation with the Indian state would also encourage Delhi to assist in the consolidation of Tibet, while Beijing attempted to stabilise that region by working through the existing elites. The united front that Beijing pursued with the Dalai Lama, despite Mao's preference for revolutionary methods, was simultaneously a complement to his foreign policy goal of courting Delhi by projecting a new moderate image. Nehru believed that Beijing's apparent embrace of moderation was, at least partly, a result of his own policy, and he thought that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence agreed with the Chinese were an Asian innovation in international relations that would provide a model for the rest of the world. The Indian Prime Minister under-estimated the continued commitment in Beijing to its ideological vision and the contingency therefore of engagement with India and moderation in Tibet.

The Soviet Union was the PRC's partner in this projection of broad moderation and courtship of Delhi but when Beijing began to perceive that this project was not serving its interests then tensions emerged. The policy was meant to ease the international pressure on China by eliminating regional anxieties that gave the US a pretext for intervention. It was also meant to give Beijing's leaders the time to focus more energy on development, as well as specifically helping them stabilise Tibet. Of course, the very logic of socialist bloc solidarity was threatened by a shift towards a foreign policy predicated on inter-state rather than inter-party relations. But, the main problem was that the Soviets appeared to be moving towards the enshrinement of peaceful coexistence as a permanent doctrine, rather than a Leninist tactic. Mao's concern was accentuated by practical evidence that this would be a strategic blunder of catastrophic proportions. Not only did US imperialist power remain entrenched on Taiwan, a situation which itself made the notion of

coexistence with Washington farcical, but to Mao's mind an array of other threats also suggested that ruling out confrontational class politics would severely handicap Beijing. Through 1956-57 Mao observed the persistent danger posed by reactionaries in Tibet, in Eastern Europe, amongst China's intellectuals and within India. It seemed to Mao that Muscovite moderation overlooked the dangers of cooperation with those who resisted revolution.

The anti-rightist campaign of 1957 was Mao's attempt to crush the class threat within China and it created the opportunity for him to pursue his ambitions more freely. The most immediate impact on relations with India were linked to events across the Tibetan plateau. For all his growing wariness of class enemies within Tibet, India and elsewhere, Mao still preserved a pragmatic interest in partnership with the Dalai Lama and the Indian state. However, the moderate accommodation of elite sensibilities within the province of Tibet had not been maintained in the Tibetan areas of the surrounding provinces, and persistent resentment at the Han presence there soon exploded into armed rebellion. While Beijing still hoped that the Dalai Lama, and indeed Delhi, would do what they could to support pacification of this uprising, the general instability continued to spread along lines of ethnic-cultural allegiance towards central Tibet. As disturbances proliferated the compromises and restraint demanded by partnership with India began to look increasingly like obstacles to a solution.

The eruption of violence in Lhasa provided the opportunity for Mao both to sweep away the impediments to the revolutionary integration of Tibet with the PRC and also to test the real class loyalties of the Dalai Lama, the Indian government and Nehru himself. In turn they all failed the examination Mao prescribed. The Dalai Lama's talk of an exile government proved he was simply a reactionary traitor. The massive sympathy expressed by public speeches, the media and popular demonstrations within India for the rebellious class enemies in Tibet, including by Nehru and his circle, confirmed the ascendance and hostility of reactionary power in that country. Confronted by this enmity Mao had no option but to respond in kind and his diplomacy towards Delhi underwent a dramatic shift to one based on transnational class struggle. Beijing now conducted diplomacy as

struggle, attacking its enemies in India and trying to forge an alliance with the masses. The entire basis of cooperation with India was over-turned. Beijing and Delhi's underlying world-views, of a politics premised on the continual dialectic of social antagonism and one premised on national revival and independence, now collided.

One consequence of this was that the whole idea of an imperial concord across the Himalayas collapsed. Empires are bound to compete with one another, but they also collaborate, and often do both simultaneously. And a similar dynamic had been at work between India and China through the 1950s. But this cooperation had been based on an occasionally explicit agreement to limit the imposition of central power on the respective objects of imperial ambition. In Beijing's eyes any ideological compromise to accommodate Indian sensitivity to Tibetan autonomy simply looked like a massive threat. In fact, Mao came to regard partnership with Nehru as simply serving counter-revolutionary interests in Tibet. Once Mao reverted to a politics of class confrontation then the whole structure of collaboration with India fell. Delhi and Beijing's imperial goals were now at odds, less in material and territorial terms than in the manner in which they challenged each other's legitimacy. Delhi's notion of Raj-era limited sovereignty for the border states, meaning submission to Indian guidance in foreign affairs and military protection with domestic autonomy, clashed with Mao's desire to stabilise Tibet's place in the PRC by unfurling the revolutionary banner against the old elite. Once Mao took this step then a crucial pillar of Nehru's sense of security in the Himalayas vanished, just as Beijing also decided it also needed to better secure the as yet undefined borders of Tibet. Furthermore, once Mao had decided he no longer wanted Indian assistance with regard to Tibet, then one major reason for maintaining civil relations disappeared.

A most fundamental element of Mao's ideological turn against the Indian state and Nehru was the question of economic development and what this implied for the possibility of partnership between Beijing and Delhi. This issue had, early in the 1950s, been the basis of a degree of common identity and a field of diplomatic exchange. However, it had quickly also become a subject of competition, and gradually on China's side, of deep suspicion. Delhi's claims to have a unique

hybrid form of development, while a ridiculous affront in Beijing's eyes, was nonetheless threatening given that Moscow was offering so much support. It seemed to Beijing that Moscow's support of Indian development, to buttress the theory of 'peaceful transition', was evidence of its worrying ideological corruption. As Beijing's analysts understood India to be increasingly reactionary, Soviet policy looked ever more alarming in its support for a moribund development model and sham non-alignment. Beijing believed India's economic progress was fundamentally imperilled by a resurgent class of comprador capitalists allied with foreign imperialists. The Soviet danger became more acute for Mao personally when it seemed as if his own critics in China echoed Khrushchev's own reservations about the Great Leap Forward. The apparent intensification of class confrontation within India prompted the question of where exactly Nehru stood, and the dismissal of the CPI administration in Kerala seemed to indicate that he was powerless against the reactionaries who were also flaunting their sympathy for Tibet and the Dalai Lama.

So it should be no surprise that these profoundly ideological perceptions of India in 1959 produced an equally ideological response in the diplomacy as struggle. The shift in diplomatic approach signalled the abandonment of *Panchsheel* based moderate engagement with India and was also a challenge to Moscow's Asia policy. Beijing had for a number of years partnered with the Soviets to publicly accept the sanctity of national sovereignty and committed to avoid intervention in the class struggles underway in other states. But with Mao acutely aware of Moscow's endorsement of the charade of Indian moderation and the boiling hostility of reactionary elements in India, he could not sit on his haunches and allow them to attack. Thus, he now re-fitted Beijing's diplomacy to intervene in the struggle within India. Beijing attacked Nehru and his government in print, exposing their hypocrisy and trying to win the sympathy of the Indian masses for the CPI's struggle and for China's stance on the border.

Diplomacy as struggle was a huge challenge for Delhi. The massive distrust felt by the Indian public and government made it impossible to accept the simple swap deal that Zhou offered in April 1960. Nehru was hugely contained by the outrage felt across India and he was compelled to maintain a tough stance in public. At the same time he took a more flexible approach in private and many Indian envoys to the Chinese appealed for them to soften their own attitude in order to preserve Nehru's own political position and his policy of non-alignment. Unfortunately, Nehru's display of flexibility only suggested struggle with Delhi was working and so effected no change in Beijing. Nehru realised that he needed to change the public mood if he was going to eventually reach a settlement with Beijing and so was born the 'Forward Policy'. However, Nehru's strategy of using gains on the border to satisfy the public mood sufficiently to make a deal with Beijing only exacerbated the problem. It is true that Nehru underestimated the ideology of the CCP. One factor was his misplaced confidence that Beijing was contained from launching a limited war by the fear of sparking nuclear armageddon. However, his real failure was that he simply did not understand that within Beijing's worldview, governed by the perception of transnational class conflict, public opinion was as much of a material threat as any military advance. The belligerence of the Indian public and warm welcome for the success of the 'Forward Policy' simply confirmed Delhi's implacable reactionary hostility and made India even more of a target.

Diplomacy as struggle was also intended as a lesson to the Soviets in how to conduct principled revolutionary policy. Moscow's disapproval of Beijing's handling of India only added to the impression of ideological weakness shown by Soviet endorsement of Delhi's development policy and non-alignment. Beijing's exacerbation of the tensions in Indian politics would illustrate to Moscow how naive their attitude to India was. By exposing the true nature of India's government the Soviet comrades might revise their own approach. Beijing's overriding concern in 1960 was that India was successfully encouraging the Soviets to pursue global detente. It was this Soviet factor that hardened Beijing's commitment to struggle with Delhi. However, Beijing failed to effect significant change in Moscow and the Soviets appeared rather to become increasingly hostile. By

1962, it seemed that Moscow was using India to actually target China ideologically and materially, by supplying military equipment for border warfare. Once Moscow had helped certain other international dangers recede, in particular the crisis in Laos, then Beijing's attitude to confronting India changed. Mao now wanted his own colleagues in Beijing and whole the world to see that Moscow had abandoned the PRC and embraced revisionism. The best way to achieve this was to drive tension with India to a new peak. Moscow's shocking sympathy for the Indian state, now dominated by reactionary power, would be revealed and leave beyond doubt its turn from revolutionary purity.

The weight of all this ideology and the long-term strategic damage that Mao's India war caused for China should not obscure either the cautious pragmatism of Beijing's strike or the politics that lay behind it. The war was in effect a repeat of the swap offer Beijing had made since 1959. Despite advancing all the way to the Brahmaputra river the PLA soon withdrew back behind the McMahon Line in the East and only in Ladakh did they hold on to a small amount of new territory up to Beijing's latest claim line. Strategically, the PLA's key interest was obviously to secure the Aksai Chin road that underpinned control of Tibet. There was nothing to be gained from holding territory in the East, and the retreat aimed to demonstrate how fair and principled Beijing was.

Confrontation and eventual war with India was only chosen once other international threats had somewhat dissipated. Mao could have bombarded Taiwan during the missile crisis, but he did not want to relieve the pressure on Khrushchev. What counted for Mao, beyond the road in Ladakh, was the public politics of his action. The Indian people, the Soviets, the global audience and Mao's own colleagues were all invited to appreciate Beijing's rejection of reactionary pressure and strict adherence to principle, in what was just another iteration of diplomacy as struggle.

The war of course brought changes within India despite the continued support for the PRC's rights at the UN. Against Nehru's wishes the defence portfolio was wrenched from Krishna Menon's hands, who was largely blamed for the under-equipped army's poor showing in the Himalayas. The

wider question of why the war had not been foreseen was not confronted, as this cut too close to Nehru's own figure. However, in practical terms, Delhi now shifted towards the approach recommended by Patel back in 1950, in the aftermath of the PLA's destruction of the Tibetan army. Defence spending was raised and the militarisation of the border was embraced. In addition, India would begin cooperating openly with the US to support the Tibetan resistance and would itself train and raise Tibetan troops. Gradually Indian distaste for nuclear arms would also decline, especially after Beijing tested its first weapon in 1964, and Delhi itself would cautiously set out on the road to an Indian bomb. The war also intensified the racist paranoia regarding India's own Chinese population, which faced severe repression under the Defence of India Act with thousands detained or pressured to leave the country. Some Indian nationalists today still stew in the humiliation suffered in 1962 and hurl abuse at Nehru's memory for his weakness and naiveté. However, they possibly under-estimate Nehru's imperial successes. After all, the final outlines of the Indian state were far from clear in August 1947, but under his leadership the British inheritance was secured and even extended. Nehru's forceful assertion of Indian ownership of NEFA, and special ties to Sikkim and Bhutan have ultimately kept these more or less in Indian hands when China certainly had grounds to claim these itself. The non-aligned world remained non-aligned in the war, but Nehru himself had recommended this approach at Belgrade in 1961. Certainly the West was swift to support India, presumably believing it finally had its chance to wrest Delhi to its side. However, within weeks Delhi's diplomats were joking with Khrushchev about arresting 'Stalinists' in India, and the ongoing strength of Indo-Soviet relations indicated the resilience of Nehruvian non-alignment.

The war helped Mao break with Moscow and set him on the road to the Cultural Revolution and absolute paramountcy in China. Military success was always the foundation of Mao's stature in the party so the compact success over the Indian army helped reassert his authority. But this began a longer process of comprehensively destroying the Chairman's opponents, which would climax with the Red Guards' savage treatment of his main rival Liu Shaoqi. The Soviets briefly backed Beijing during the war but once the Cuban crisis ended Moscow reverted to its traitorous friendship with India. Beijing's public rhetoric focused on Moscow's spineless behaviour over Cuba, but the

passion was intensified by the clear proof of Khrushchev's revisionist partiality for Delhi. When Moscow agreed the Limited Test Ban Treaty with the US and others in 1963, Mao's fear that the superpowers were constructing a bi-polar global hegemony was confirmed and Beijing began its public attacks on Soviet ideological treachery. Besides being a tool for crushing his domestic critics, the Cultural Revolution was also a means of breaking entirely with the Soviet approach. These rather short term Maoist benefits of the war belied a longer term problem for the PRC. Indian distrust of China today is symptomatic of a common problem that Beijing confronts with many in its neighbourhood. The memory of China's radical belligerence in the Maoist period still makes many wary, constraining China's rise and providing opportunities to its geopolitical rivals. Arguably, for all his reputation for strategic vision, the cost of Mao's tactical humiliation of Nehru has not yet been fully realised.

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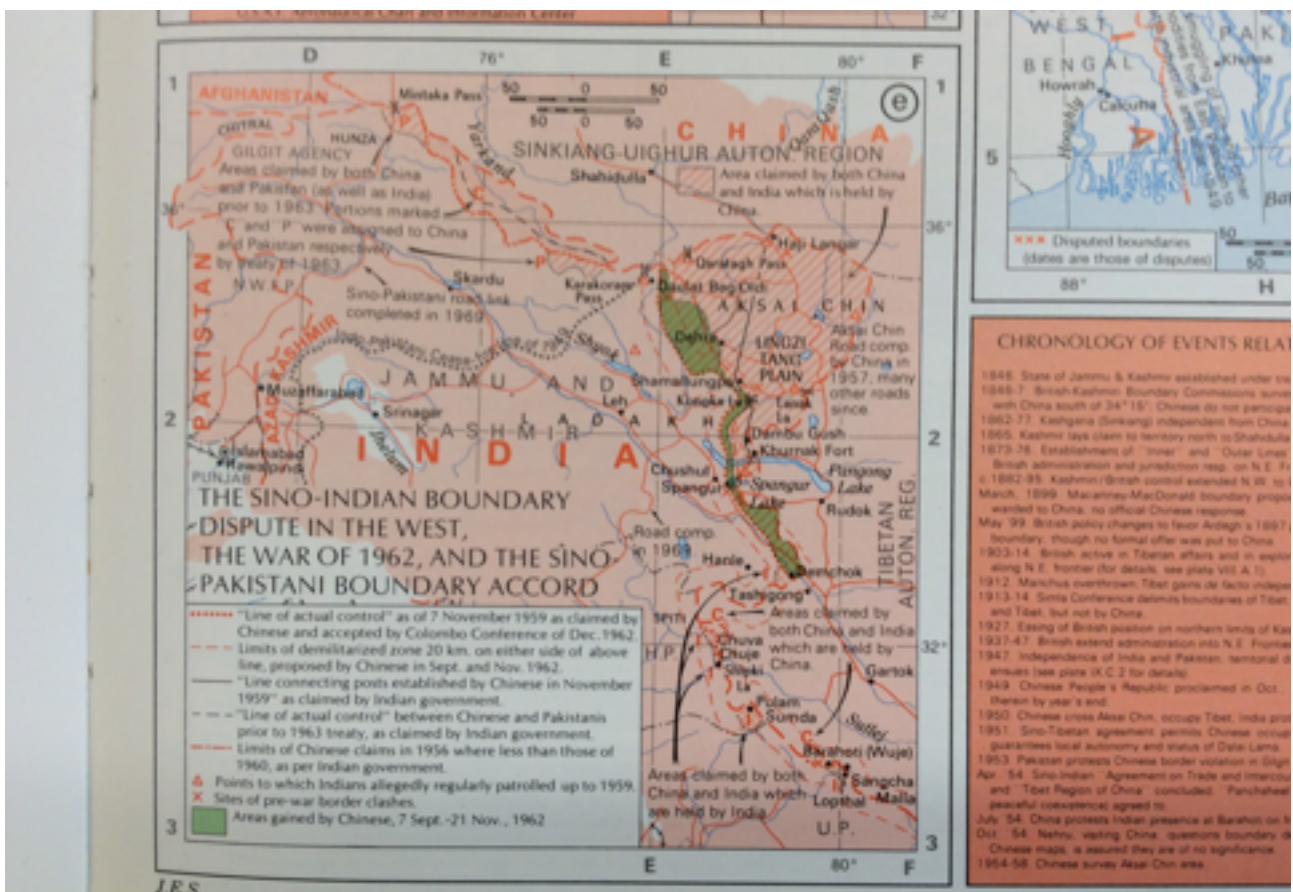
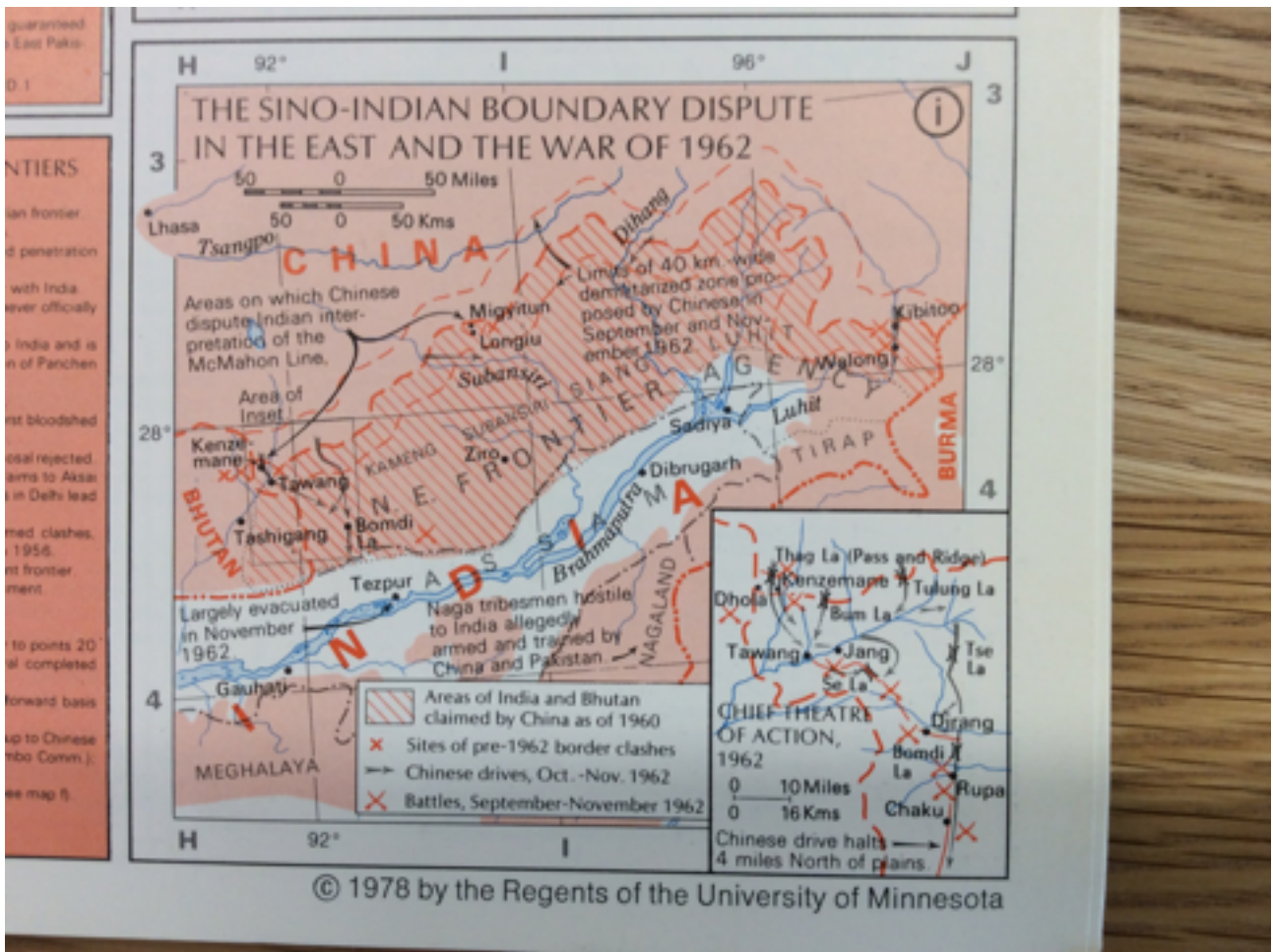
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Appendix 1. Maps



People's Liberation Army invasion of Tibet
(October 1950)



Frontier of Tibet as claimed by Tibetans in 1914



Frontier of Tibet as claimed by Nationalist Chinese in 1914



Front
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Frontier of Tibet as proposed at the Tripartite Simla Conference in 1914



Territories under the control of the Dalai Lama's Government (1918-1950)



