THE INDIA-CHINA BORDER QUESTION

J. M. Addis

Introduction by Neville Maxwell

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THE ADDIS PAPER
An Introduction

By Neville Maxwell

The mood in President John F. Kennedy’s White House when in October 1962 news came of the Chinese attack on India must have been one of jubilation. From the beginning of its independence Nehru’s India had opposed and obstructed America’s policy of isolating and demonising “Red China” and propping up the defunct Nationalist regime in Taiwan as incumbent of Beijing’s United Nations seat. Now Nehru had got what he deserved, the Americans would have chortled. But of course none of that gloating showed in the personal commiseration from the President to Prime Minister Nehru: America’s sympathies, Kennedy wrote, were “wholeheartedly with you. You have displayed an impressive degree of forbearance and patience in dealing with the Chinese. You have put into practice what all great religious leaders have urged, and so few of their followers have been able to do”.

That gushing praise is revealing. Kennedy no doubt believed what he wrote! The international community as a whole had been deceived by Indian sophistry into a hard-to-shake belief in an utterly false perception of the cause of the India/China border war.

The political climate gave a fair wind to the Brahminical casuistry which Nehru and his compatriots deployed to delude world opinion, to “stand truth on its head” as Beijing complained. Western opinion was programmed to believe that the PRC was innately belligerent and expansionist and that Nehru, and therefore India, were inherently noble, pacific and truthful. Accordingly, nothing Beijing said about the dispute was believed, everything Nehru said was accepted as gospel truth.

But the very means India used to obfuscate the issues, real-time publication of the diplomatic correspondence with Beijing, would also provide the key to the truth: it only needed someone free of both anti-China and pro-India bias to read it closely and critically. That is what the British diplomat John Addis did over the winter months of 1962/3 when he used a period of leave to research the “India-China Border Question” at Harvard.

His first discovery was dramatic. On the library’s shelves he found two copies of the 1929 edition of London’s officially published record of treaties and other diplomatic engagements involving its Indian government, known after the original editor as Aitchison’s Treaties – and was surprised to note that the volumes were not identical.
Curiously, the difference lay in only one passage, on the pages describing the outcome of the conference convened by the Government of India in 1914 at Simla to mediate in the relations between Lhasa and Beijing. The British had covertly used the opportunity to try to induce China and/or Tibet to cede to India a broad tract of territory in India’s north-east. One version of the volumes Addis found reflected the failure of that attempt, the other claimed success.

Addis deduced that the contradiction revealed a British diplomatic forgery, aimed to indicate falsely that India could legitimately lay claim to an advanced border alignment on its north-eastern frontier with China. Exposure of that trickery showed that independent India’s claim to a border on what the British had named the McMahon Line had no legal basis. (The details of the forgery and the identity of the leading forger, Olaf Caroe, were revealed later by Alastair Lamb and the Indian scholar Karunakar Gupta.)

Reading on into the Sino-Indian diplomatic correspondence of the late 1950s and early 1960s about their contradictory territorial claims, including the letters exchanged between the two prime ministers, Addis found that the Indians had built upon and elaborated the original British falsification. Insisting that not only the McMahon Line but all the border alignments it claimed were indisputable and non-negotiable international borders, the Indian government had charged China with committing “aggression” by the mere fact of its being in occupation of territory India claimed. When that accusation became public the Nehru government found itself trapped into the obligation to repel what it had denounced as illicit occupation of sacred Indian soil – in other words, to impose its own territorial claims on China by force of arms.

Thus, under Addis’s clear gaze, what JFK had acclaimed as Indian “forbearance and patience” appeared instead as belligerent obduracy, and the Chinese “aggression” that in October 1962 so outraged the West emerged as a legitimate act of anticipatory self-defence. It was not Nehru who had exercised “forbearance and patience” under sustained armed provocation, but the Chinese leadership. By treating Chinese occupancy of territory Indian claimed as “aggression” Nehru made war inevitable, by his adamant insistence that he/India would never negotiate a border settlement he laid the curse of a disputed border on his own country and on China too.

Unfortunately Addis’s research paper for the Harvard Institute for International Affairs did not come into public knowledge at the time it was written, when its impact would have been explosive. The Indian Government obtained a copy, however, and hotly complained to London about the “anti-Indian activities” of its diplomat: Addis was sternly rebuked by his superiors, and kept his silence. He ended his career as ambassador to China. (At Oxford later he was a friendly colleague of this writer, who takes pleasure in posthumously bringing his brave exercise in forensic scholarship into the public sphere.)

The paper is of course far from the last word. Much of the record was closed to Addis. His suggestion that the PRC might have been satisfied with the results of their initial attack but for Nehru’s demonstrative embrace of American military aid
misreads the Chinese strategy: the second phase of its punitive campaign, the knock-out, was critical to its success. Nothing less would have terminated India’s determined attempt to impose its territorial claims on China. Feeble as India was militarily in 1962, American and British aid quickly strengthened it and if China had halted its operation at a point short of absolute victory it would have stranded itself in an open-ended war of attrition.

Addis’s paper is by no means past its relevance date, it should be read by all studying Sino-Indian relations. The Indian government still – after 50 years! -- refuses to negotiate a settlement. It has never withdrawn its charge that in 1962 it suffered an “unprovoked aggression” by China, but resurrects that complaint whenever it seems likely to elicit international sympathy or support. The Indian political elite, journalists, historians, security specialists, chorus the same stale and groundless indictment. In the USA too, academic “China watchers” find it professionally rewarding to sustain the Indian frame-up, placing the blame for the 1962 conflict on Beijing and dubbing it “Mao’s India war”.
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INTRODUCTION

Chapters 1-6 set out the background to the current dispute over the border between India and China. This is my own assessment of the evidence brought forward by the Indian and Chinese officials at their meeting in 1960, which has been published in the "Report of Officials" (see Bibliography). No source material has been used other than that referred to in the Report.

Chapters 7-28 contain a full narrative of developments on the basis of the exchange of letters, notes and memoranda between the Indian and Chinese Governments, which have been published by the Government of India in a series of White Papers, and of speeches in the Indian Parliament. Some use has also been made of press material. The criterion for the selection of quotations has been to convey what is central or what is characteristic in the document quoted, and the context of the quotation is given whenever that is necessary to convey its proper import. The narrative of events stops at 21 November 1962.

Chapter 29 attempts to relate the India-China Border Question to the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute on peaceful
coexistence, and Chapter 30 contains some comments on Chinese motives and intentions in the border dispute.

The best map provided on the Indian side is in the Report of Officials. The Chinese have published a useful set of maps in "The Sino-Indian Boundary Question" of November 1962.
I.

THE THREE SECTORS: THE MIDDLE SECTOR

The discussions on the India-China border question have conveniently divided the frontier into the western, middle and eastern sectors. The western sector separates Kashmir from Sinkiang and the western extremity of Tibet, and runs from Afghanistan to the north-western tip of the Punjab. The middle sector runs from this point to Nepal. The eastern sector runs from Bhutan to Burma.

The problems arising from the middle sector are relatively simple and can conveniently be disposed of first. This sector of the frontier has never been the subject of any treaty or agreement concluded between British India, or the States of India, and Tibet or China. The Indian Government claim that the western end of the middle sector is covered by treaties of 1684 and 1842 concerning the frontier between Kashmir and Tibet. The argument is that a small area here was included in Kashmir until 1846 and was therefore subject to the earlier treaties. The Indian Government do not however dispute that the whole of the rest of the frontier in the middle sector is not affected by any international instruments concluded before Indian Independence. (The 1684 and 1842 treaties are discussed further below in relation to the western sector.)

Despite the absence of any treaty provision, the present Indian and Chinese Governments are nevertheless agreed that the
frontier in the middle sector runs generally along the crest of the Himalayas. The dispute between them in this sector relates to four small areas where the Chinese claim that Tibetan administration has traditionally operated over the watershed. These are 1) the Spiti area, as the Indians call it; or Chiva and Chuje, to give the Chinese names for the disputed villages 2) the area west of the Shipki pass 3) the Nilang–Jadhang area (Sang and Tsungkinsha to the Chinese) and 4) Barahoti, which the Chinese call Wuje, together with the adjacent villages of Sangchamalla and Laphthal. Of these areas, only the last assumes some importance in the exchanges relating to the border question.

The disputes relating to the third and fourth of these areas have been inherited by Independent India and Communist China from their predecessors. British occupation of Nilang–Jadhang (Sang and Tsungkinsha) dates from 1920 and was disputed by the Tibetan authorities. From 1926 to 1935 there was an active correspondence about the area between British India and Tibet, in the course of which an offer was made to cede part of it to Tibet; but Tibet refused to compromise for less than the whole of her claim. The dispute over possession of Barahoti (Wuje) was the subject of a virtually continuous correspondence between India and Tibet from 1894 to 1954. Speaking of Barahoti on 17 November 1959 Mr. Nehru said "As regards this particular place it is a minor dispute with the old Government of Tibet . . . . There were no conflicts, but there were complaints by us to them and by them to us. They used to send their tax-collector
who used to collect grazing-fees and other fees. This has happened in several parts of the border for the last half a century—certainly before the change in government in China, even in the brief period in 1947-48-49. Then we had to deal with these problems in two or three places in the border, small problems relatively. There they were. So it was a continuation of that. As I said this was an isolated thing and we treated this—and there were two other places—as matters in dispute which had to be settled by negotiation."

To illustrate the past history of the Barahoti dispute, the Chinese have brought forward two quotations from the reports of a Lieutenant Strachey who surveyed the area of the middle sector in 1848:—"It will be observed in this quarter that I have made the British frontier include a good deal of ground unexplored and omitted by the surveyors; the valley of Laptel [i.e. Laptha] being so much more open and accessible to Gnari [in Tibet] than to Jwar or to Painkanda [in India], it seemed questionable whether it did not belong to Lhassa, but I have allowed its place in the boundary maps to be decided by the flow of its water into Painkanda, so as to advance the British frontier to the crest of the Balesh mountains." And again: "I do not think that our Bhotiya subjects [i.e. the hill-tribes of this area] have any definite ideas as to the boundary between the two powers. We English in Kumaon affirm that the watershed is the boundary, and I think no one will dispute the assertion. I was indeed told that Hoti [i.e. Barahoti] a pasture-ground
north-east of Niti village within the watershed was considered by the Tibetans to be a dependency of Daba Dzong. But as it was convenient for me to consider it British ground when I was geologizing here in the following year, I did not find anyone, either Bhotiya or Tibetan, inclined to deny my positive assertion that it was British."
II.

THE WESTERN SECTOR

In the region of the frontier between Kashmir and Sinkiang there are the three great mountain ranges running parallel to each other in a generally east-west alignment: the Kunlun Range in the north, the Karakoram Range in the middle and the Himalayas in the south. The western end of the frontier between Kashmir and Sinkiang, from the junction with the frontier of Afghanistan to the Karakoram Pass, is occupied by Pakistan, so the Chinese Government have refused to discuss it with the Indian Government; but the Indian and Chinese Governments agree that this part of the frontier between Kashmir and Sinkiang runs generally along the crest of the Karakorams and that the Karakoram Pass is on their common frontier. Eastwards from this point their claims diverge widely. The Chinese claim that the frontier runs more or less straight from the Karakoram Range east along the crest of the Karakoram Range to the Kongka Pass. The Indians claim that from the Karakoram Pass the frontier executes a deep salient up to a point on the crest of the Kunlun Range and descends again to the Karakoram Range at a point east of the Kongka Pass. The disputed area here, generally referred to as the Aksai Chin area, covers some 33,000 square kilometers: it is a triangle with its base on the Karakoram Range and its apex cutting into Sinkiang. The Kongka Pass, or a point east of it, marks the easternmost limit
of the common frontier between Sinkiang and India. From this point eastwards the frontier separates Tibet from India; it passes from the Karakoram Range south to the Himalayan Range, through an area without clearly decisive geographical features. Here again (the Demchok area or Parigas, as the Chinese call it) the claims of the two sides differ, though not widely.

Arguments based on geographical considerations favour the Chinese more than the Indian case in respect of the stretch of the frontier between the Karakoram Pass and the area of the Kongka Pass. On purely geographical grounds it is more reasonable that the frontier, as the Chinese claim, should run along the crest of the Karakorams the whole way from the junction with Afghanistan to the area of the Kongka Pass, where it turns south to join the crest of the Himalayas, which is the general line of the frontier for the next section eastwards (the whole of the middle sector). It makes less sense geographically that after running along the crest of the Karakorams for about 200 miles the frontier, as the Indians claim, should make an excursion to the Kunlun Range and back again before descending to the Himalayas.

To turn now to historical considerations, Ladakh, which is now the northeastern part of Kashmir, seems to have been originally part of Tibet; but the Chinese do not rest any claim on that. In the 17th. century it was either independent or subject to the Mogul Empire of India. In the current argument the Indians have quoted a Treaty of 1684 between Ladakh and Tibet which is questioned by the Chinese and is not referred
to in the standard collection of treaties relating to India (Aitchison's "A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and Neighbouring Countries"). Even in the Indian submission, however, the 1684 Treaty does not define the frontiers of Ladakh but merely confirms the existing frontiers. Subsequently Ladakh was "an independent tributary of Kashmir" (the words are Aitchison's) until 1834 or a few years later, when it was annexed by Kashmir. In 1841 the Raja of Jammu invaded Western Tibet through Ladakh. The Tibetans appealed to the Chinese, who decisively defeated the invaders on Tibetan soil and then drove into Kashmir as far as Leh, the capital of Ladakh. Hostilities ended with a Treaty of 1842, which affirms "the boundaries of Ladakh and its surroundings as fixed from ancient times" and refers also to "the fixed boundaries of Ladakh," but once again without defining them in any way.

In 1846 Kashmir, with Ladakh, was absorbed into British India, so that the Ladakh-Tibet boundary became the international frontier with the Chinese Empire. In the current argument the Chinese have not disputed the incorporation of Ladakh in Kashmir or of Kashmir with Ladakh in India; nor do they dispute the validity of the 1842 Treaty. The two Governments agree that in 1842 and at other relevant times the frontier of Ladakh was well established and well known, but not where it lay.

The Aksai Chin area, the large salient or triangle which is under dispute between Ladakh and Sinkinag, is extremely
mountainous and inaccessible. The altitude varies from 14,000 to 20,000 ft., with the peaks rising higher still. It is virtually uninhabited and is normally visited only by seasonal herdsmen and by traders from Ladakh and Sinkiang. Its importance lies in the ancient caravan routes which cross it. These are the main thoroughfares from Khotan in Sinkiang to Rudok in Western Tibet. Traditionally, there was also local trade between Khotan and Ladakh, but not through this area with other parts of India. Mr. Nehru said on 23 December 1959 "At the present moment in all this wide area, I think, possibly one or two tiny villages or a few huts are there. In summer some shepherds come to graze their sheep and they walk away in winter." Speaking of the caravan routes in this area he said on 23 February 1961 "There are some seasonal caravan routes in the Aksai Chin area which had been used for a long time past by caravans. The Chinese used them also in the past, when we did not connect it with any kind of aggression. It was a common practice. This is right in the northeastern bit, about the road which came up here. This was not supposed to mean sovereignty. It was a caravan route being used by any party. This is a central Asian route. There were very few roads or routes there, and it was supposed to be open traffic."

It seems a fair surmise that in the old days the local authorities in Ladakh and in the Khotan district did not consider it necessary to have a precisely defined frontier between themselves. Their main areas of jurisdiction were well
enough known to each party from time immemorial. In between there was probably a sort of grey area, almost a common ground, in which shepherds from either side pastured their flocks and traders from both parties passed. To some extent taxes had to be levied and order maintained. But it was perhaps not a matter of great moment to either party if in certain circumstances shepherds or traders paid taxes or dues to both or neither. Linear frontiers and precise limits to jurisdiction have not been traditionally the rule in Asia before recent times.

At all events, when the 1842 Treaty was signed, it was considered sufficient to reaffirm the existing frontier "as fixed from ancient times" without defining it in any way. This was however not good enough for the officials of British India, who took over in 1846. No time was lost in seeking an agreed definition of the eastern frontier of Ladakh. In 1847 the British Government proposed to the Viceroy of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, as the Chinese authority with whom they had direct correspondence at the time, and to the Chinese Amban (official representative) in Tibet that the two countries jointly delimit the boundary between Kashmir and Tibet. The Chinese, preoccupied with the Opium War, were suspicious of British designs in making the proposal, and preferring the undefined confirmation of the 1842 Treaty to any precise delineation which the British might be expected to offer in the circumstances of the time, they declined.
British interest and activity in the Aksai Chin area increased after 1865, when it provided the means of access to a secessionist movement in Western Sinkiang which it was British policy to recognise and support. Sinkiang had been effectively reconquered by the Chinese Empire in 1758, but during the first half of the 19th century the former rulers of Kashgar made repeated attempts to reassert their authority. After 1862 they were successful; but the ruling house was overthrown by Yakoob Beg, the commander of their armed forces, who seized power in 1866. Because he was supported by the Russians, the British were eager to make contact with him and exert some influence from the other side. Routes were surveyed in the Aksai Chin area so that British missions could be sent through to establish relations with Yakoob Beg's administration, in 1870 and again in 1873-4, when a Commercial Treaty was concluded. The Chinese Government overthrew the Yakoob Beg régime in 1877 and reestablished their authority in Western Sinkiang.

In 1899 the British Government renewed their proposal to the Chinese Government for a delineation of the frontier between Ladakh and Tibet. The offer was again declined.

Thereafter the frontier in the western sector was left somewhat vague. "The actual boundary of Ladakh with Tibet was not very carefully defined," Mr. Nehru told the Lok Sabha on 4 September 1959, "It was defined to some extent by British officers who went there. But I rather doubt if they did any
careful survey." A map published by the official "Survey of India" in 1889 gives the Aksai Chin salient to India but marks part of the boundary as undefined. Survey of India maps issued in 1865, 1903, 1917, 1929, 1936 and 1938 do not show any boundary at all in the western sector. The Indians explain this by saying that these maps were "obviously meant for internal circulation" and that it "was a generally accepted cartographic practice" not to show external limits; an explanation to strain the credulity of the most well-disposed. A map entitled "India and Adjacent Countries" published by the Survey of India in 1945 marks the present Indian claim in this sector with a colour-wash but no defining line and carries the legend "frontier undefined." "This only indicated," the Indians have explained to the Chinese, "that the boundary had not been demarcated on the ground, or defined in detail from point to point." The same practice was followed after Independence, in the case of the map entitled "India Showing Political Divisions" issued by the Survey of India in 1950. In maps published by the Survey in 1951 and 1952 the frontier in this sector was still shown by a colour-wash without a defining line. The first map to be issued by the Survey of India showing the frontier in this sector as a line without qualification is dated 1954.

"This place, Aksai Chin area, is in our maps undoubtedly," Mr. Nehru told the Lok Sabha on 12 September 1959, "But I distinguish it completely from other areas. It is a matter of
argument as to what part of it belongs to us and what part of it belongs to somebody else. It is not at all a dead clear matter." In the same statement he referred to the dispute over the Aksai Chin area as "a matter which has been challenged, not to-day, but for a hundred years. It has been challenged as to the ownership of this strip of territory. That has nothing to do with anything else. That particular area stands by itself. It has been in challenge all the time . . . . I cannot say what part of it may not belong to us and what parts may. The point is, there has never been any delimitation there in that area and it has been a challenged area--bits of it: I cannot say which bit is and which not. That is a question which will have to be decided." Mr. Nehru was rather floundering here. There was not a history of correspondence between governments over possession of the Aksai Chin area, as there was over other parts of the border; nor had either side made clear claims to defined parts of Aksai Chin.

The British administration in India acted as if Aksai Chin were part of Ladakh. Survey teams were sent in from time to time. Permits were issued for shooting parties who wanted to go there. But there was no administration of the area. "The Kashmir Government took Ladakh for granted," Mr. Nehru said on 14 August 1962. "It had no posts there or measures for defence. Nor was there any fear in those days. They sent perhaps every two years a small deputation of some people, some officers and others to some places to collect some little money,
very little money which was more a gesture." On 2 May 1962 he said of the Aksai Chin area "There was no administration there."

Jurisdiction in the Aksai Chin area was also claimed by the Chinese authorities in Sinkiang. In 1898, H.H.P. Deasy, a British traveller, was refused permission to go from Sinkiang to Ladakh: "The Amban of Keria, who several times informed me that the Aksai Chin is part of the province of Sin-Chiang [Sinkiang] and under his jurisdiction, refused to allow me to use the Polu route." In 1941 the Chinese authorities arrested 11 Indians in Aksai Chin and protested to the British Consul-General at Kashgar against the "trespass." These are rare and isolated instances; but they are nevertheless evidence of a Chinese claim to jurisdiction in the Aksai Chin area which goes back over a long period.

It may be surmised that in the century and a half up to 1950 the true facts as regards jurisdiction in the Aksai Chin area may have been something as follows. There was no clear frontier in this area. Neither India nor China exercised regular or settled jurisdiction in Aksai Chin. Regular Indian administration stopped short of the Karakorams in the north; regular Chinese administration stopped short of the Kunluns in the south. In the wild mountain desert between the Karakorams and the Kunluns there was in effect a jurisdictional hiatus. Both India and China however claimed jurisdiction in this void and believed it to form part of their own national territory; and both Indian and Chinese authorities entered it from time to time and carried out administrative measures in it.
III.

THE EASTERN SECTOR

The disputed area in the eastern sector consists of the southern slopes of the Himalayas, from Bhutan in the west to Burma in the east, and covers some 90,000 square kilometers. It is inhabited by a number of tribes racially distinct from the inhabitants both of the Tibetan plateau and of the Indian plains; but neither side sets any store by any ethnic argument.

The argument based on geography favours the Indian case in the eastern sector. Tibet is a tableland, and the Himalayas mark its southern boundary. The Chinese accept the Himalayas as the frontier with Uttar Pradesh (the middle sector), Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan; and on purely geographical grounds it is more reasonable that the frontier from Bhutan eastwards should continue to run along the crest of the Himalayas, as the Indians claim, rather than descend from the watershed to where the foothills join the plains, as the Chinese would have it do in this sector alone. The Chinese counter by pointing out that for the length of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan India's northern border runs along the junction of the foothills with the plains; but this is perhaps no more than a debating point.

In considering the historical aspects of the rival claims in the eastern sector, it is perhaps legitimate to distinguish, though the Indians have made no explicit claim to do so, between territorial claims based factually and historically on treaties
and documents and on the actual limits of British administration during the British period and claims based morally and spiritually on the essential and eternal "Indianness" of the areas in question. In this latter sense it is clear that the Indians regard their claim to the Himalayan slopes in the eastern sector as overwhelming and conclusive, quite apart from the facts of treaties and administration. "The Himalayas are much more than mountains to us; they are part of ourselves" said Mr. Nehru on 25 November 1959. The Chinese have no such feeling for the area; nor, it should be remarked in passing, do the Indians traditionally for the mountain wastes of the disputed Aksai Chin area in the west.

The interest of the Government of India in the area began in the second half of the 19th century, when settled areas under British administration in the plains were being troubled by raids by hill-tribes from the mountain slopes. In 1862 and 1866 written agreements were concluded with four of the hill-tribes. These agreements, as published in Aitchison, include the following provisions:--"The limit of the British territory which extends to the foot of the hills is recognised by the signatory tribe, who hereby engage to respect it. The British Govt. will take up positions on the frontier in the plains, will establish stations, post guards, or construct forts, or open roads, as may be deemed expedient, and the signatory tribe will not take umbrage at such arrangements, or have any voice in such matters. The signatory tribe
recognize all persons residing in the plains in the vicinity of the Meyong Hills as British subjects. The signatory tribe engage not to molest or to cross the frontier for the purpose of molesting residents in the British territory." This wording suggests not only that the British regarded their frontier as lying along the foot of the hills but also that the signatory tribe considered that they previously had claims in respect of the plains which they were now renouncing. Indeed, the British Government paid after this time a form of annuity to the hill-tribes which was known as "posa." The anthropologist von Fuehrer-Haimendorf who visited the hill-tribes in 1944 at the request of the Government of India commented as follows:-- "There seemed to be equal confusion as to the nature and origin of the payments themselves and it soon became obvious that there was a serious discrepancy between the official view and the tribesmen's attitude. By the officers of Government posa was generally considered as a form of tribute with which in the early days of British rule the hillmen had been bought off from raiding the plains. According to the tribesmen, on the other hand, the posa-payments were a kind of rent, paid by Government for the use of their ancestral lands in the Brahmaputra Valley. Like many Himalayan people, the Miris of the hills south of the Kamla used to be semi-nomadic; in the spring and summer months, they explained, they cultivated their fields in the hills, and during the winter they moved to the plains, where in the country between the foothills and the Brahmaputra
each clan hunted and fished within the borders of its own clan territories. When Assamese peasants first settled on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, the traditional owners demanded and received rent from the new settlers for the use of their clan lands. At first this rent was paid in agricultural produce, but at a later date, presumably when the present system of land revenue was introduced, the Government of India took over the payment of this rent, which, assessed in Indian coinage, was paid annually in the form of posa."

Whatever the precise relation between the Government of India and the hill-tribes at this time, the policy did not include direct administration of the hill-tracts. In 1873 an "Inner Line" was promulgated to control access to the hill-tribes, who were being exploited by traders. This Inner Line in effect marked the limits of direct administration and corresponds generally to the frontier now claimed by China.

In 1885 the Government of India began an attempt to open up trade between India and Tibet through Sikkim. They first sought and obtained the consent of the Chinese Government for the initiative. The Tibetans however resisted the British advances, and border clashes ensued, the Tibetans at one time succeeding in erecting a stone fort across the road 12 miles within the Sikkim frontier. Finally a Convention was concluded in 1890 between Great Britain and China which defined in its first article the frontier between Sikkim and Tibet. The Tibetans however showed scant respect for the terms of the
Convention, and continued clashes led to the Younghusband Expedition of 1903 and the Convention between Great Britain and Tibet of 1904. It is curious that the 1904 Convention, though it confirms the definition of the Sikkim-Tibet frontier in the 1890 Convention, does not define the frontier between British India and Tibet either in the east or in the west—Britain it seems, in her relations with Tibet, was preoccupied at this time with the Sikkim frontier to the exclusion of others. The 1904 Convention was confirmed by a further Convention between Great Britain and China in 1906.

There were no doubt complex reasons for British interest in Tibet at this time. Lord Curzon, who was closely concerned in the Younghusband Expedition, was certainly exercised over the danger of Russian influence in Tibet. The Younghusband Expedition established that the Russian influence which it had been despatched to supplant was not in fact there. In 1907 Great Britain and Russia passed to a general settlement of their spheres of interest in Central Asia and concluded an "Anglo-Russian Convention regarding Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet." The section entitled "Arrangement concerning Tibet" begins as follows:—

"The Governments of Great Britain and Russia, recognising the suzerain rights of China in Tibet, and considering the fact that Great Britain by reason of her geographical position, has a special interest in the maintenance of the status quo in the external relations of Tibet, have made the following arrangement:—
Article 1

The two High Contracting Parties engage to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet and to abstain from all interference in the internal administration.

Article 2

In conformity with the admitted principle of the suzerainty of China over Tibet, Great Britain and Russia engage not to enter into negotiations with Tibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government . . . ."

Thus it was that when the Tibetan Government announced in 1911 that their allegiance had been personal to the Emperor of China and therefore lapsed with the proclamation of the Chinese Republic, Great Britain felt inhibited from recognising Tibetan independence.
IV.

THE ORIGIN OF THE McMHAON LINE

In 1913 Great Britain convened a tripartite conference with Tibet and China. Its purpose and scope are not entirely clear, as neither the correspondence relating to its convening nor the record of the proceedings has been published and the Indian and Chinese Governments now give differing accounts. The main interest of the British Government in convening the conference seems to have been to settle matters relating to the border areas between Tibet and China, where Great Britain had trade interests. The Government of the new Republic of China were reluctant to participate in the conference, and it was only after strong British pressure at Peking, which included the threat to withhold recognition of the Republic, that the Chinese Government agreed to send a plenipotentiary.

The conference met in Simla and Delhi in 1913-14. It appears that at an early stage Sir Henry McMahon, the British plenipotentiary, proposed a tripartite discussion of the frontier between Tibet and India and that the Chinese plenipotentiary refused. The British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries then discussed the frontier in bilateral talks, without Chinese participation and separately from the
triplartite conference. They reached agreement and confirmed it in an exchange of letters, which has now been published.

Sir Henry McMahon's letter of 24 March 1914 reads in full as follows:--

"In February last you accepted the India-Tibet frontier from the Isu Razi Pass [In the area of the Assam-Burma border, on the watershed between the Irrawaddy and the Salween] to the Bhutan frontier, as given in the map (two sheets), of which copies are herewith attached, subject to the confirmation of your Government and the following conditions:--

a) The Tibetan ownership in private interests on the British side of the frontier will not be disturbed.

b) If the sacred places of Tso Karpo and Tsari Sarpo fall within a day's march of the British side of the frontier, they will be included in Tibetan territory and the frontier modified accordingly.

"I understand that your Government have now agreed to this frontier subject to the above two conditions. I shall be glad to learn definitely from you that this is the case.

"You wished to know whether certain dues now collected by the Tibetan Government at Tsöna Jong and in Kongbu and Kham from the Monpas and Lopas for articles sold may still be collected. Mr. Bell has informed you that such details will be settled in a friendly spirit, when you have furnished to him the further information, which you have promised.

"The final settlement of this India-Tibet frontier will help to prevent causes of future dispute and thus cannot fail to be of great advantage to both Governments."
The Tibetan reply of 25 March 1914 is also given in full:—

"As it was feared that there might be friction in future unless the boundary between India and Tibet is clearly defined, I submitted the map, which you sent to me in February last, to the Tibetan Government at Lhasa for orders. I have now received orders from Lhasa, and I accordingly agree to the boundary as marked in red in the two copies of the maps signed by you subject to the conditions, mentioned in your letter, dated the 24th March, sent to me through Mr. Bell. I have signed and sealed the two copies of the maps. I have kept one copy here and return herewith the other."

On 21 April 1914 the Chinese representative handed to Sir Henry McMahon a telegram from Peking stating that the Chinese Government would not recognize any treaty or similar document that might then or thereafter be signed between Britain and Tibet. He made a formal declaration to this effect at the meeting of the tripartite conference on 3 July 1914 when the tripartite Convention was initialled. The same day the Chinese Minister in London made the same reservation in a formal note to the British Government, and the reservation was repeated in a further formal note delivered in London on 7 July 1914.

The convention initialled by the three plenipotentiaries on 3 July 1914, now known as the Simla Convention, was later published. The preamble ascribes its origin to the desire of the high contracting parties "to settle by mutual agreement
various questions concerning the interests of their several States on the Continent of Asia, and further to regulate the relations of their several Governments." Article 2 recognizes that "Tibet is under the suzerainty of China" and recognizes also "the autonomy of Outer Tibet". None of the Articles refers to the exchange of letters of March 1914 between the British and Tibetan representatives or mentions the frontier between Tibet and India. Article 9, however, states that "for the purpose of the present Convention the borders of Tibet, and the boundary between Outer and Inner Tibet, shall be as shown in red and blue respectively on the map attached hereto"; and it appears that the red line on this map was the line agreed in the March exchange of letters as the frontier between Tibet and India.

The Chinese Government refused to ratify the Convention, because they disliked its provisions for the border area between Tibet and the provinces of China. The British Government withheld publication of it for many years in the hope that the Chinese Government would change their mind. The Indian Government have now explained that it was published "in the first edition of Aitchison's Treaties, Engagements and Sanads to be published after 1914--i.e. in 1929". This statement,
though accepted by the present Chinese Government, is not quite correct. The 1929 edition of Aitchison did not publish either the text of the Convention or the exchange of letters of March 1914 and contained only the following reference to the Convention—"In 1913 a conference of Tibetan, Chinese and British plenipotentiaries met in India to try and bring about a settlement with regard to matters on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier; and a Tripartite Convention was drawn up and initialled in 1914. The Chinese Government, however, refused to permit their Plenipotentiary to proceed to full signature". Several years later a revised edition of Aitchison was issued which while still purporting to be the 1929 edition was in fact an expanded edition containing a different explanatory comment and giving for the first time the texts of the Simla Convention and of the exchange of letters of March 1914. The relevant maps, however, were not published at the same time. They were first published by the Chinese Government in November 1962.
V.

THE ALIGNMENT OF THE McMHAON LINE

The present Chinese Government, like all its predecessors, do not recognize the McMahon Line as the frontier or consider that they are under any obligation arising out of the proceedings of the Simla Conference and related discussions in 1914. They have however observed the McMahon Line in practice as the boundary; and from 1950 to 20 October 1962 Chinese troops were under orders not to cross it. The precise alignment of the McMahon Line is therefore of practical importance. Here again there is disagreement between the Indian and Chinese Governments—a dispute within a dispute.

This issue is crucial but it is not brought out clearly in the exchanges between the Indian and Chinese Governments. It emerges gradually from the background and does not become prominent before November 1962. The clearest interpretation of the issue that can be obtained from the whole of the correspondence is given here at the outset to facilitate an understanding of the development of the dispute.

It was certainly the intention of the authors of the McMahon Line that it should follow the main ridge of the Himalayas except where it was permitted to descend the slope
in order to include places of religious pilgrimage in Tibet. This principle of the watershed is not however stated in the exchange of letters of March 1914, which defines the frontier by the line on the map.

The map attached to the exchange of letters puts the western end of the frontier, at its junction with the Bhutan border, on the alignment of latitude 27° 45' N (to the nearest minute). The physical conformation of the terrain here is a series of parallel ridges running roughly east-west. The Government of India later found out that a ridge at latitude 27° 48' N was in fact higher than the ridge at latitude 27° 45' N. They therefore moved the frontier up 3 minutes north. This was apparently done without any notification to the Tibetan or Chinese Governments at the time. The Chinese Government now go by the alignment of the 1914 map, the Indian Government by their later revision of it. This short strip of territory between the two parallels of latitude includes places which figure afterwards in the dispute: Khinzemane, Dhola, Che Dong, the Thangla Ridge and the Kechilang River.

The 1914 map was also revised by the Government of India in the centre of the sector, where the line descends from the main ridge to include places of religious significance
in Tibet. Here again later surveys by the Government of India disclosed inaccuracies in the 1914 map, but the principle on which the revision was made is less clear than in the Thangla Ridge area. The map marks the village of Migyitin at latitude 28° 38' N, about 3 miles due north of the line, and later surveys established that Migyitin is in fact situated at latitude 28° 39' N. There might therefore be a case for accepting the mileage from the frontier as the deciding factor and shifting the line one minute north. The Indian Government specifically disclaimed in November 1962 having done this, though they admitted in September 1959 having revised the alignment of the line at this point. A further cause of uncertainty is that consistently from 1959 the Indian Government have claimed that the line runs immediately to the south of Migyitin: this must surely mean something less than 3 miles. The reason for the revision is therefore not entirely clear, though it was certainly based on a more accurate understanding of the topographical features. Again there appears to have been no notification of the revision to the other party. The difference here between the original line and the revised version of it affects the village of Longju, which is about 2 miles south of Migyitin.
The first map to be published by the Survey of India after the Simla Conference, in 1917, followed the practice of earlier maps published by the Survey, in 1856, 1889 and 1903, in showing only the "Inner Line" in the north-east; enabling the Chinese Government to argue that the map supported their claim. The north-eastern frontier was not demarcated in conformity with the McMahon Line in any map published by the Survey of India until 1936, when it was drawn with the legend "boundary undemarcated." In a map published by the Survey in 1945 it is marked as the "approximate" boundary. After Independence, the 1936 practice was followed by the Survey of India in maps published in 1951 and 1952. It was not until 1954 that the Survey published a map giving the northeastern frontier in accordance with the McMahon Line without qualification.
VI.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE DISPUTED AREAS

Despite the agreement of March 1914 between Britain and Tibet that the frontier of British India lay along the Himalayan crest in the north east, the Government of India continued after 1914 their policy of abstaining from direct administration in the hill tracts between the Inner Line marking the junction of the foot-hills with the plains in the south and the McMahon Line running along the crest of the Himalayas in the north, and contented themselves with the despatch of rare expeditions to a few places within this area, which constitutes the North East Frontier Agency, or NEFA. Poll-tax was levied in one group of villages in NEFA in 1914-15 and again in 1915-16. A Political Officer from the Government of Assam made a tour in part of NEFA in 1918-19; and a second tour was carried out in 1939. To judge from the evidence brought forward by the Indian side in the current dispute, that seems to have been the extent of the exercise of jurisdiction by the Government of India in NEFA in the period between the two world wars.

During the same period the Tibetan Government also continued to exercise some jurisdiction in some parts of the hill tracts south of the McMahon Line. As the Indians have pointed out, it is not always easy, in the Tibetan set-up, to distinguish between ecclesiastical and civil-administrative jurisdiction; but it seems clear that at Tawang, in the corner
between Bhutan and Tibet, there was pretty effective Tibetan administration right up to 1944. Kingdon-Ward, for example, the British geographer and botanist, noted in 1938 "Monyul [The district containing Tawang] is in fact an outlying district of Tibet like the Chumbi valley [between Sikkim and Bhutan]. And Tawang is controlled by Tsona Dzong."

It was only under the threat of the Japanese invasion, which reached the Naga Hills in 1941, that the Government of India decided to establish a resident administration and defence posts within the area between the Inner Line and the McMahon Line. In 1944, the Assam Rifles moved in and established the first administrative and defence post in the area, at Walong, in the corner near the Burma border. The Chinese Nationalist Government protested at what they represented as this intrusion into Tibetan territory, in notes delivered to the British Embassy at Nanking in July, September and November 1946. A further note of January 1947 was passed by the British to the Indian authorities, who were already at that time taking over British responsibilities in Tibet. The Chinese Government sent a further note on the subject direct to the Indian representative at Nanking in February 1947.

When India acceded to Independence in August 1947, there were no checkpoints on the frontier in the western sector, i.e. in Ladakh. The Pakistan invasion of Kashmir brought the Pakistani forces up to Ladakh, and they occupied the Zoji La Pass, which cut the Indian Government off from all communication
with Leh, the capital of Ladakh. By the end of 1948, the Pakistanis were driven back, and access to Ladakh was reestablished. But there was still no move by the Indians into the vacant spaces of Ladakh.

The background to the India-China border question has now been set out. Before passing on to an account of the current phase of the dispute, it is as well to pause and review the position along the frontier as it was in 1949. In the western sector there was something of a void between Indian administration in Ladakh and Chinese administration in Sinkiang. There was contact between the two administrations and a legacy of disputed areas (four in all and small in size) along the middle sector of the frontier. In the eastern sector, in NEFA, there was a combination of both situations: an extensive administrative void, but points of contact and inherited disputes with the Tibetan administration in a few places.
VII.

THE CHINESE OCCUPATION OF TIBET AND THE EFFECT ON THE BORDER: 1950-57

The Indian Government recognised the Central People's Government of China in December 1949. In the summer of 1950 the Indian Government initiated an exchange of notes with the Chinese Government about the latter's evident intentions towards Tibet. In the course of this exchange (which has not been published in full) the Indian Government, in a note dated 12 August 1950, stated that "the Government of India never had nor do they have now any political or territorial ambitions in Tibet" and that the Indian Government "is concerned about the possibility of unsettled conditions on its borders arising from military operations." The Chinese reply, dated 21 August 1950, stated that the Chinese Government "is happy to hear the desire of the Government of India to stabilize the Chinese-Indian border." The Indians replied that "the recognised boundary between India and Tibet should remain inviolate" but they did not take the opportunity to define the recognised boundary. In October and November 1950 further notes were exchanged in which the Indian Government expressed their regret at the prospect of military action to take over Tibet. These notes, which have been published, do not however contain any further reference to the border.

The Chinese advance into Tibet dates from 25 October 1950. The effect of this action on the border situation has
been stated so clearly, and with such evident frankness, by both sides that it is worth quoting their accounts verbatim.

First, Mr. Nehru, speaking in the Lok Sabha on 23 February 1961. "When the Chinese forces entered Tibet, ... in 1950-51, frankly we did not expect any trouble on our borders, but naturally ... we thought that the whole nature of our border had changed. It was a dead border, it was now becoming alive, and we began to think in terms of the protection of that border, that is, the border with Tibet at that time. Our attention was first directed to these borders, and a high-level, high-power committee was appointed, the Border Defence Committee, right then in 1951 or 1952, I forget. This Committee presented a comprehensive report, and many of the suggestions were accepted by Government, some were not. ... Also, when we thought of our border, we thought the danger was more probable in the NEFA border. ... In 1950, that is before this had happened, there were five checkpoints, only five checkpoints on the border--two in Himachal Pradesh and three in NEFA along the northern border. Within a year, because of the changes that took place in Tibet, by April 1951 this number had been increased to 25, and most of the important routes were covered. I am talking about NEFA. A little later, this number was further increased all along the NEFA border and the middle sector, i.e. Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh etc. In 1954 these checkpoints moved closer to the actual border in NEFA and the middle sector ... In Ladakh, again, in 1951,
some checkpoints were established. This is a vast area. In these checkpoints, army units were stationed at various places in Ladakh, rather distant from each other, and expeditions were sent to the furthest limits of our territory from 1951 onwards both by the police and the army. These expeditions were in the nature of mountain expeditions...a group of 10 or 15 persons. In 1954, in order to strengthen the administration...checkpoints were taken over by the Central Government and further checkpoints were established. The only area where we did not establish checkpoints was the uninhabited area, the Aksai Chin area—not that we did not want to, but we were busy with the other areas, and also it is a very difficult area. Even there expeditions were sent. Between 1950 and 1959, 16 such expeditions were sent to various parts of Ladakh."

In other words, the Indian Government, concerned at the implications of the Chinese occupation of Tibet, decided to extend their hold on the border areas. In 1950-51 they gave priority to NEFA over the western sector. In 1954 there was a further move, nearer to the frontier. The Chinese do not dispute anything in this account. They concede that the Indian Government occupied the whole of NEFA in 1950-51; such Tibetan administration as had existed in places south of the McMahon Line withdrew before the Indian advance. The Chinese advance into Tibet did not cross the McMahon Line.

Next, the Chinese account of what they did, as given by their officials in 1961. "From the end of 1950 to the autumn of 1951, the Chinese People's Liberation Army entered the Ari
district of Tibet through the Aksai Chin area along the customary route between Sinkiang and Tibet. They explained in a note of 26 December 1959 that "this area is the only traffic artery linking Sinkiang and western Tibet, because to the northeast lies the great Gobi of Sinkiang through which direct traffic with Tibet is practically impossible. . . . In the latter half of 1950, it was through this area that the Chinese Government despatched the first units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet." The 1961 account continues "Since then large numbers of personnel of the Chinese side have entered and goods sent to Tibet from Sinkiang through this area. Owing to the fact that this area is an important stretch of land which links the two vast areas of China's Sinkiang and Tibet, the Chinese Government and Chinese frontier forces have from the outset carried out extensive activities in this area, such as despatching frontier guard units to patrol the frontier areas, carrying on various kinds of investigations and surveilling communication lines. Back in July 1951, Chinese People's Liberation Army units already started patrolling in the Kongka Pass area at the southeastern corner of the disputed triangle containing the Aksai Chin area and the road and other places. From 1954 to 1955, Chinese frontier guard units carried out all-round military investigations in the entire area east of the traditional customary line i.e. the frontier claimed by the Chinese in this sector. At the same time, the administrative departments of China's Sinkiang region also set up a special
survey team, charged with the surveying of the course to be taken by the Sinkiang-Tibet highway. The footsteps of the members of this team covered every place in Aksai Chin and Lingithan. And, after the surveys for a period of about two years, they put forward more than ten routes to be chosen and decided upon, among which some are even to the west of the present Sinkiang-Tibet highway. Finally, the Chinese Government completed the construction of the present Sinkiang-Tibet highway through the Aksai Chin area from March 1956 to October 1957."

Thus, at the same time that the Indians were moving to fill the void in the eastern sector, the Chinese were moving to fill the void in the western sector. The Indians got there first in the east, the Chinese in the west.

The Chinese account may exaggerate the extent and frequency of Chinese patrol activities in the disputed area of the western sector from 1951 to 1957. But the general lines of their account of their entry into Aksai Chin and the dates of the construction of the road were confirmed by Mr. Nehru speaking in the Lok Sabha on 14 August 1962. "It was about that time that China took possession of Tibet," he said in the course of a historical retrospect, "and soon after, as their possession grew, their hold grew, it was difficult for them from the logistic point of view to feed them, to send supplies etc., right across the Gobi desert. . . . They have gradually made roads etc., and in the course of that road-making, in the
middle of the 1950's, they improved the whole caravan route which passed through the northern area of Aksai Chin into Tibet from Sinkiang. It is a caravan route being used from time to time. They used it because it was easier for them to go from Sinkiang to Tibet that way instead of crossing the Gobi desert. And later, a year or two later, they improved the route and made some kind of a road." Earlier, on 23 December 1959, he was more specific about the date. "Mr. Chou En-lai has in his letter referred to this road being built with 3000 civilian personnel and all that from 1955-57. That is perfectly true. The House knows that--the road that was built."

When the Chinese went into the Aksai Chin area, did they do so in the knowledge that it was territory claimed by India? "In 1940-41," according to the report submitted by the Chinese at the Conference of Officials in 1960-61, "the Chinese side conducted, with the assistance of Soviet experts, a survey in that part of Sinkiang which bordered on Ladakh, and drew up topographical maps of 200,000 to 1 in scale." This single reference to collaboration between the Soviet Government and the Chinese Nationalist Government in this area is tantalising; but nothing more has been revealed in regard to the detailed maps drawn up in their joint survey. They may however have formed the basis for the Map of China on the scale of 1 million to 1 compiled in 1943 and printed in 1948 by the Bureau of Survey of the Chinese Ministry of National Defence. This map was for official use only and was not published, but a copy of it was
furnished to the Conference of Officials of 1960-61. It gives the present Chinese claim for the frontier between Ladakh and Sinkiang and Ladakh and Tibet. It seems a fair surmise that the maps on which the Chinese army engineers were operating in 1950-51 gave Aksai Chin to China. Should they have been aware of the Indian claim? Should the central government have drawn their attention to it? The Indian claim had not been put forward officially at that time. It appeared on the Survey of India map of 1945 which for the first time showed the Indian claim to Aksai Chin, as a colour-wash without a defined line. The central government had been established for just a year in Peking and had many other things to think about, including the Korean War. There are some indications, as the subsequent narrative will show, that from 1950 to 1959 the Chinese leaders simply had not seized themselves of the details of the India-China border question.

The Indian Government did not learn of the Chinese occupation of Aksai Chin until 1958. Patrols were sent out by both sides during the intervening period but they did not meet. Diplomatic exchanges relating to the border question continued between the two governments in ignorance of the facts.
VIII.

FURTHER DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES: 1951-54

In the autumn of 1951 the Chinese Government proposed discussions about the border. This was revealed by Mr. Nehru in the course of a statement on 25 November 1959. According to this account, Mr. Chou En-lai had an informal conversation with the Indian Ambassador on 27 September 1951, in the course of which Mr. Chou expressed his anxiety to safeguard in every way Indian interests in Tibet, on which matter "there was no territorial dispute or controversy between India and China." Mr. Chou added:--"The question of stabilisation of the Tibetan frontier was a matter of common interest to India, Nepal and China and could best be done by discussions between the three countries." There follows an obscure passage in Mr. Nehru's account of the words attributed to Mr. Chou at this interview:--"Since the Chinese army entered Lhasa, in pursuance of the Sino-Indian agreement of 1951 to take up frontier posts, it was necessary to settle the matter as early as possible." There is no formal "Sino-Indian Agreement of 1951"; the reference can only be to some local understanding in regard to the occupation of frontier posts, of which nothing else is known. On 4 October 1951, the Indian Ambassador in Peking replied on instructions that the Indian Government "would welcome negotiations on the subjects mentioned by Premier Chou En-lai." In February
1952 the Indian Ambassador gave a statement of the existing Indian rights in Tibet and reiterated "India's willingness to arrive at a mutually satisfactory settlement." Mr. Chou En-lai replied that there was "no difficulty in safeguarding the economic and cultural interests of India in Tibet" but did not refer to the frontier; nor did the Indian Ambassador. The question of an agreement on the frontier was thus allowed to drop out of the exchanges between the two governments. The proposal for tripartite discussions with Nepal was never revived. (It is curious that in all the voluminous correspondence that has ensued, the Chinese have not referred to the exchanges recounted in this paragraph. The Indians showed at this time a greater inclination to negotiate about the frontier than the Chinese have ever got them to aver since.)

At the end of 1953 the Indian Government took the initiative in proposing discussions with the Chinese Government to regulate trade between India and Tibet. An "Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet Region of China and India" was signed on 29 April 1954. The Preamble of the Agreement enshrined for the first time the famous "five principles of peaceful coexistence" the first of which is "mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty." Article 4 of the Agreement specified six passes which may be used by traders and pilgrims of both countries. The original Chinese draft of this article read "The Chinese Government agrees to open the following passes in the Ari District of the Tibet Region
of China . . . ." The Indian delegate contended that the passes named were Indian passes. The Chinese delegate then made what he described as a concession and proposed the revised wording which was adopted "Traders and pilgrims of both countries may travel by the following passes . . . ." The Indians argue that this implies recognition of the six passes as frontier passes, the Chinese that "they finally agreed to adopt a wording in the agreement which did not involve the question of ownership of these passes, so as to bypass this difficult question."

All six passes are in the "middle sector" of the boundary. In the subsequent correspondence the Chinese have conceded that five of them are on the frontier but claim that one, the Shipki Pass, lies within Tibetan territory.

Apart from this discussion of the six passes in the middle sector, the opportunity of the talks leading up to the 1954 Agreement on trade between India and Tibet was not taken to discuss the common frontier. It seems clear from subsequent statements by Indian spokesmen that the Indian Government were well aware at the time that a border problem existed, though not of the magnitude of the problem afterwards disclosed, and thought that it was better policy to let sleeping dogs lie for the time being. "It was true," wrote Mr. Chou to Mr. Nehru on 23 January 1959, "that the border question was not raised in 1954 when negotiations were being held between the Chinese and Indian sides for the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse
between the Tibet Region of China and India. This was because conditions were not yet ripe for its settlement and the Chinese side, on its part, had had no time to study the question."

The Chinese have also stated that during the negotiations for the 1954 Agreement "the two sides had an understanding at that time that . . . no boundary question should be touched on in the negotiations," but this is not admitted by the Indians.

Mr. Nehru visited Peking in October 1954. The Indians and Chinese agree that in the course of this visit he spoke to Mr. Chou En-lai about maps published in China showing a frontier different from that claimed by India; and that Mr. Chou replied that the boundary in Chinese maps was drawn according to old maps because the Chinese Government had not yet undertaken a survey of China's boundary, nor consulted with the countries concerned, and that it would not make changes in the boundary on its own. The Indians however have contested the further Chinese statement that "in 1954, when Prime Minister Nehru visited China, Premier Chou En-lai explicitly pointed out that the Sino-Indian boundary is undelimited."
BORDER INCIDENTS—BARAHOTI: 1954-58

It was in the summer of 1954 that the first border incident occurred, in the middle sector, the scene of Lieutenant Strachey's map-making, Barahoti, or Wuje, which had been disputed between India and Tibet in a continuous correspondence between the two governments since 1889. Troops of both sides met, but there was no clash. The Chinese were the first to protest through the diplomatic channel. The Indian troops withdrew for the winter. The same situation was repeated in the summer of 1955, and the Chinese were again the first to protest. In August 1955 the Indians proposed that the place should be neutralised—that neither side should send in troops or civilian officials pending a settlement. The Chinese did not reply to this. In September 1955 troops of the two sides met at another place in the middle sector, at the Niti Pass, which was one of the six passes specified in the 1954 Agreement and is acknowledged by the Chinese to be on the frontier. The Indians protested.

In the summer of 1956 a limited agreement was reached to avoid a recurrence of incidents at Barahoti, both sides still maintaining that the place was in their territory. The initiative came simultaneously from both sides. On 7 June 1956 the Indian Government informed the Chinese Embassy at Delhi that their troops were already in Barahoti and requested that Chinese troops should be ordered not to cross the pass. On 8 June 1956
the Chinese Government expressed to the Indian Embassy at Peking their wish to avoid a recurrence of the incident of the previous year and their willingness to have a joint investigation of the claims to Barahoti; they suggested that pending a settlement both sides should refrain from sending troops into the place. The Indians replied promptly, on 13 June 1956, to the proposal for a joint investigation. It appears, from the silence of both parties on the point, that the Indian troops which were already in possession remained at Barahoti during the summer season and that the Chinese did not cross the pass. On 3 October 1956, presumably after the Indian troops had been withdrawn for the winter, the Indian Government agreed to the proposal that neither side should send in troops pending a settlement.

In the summer of 1956 there were also incidents when patrols met in two of the other disputed areas in the middle sector; at Nilang in May and west of the Shipki Pass in September. The Indians protested.

The Indian and Chinese Prime Ministers met in India towards the end of 1956. The account is inserted here, in chronological sequence, but the import of the discussion between Prime Ministers far transcended the Barahoti affair. Their meeting took place shortly after a visit of the Burmese Prime Minister to Peking, at which the Burma-China frontier had been discussed and a large measure of agreement attained. Mr. Chou En-lai told Mr. Nehru of these talks. "It was in this connexion,"
Mr. Nehru later recorded in a letter to Mr. Chou, "that you mentioned to me the Sino-Indian border, and more especially the so-called McMahon Line . . . . You told me that you had accepted this McMahon Line border with Burma and, whatever might have happened long ago, in view of the friendly relations which existed between China and India, you proposed to recognise the border with India also. You added that you would like to consult the authorities of the Tibetan region of China and you proposed to do so . . . . I then mentioned that there were no disputes between us about our frontier, but there were certain very minor border problems which were pending settlement. We decided that these petty issues should be settled amicably by representatives of the two Governments meeting together." Mr. Chou En-lai has not disputed this account.

In February 1957 the Chinese confirmed their intention not to send troops to Barahoti that year. Troops were not in fact sent in by either side. 1957 was a quiet year throughout the frontier. In October 1957 a Chinese party crossed the McMahon Line and came down as far as Walong; but the Indian note on the subject, which was not sent until 16 January 1959, itself suggests that the Chinese party which was "engaged on survey work crossed into Indian territory by mistake." There was no protest.

The "Barahoti Conference" met in Delhi in April 1958 and failed to reach agreement. The arrangement that neither side should send in troops remained in force, but the Chinese
refused an Indian proposal that neither side should send in
civilian officials pending a settlement. It appears probable
(but is not clearly stated in the correspondence) that Chinese
civilian officials were already there. On 8 July 1958 a party
of Indian civilian officials were sent to camp in the area,
the Chinese Government being officially notified. Thus, this
small disputed area had been successfully neutralised militarily,
but Indian and Chinese civilian officials were camping in it
side by side. There were no other frontier incidents in the
1958 season.
X.

THE POSITION IN 1958: THE ISSUE OF MAPS AND THE AKSAI CHIN ROAD

The summer of 1958 marks the end of the first phase. In 1950 the frontier, which had been "dead" became "alive." The Indians, apprehensive of trouble to come, began warily establishing checkpoints in the frontier zone, particularly in the eastern sector, but had not at this time established any posts up to the McMahon Line itself. The Chinese were everywhere north of the McMahon Line, and the Tibetan administration which had existed south of it before 1950 had been withdrawn. In the western sector, the Chinese had completed their road of access through Aksai Chin by the autumn of 1957; but it seems reasonably certain that by the end of 1958 the Chinese had not established any posts west of the road. (This was asserted by Mr. Nehru on 23 February 1961, on the ground that "the route parallel to this road was used by our army expedition in 1958, and they did not detect any evidence of any Chinese intrusion." This statement has not been disputed by the Chinese.) The Chinese occupation thus stopped short of the line claimed as their frontier in the western sector. The Indians, on their side, had begun the process of consolidating their position in Ladakh; but they had as yet established no posts in the whole of the area in the western sector claimed by the Chinese, except at the extreme eastern end, where the frontier passes from the
Karakorams to the Himalayas, at Demchok, which the Chinese call Parigas. The administrative voids, therefore, in the western and eastern sectors which had existed before 1950 had still not been completely filled, and direct confrontation had not yet been established all along the line. It was only in the middle sector that there was direct contact across the line; and only here that incidents had occurred, at Barahoti, which had been the subject of a dispute for decades.

The next phase, 1958-59, brings all the issues, hitherto latent, into the open—the Chinese occupation of the Aksai Chin area and their claim to NEFA, their offer of negotiation and the Indian refusal to discuss the border question. The Tibetan revolt precipitated a further advance by both sides into the frontier areas, filling the administrative voids, and there occurred the first exchanges of fire in clashes between patrols.

The new phase began on 21 August 1958, when the Indian Government drew attention to a map published in the magazine "China Pictorial" of July 1958 "in which the borders of China have been indicated by a thick brown line. . . . The border as depicted in the map includes as Chinese territory 1) four of the five Divisions of India's North East Frontier Agency 2) some areas in the north of Uttar Pradesh \[\text{i.e. in the middle sector}\] 3) large areas in eastern Ladakh which form part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The note ended in an offer to supply a map showing the frontier claimed by India. "The northern boundary of India is clearly shown in the Political
Map of India--3rd. edition, 1956 (scale--one inch to seventy miles), which is freely available on sale. The Government of India will be happy to supply a copy of this map to the Government of the Republic of China." This suggests that a map of India's frontiers had not been officially communicated to the Chinese Government earlier and appears to constitute the first official statement of the Indian Government's frontier claim in any correspondence with the Chinese Government. (The Chinese Government first communicated in 1960 a map showing their official frontier claims.)

The Chinese reply to this note was not delivered until 3 November 1958. It was on the same lines as the reply given by Mr. Chou to Mr. Nehru in October 1954. "In the maps currently published in China, the boundary line between China and its neighbouring countries, including India, is drawn on the basis of maps published in China before the Liberation . . . . The Chinese Government believes that with the lapse of time, and after consultations with the various neighbouring countries and a survey of the border regions, a new way of drawing the boundary of China will be decided on in accordance with the results of the consultations and the survey."

The Indians had now learnt of the construction of the motor road in Aksai Chin. Mr. Nehru told the story of this discovery when he spoke in the Lok Sabha on 23 February 1960. "In 1955--we did not know this then, we found out later--the Chinese started levelling the caravan route for the purpose
of using it as a motorable road. It took them a couple of years. It was not clear to us then whether this proposed motor way crossed our territory. The first suspicion that this might be came to us in 1957, from a map published in Peking. We did not even then know definitely whether this transgressed our territory. The map was a small map, about half a magazine page. We did not know, but we began to suspect it. As we did not have proof, we did not protest then. In the following summer, that is in 1958 summer, two patrol parties were sent to locate the two extremities of this road, about which we had heard. A patrol party which went to the south located the road as actually crossing our territory, a corner of our territory. The other party did not return for some time. We thereupon drew the attention of the Chinese Government to this party which had not returned, and enquired from then, and to the fact of the road having crossed our territory." This was done, in restrained terms, in a note dated 18 October 1958--"it is a matter of surprise and regret that the Chinese Government should have constructed a road through indisputably Indian territory without first obtaining the permission of the Government of India or even informing the Government of India . . . . The Government of India are anxious to settle these petty frontier disputes so that the friendly relations between the two countries may not suffer." The return of the missing party was requested. The party was returned on 22 October 1958. In a note dated 3 November 1958 the Chinese Government recounted how two
groups of Indians had been discovered and detained on 8 and 12 September 1958 "on the Sinkiang-Tibet road on Chinese territory"; and protested at the intrusion.
LETTERS BETWEEN PRIME MINISTERS:
DECEMBER 1958 - MARCH 1959

On 14 December 1958 Mr. Nehru wrote to Mr. Chou En-lai about the border question, the first of an important exchange of letters between Prime Ministers on the major issues. He recalled their discussions in 1954 and 1956, the unsuccessful Barahoti Conference, the recent Indian démarche about the "China Pictorial" map and the Chinese Government's reply thereto. An inexplicable omission in this catalogue is that there is no mention of the road through Aksai Chin, of the Indian Government's protest about it, of the arrest and detention of the Indian survey parties on the road or of the Chinese Government's protest about that. Mr. Nehru commented, instead, on the enigmatic terms of the Chinese Government's reply about maps. "I was puzzled by this reply because I thought that there was no major boundary dispute between China and India. ... I do not know what kind of surveys can affect these well-known and fixed boundaries." He concluded the letter with the explanation "I am venturing to write to you on this subject as I feel that every possibility of grave misunderstanding between our countries should be removed as
soon as possible. I am anxious, as I am sure you are, that the firm basis of our friendship should not only be maintained but should be strengthened."

Mr. Chou En-lai's reply, of January 1959, took as its starting-point the proposition that "the Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited." He went on to say that "the Chinese Government has always held that the existence of the border question absolutely should not affect the development of Sino-Indian friendly relations. We believe that, following proper preparations, this question which has been carried over from the past can certainly be settled reasonably on the basis of the Five Principles of peaceful coexistence through friendly talks. To this end, the Chinese Government has now proceeded to take certain steps in making preparations." Turning to the McMahon Line, he said that the Chinese central government had never recognised it and that the Tibetan local authorities had always been dissatisfied with it. "On the other hand, one cannot, of course, fail to take cognizance of the great and encouraging changes: India and Burma, which are concerned in this line, have attained independence and become states friendly to China. In view of the various complex factors mentioned above, the Chinese Government, on the one hand finds it necessary to take a more or less realistic attitude towards the McMahon Line and, on the other hand, cannot but act with prudence and needs time to deal with the matter. However, we believe that, on account of the friendly relations between China and
India, a friendly settlement can eventually be found for this section of the boundary line." Turning to the question of maps, he said that currently published Chinese maps "are shown in the way consistently followed in Chinese maps for the past several decades, if not longer. We do not hold that every portion of this line is drawn on sufficient grounds. But it would be inappropriate for us to make changes without having made surveys and without consulting the countries concerned." He added "As a matter of fact, our people have also expressed surprise at the way the Sino-Indian boundary, particularly its western sector, is drawn on maps published in India." He then referred to border incidents. "In recent years, there occurred between China and India some minor border incidents which are probably difficult to avoid pending the formal delimitation of the boundary. In order to avoid such incidents so far as possible before the boundary is formally delimited, our Government would like to propose to the Indian Government that, as a provisional measure, the two sides temporarily maintain the status quo, that is to say, each side keep for the time being to the border areas at present under its jurisdiction and not go beyond them."

This letter did much to clarify the Chinese Government's position. The frontier had never been formally delimited. An agreement was necessary between Independent India and New China to settle inherited border problems and delimit the frontier formally. Meanwhile, the Chinese proposed that both sides
should remain in their existing positions. Moreover Mr. Chou En-lai gave as clear a hint as he could be expected to give in writing that in the negotiations which he envisaged, China would settle on the basis of the McMahon Line. The reference to the steps preparatory to settling the border question which the Chinese Government had now proceeded to take is enigmatic; perhaps Mr. Chou's statement to Mr. Nehru in 1956 that he would have to consult "the authorities in the Tibet Region of China" about recognising the McMahon Line gives the clue. The need "to act with prudence" and for "time to deal with the matter" may perhaps be attributed to concern over the security situation in Tibet.

Mr. Nehru's reply of 22 March 1959 says that he has "again examined the basis of the determination of the frontier between India and the Tibet Region of China. It is true that this frontier has not been demarcated on the ground in all the sectors but I am somewhat surprised to know that this frontier was not accepted at any time by the Government of China." (In this he misquoted Mr. Chou's letter, which had only said that the McMahon Line "has never been recognised by the Chinese central government." It is once again curious that by confining his remarks to "the frontier between India and the Tibet Region of China" Mr. Nehru excluded by implication the frontier between India and Sinkiang. And in fact the road through Aksai Chin and all its implications are not mentioned
in his letter. It seems that at this period the Indians preferred not to bring into the open the possibility, which they must surely have foreseen, of an enormous territorial claim against Ladakh.) Mr. Nehru's letter went on to discuss the Chinese proposal for observance of the status quo as a temporary measure. "We thought that our position was clearly understood and accepted by your Government. However, as unfortunately there is some difference of views between our two Governments in regard to the delineation of the frontier at some places, I agree that the position as it was before the recent disputes arose should be respected by both sides and that neither should try to take unilateral action in exercise of what it conceives to be its right. Further," and Mr. Nehru was perhaps here thinking of the Chinese occupation of Aksai Chin although he avoided all explicit reference to it, "if any possession has been secured recently, the position should be rectified." It will be seen that whereas Mr. Chou had proposed maintenance of the status quo, Mr. Nehru replied accepting restoration of the status quo ante. This difference, however, did not become an issue at this time.
XII.

THE TIBETAN REVOLT AND ITS EFFECT ON THE BORDER QUESTION

In March 1959, the Tibetan insurrection, which had been brewing on the Tibet-China border since 1956, came to a head and had to be admitted as a fact by the Chinese Government. There was fighting in Lhasa, the Dalai Lama was given asylum in India, and many Tibetan refugees crossed the frontier. These events aroused strong and outspoken feelings in India and China. In India the deep feelings of sympathy for the Tibetan people and respect for the holy places were aggravated by a consciousness of guilt at India's acquiescence in the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950. There was strong condemnation of Chinese actions in press and parliament. For the Chinese, the revolt was a public humiliation and a major setback in an important sector of their policies. Indian criticisms and protests caught them on the raw, all the more so since they believed that the revolt had been supported, if not by the Indian Government, at least by Americans and Chinese Nationalists using Indian territory as a base. Statements sharply critical of Indian policy were in turn made in the Chinese press and in the National People's Congress, which was in session at the time. The honeymoon of Indian-Chinese friendship, which had been so sedulously fostered by both sides, was over. From now on the atmosphere in which the relations
between the two countries had to be conducted was bitter and hostile. Mr. Nehru was under unremitting pressure from the press and from the opposition in parliament to take a strong line.

On 16 May 1959 the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi complained to the Indian Foreign Secretary of Indian behaviour in regard to the Tibetan revolt. The Ambassador's "statement", as the Indian White Paper calls it, closed with a passage in which more than in any other document on the record, the authentic voice of Chinese policy on the border question seems to be speaking out plainly. "On the whole, India is a friend of China . . . and we believe will certainly continue to be so in one thousand, ten thousand years to come. The enemy of the Chinese people lies in the East. . . . China's main attention and policy of struggle are directed to the east, to the west Pacific region, to the vicious and aggressive U.S. imperialism, and not to India or any other country in the southeast Asia and south Asia. Although the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan have joined the SEATO which is designed to oppose China, we have not treated those three countries as our principal enemy; our principal enemy is U.S. imperialism. India has not taken part in the Southeast Asia Treaty; it is not an opponent but a friend to our country. China will not be so foolish as to antagonize India in the west. The putting down of the rebellion and the carrying out of democratic reforms in Tibet will not in the least endanger India. You
can wait and see. As the Chinese proverb goes 'the strength of a horse is borne out by the distance travelled, and the heart of a person is seen with the lapse of time.' You will ultimately see whether relations between the Tibet region of China and India are friendly or hostile by watching three, five, ten, twenty, a hundred . . . years. We cannot have two centres of attention, nor can we take friend for foe. This is our state policy." The statement ends with an appeal for the settlement of temporary and local differences.

The immediate effect of the Tibetan revolt on the situation on the border has been described by Mr. Nehru, in a statement of 14 August 1962. "In 1959 . . . the incipient rebellion in Tibet grew in size, and as a result of it, the Chinese sent much larger forces to Tibet, which immediately fanned out to its frontiers, partly, maybe, because they thought that help was coming to the Tibetan rebels from the frontier, from India and elsewhere; they came to the Indian frontier partly because people were escaping. . . . In the same way they spread out to the Western side."

There has been no corresponding statement from the Chinese side; but there seems no doubt but that in the summer season of 1959 both the Indians and the Chinese "fanned out" and began to fill the administrative voids in the western as well as the eastern sector. The Chinese advance in the western sector, which did not extend to the limits of their claim, was a single operation which was completed by the winter of 1959:
they remained in their positions from 1959 until 1962, without making any further advance. The Indian advance in the western sector was by contrast progressive and continuous: it was not completed in 1959 and was continued progressively through 1961 and 1962, while the Chinese remained stationary. There was thus still a substantial hiatus between the Indian and Chinese positions in the western sector in 1959; they confronted each other directly at the eastern end of it, but not all along the line. As regards the eastern sector, the Chinese have admitted that in the summer of 1959, because of the Tibet revolt, they "despatched guard units to be stationed in the south-eastern part of the Tibet Region of China"; and it seems probable that their posts were established right up to the McMahon Line. The Indians on their side certainly began to consolidate their positions right up to the McMahon Line and for the first time, in 1959, established posts on the frontier. Here again, in the eastern sector also, it seems that the Chinese movement forward was virtually completed in 1959; while the Indian advance and consolidation was a continuous process from 1959 to 1962.
There had been no border clashes in 1957 and 1958, but in the new situation created by the advances made by both sides in 1959 clashes were inevitable. In July 1959 patrols of the two sides met in the area of the Pangong Lake, at the eastern end of the western sector, in the disputed area where the frontier passes from the Karakorams to the Himalayas. Both sides protested through the diplomatic channel. The following month there was a series of minor incidents in the eastern sector at Khinzemane, below the Thangla Pass, in the small strip of territory between the alignment of the McMahon Line on the 1914 map and the Indian Government's revised version of it. Patrols of the two sides met on 7, 9 and 14 August 1959, and both Governments protested. In July and August 1960 there were minor affairs in the area; the Chinese protested at the arrest by the Indians of a Tibetan who had crossed the Thangla Pass, and the Indians protested at the intrusion of a party of Chinese. Apparently the Indians remained in possession of Khinzemane, without further reaction from the Chinese. The area of the Thangla Pass remained quiet until September 1962.

There was however more serious trouble at the end of August at the other portion of the McMahon Line where there is a discrepancy between its alignment on the 1914 map and the
Indian Government's revised version of it. The village of Longju lies between the two versions of the line, but the adjoining villages of Migyitun and Tamaden are on the Tibetan side of the frontier and not in dispute.

On 23 June 1959 the Chinese Government complained of the activity of Indian patrols in the vicinity of Migyitun. The Indian Government replied on 26 June, denying that Indian patrols had entered Migyitun, which they admitted to be on the Chinese side of the frontier, and mentioning that there were Indian posts at Tamaden and Longju. It seems that these posts had been recently established. On 25 August 1959 Indian and Chinese patrols met just south of Migyitun. Shots were exchanged, for the first time in any border incident, and one Indian was killed. Shots were exchanged again the following day, and the Indians evacuated Longju. The Chinese got in first with their diplomatic protest, on 27 August, the Indians following with theirs the next day. Naturally the two versions of the incident differed widely.

There had to be full publicity for this episode. Mr. Nehru gave a full account of it in the Lok Sabha on 28 August. In the course of this statement he mentioned the earlier affairs at the Pangong Lake and at Khinzemane and referred briefly to the Chinese road in the western sector, but he did not at this time give a full account of the development of the border question and of the exchanges with the Chinese Government.
On 10 September 1959 the Indian Government sent the Chinese a note rationally discussing the alignment of the frontier in relation to Khinzhemane and Migyitun. "The Government of India would like to emphasize once more that the so-called McMahon Line definitely represents the boundary between India and the Tibet Region of China and they stand firmly by it. . . . This line is by and large in accordance with the geographical features in that area and also with long-established usage. The McMahon Line however departs from well-recognised geographical features at a few places. For example, the international border departs from the watershed near Tsari in order to include in Tibet the pilgrimage route of Tsari Nyingpa which is used every year by a large number of Tibetans. Similarly, the village of Migyitun was included in Tibet in view of the fact that the Tibetans attached considerable importance to this village. The Government of India are prepared to discuss the exact alignment of the McMahon Line at places where it departs from the geographical features marking the international boundary. . . . In regard to the specific dispute raised by the Chinese Government about Khinzhemane, the Government of India would like to point out that the boundary line in the particular area follows the crest of the highest mountain range. Khinzhemane is south of this range and is obviously part of Indian territory."

Mr. Nehru spoke of the same issue in the course of a long statement in the Lok Sabha on 12 September 1962, in which he gave for the first time a full account of the development of
the border question and of the exchanges with the Chinese Government. "The McMahon Line is a broad line between Bhutan and the Burma border and it goes on to Burma. In some places it is quite definite; in some places it is not definite, it is not marked in some places. And you have to go by other indications. The broad approach of the man who drew that line was that it should be on the watersheds. It was a good approach. But we have deliberately left the watershed in one or two places. Therefore, when I say I stick to the McMahon Line, what I mean is that I stick to that broad approach. But if by evidence or facts, whatever it is, a slight deviation in the alignment is necessary, it is not a major matter." And later in the same speech "There is the McMahon Line. By and large, apart from minor variations, that is a fixed line. In some parts, in the Subansiri area or somewhere there, it was not considered a good line and it was varied afterwards by us, by the Government of India. There are many factors to be seen. But broadly, it follows the watershed. That is the test. We hold by that. We stick to it subject to minor variations for special reasons. A mile here or a mile there does not matter provided it is peacefully arranged."

There were thus now clear statements from the Indian side that the McMahon Line left the watershed at places, that the principle of the highest ridge was the decisive factor in the Thangla Ridge/Khinzemane area and that the alignment in the Subansiri/Longju area had been "varied" or rectified. But it
was not stated clearly either that this "variation" affected precisely the relation of Longju to the frontier or that the alignment on the highest ridge near Khinzhemane was another "variation".

These partial revelations on the alignment were made in public, but no attention was paid to them in the general uproar. Public opinion in India, already bitterly critical of the Chinese Government over the suppression of the Tibetan revolt, was greatly incensed over the Longju incident, which was taken to be a clear case of Chinese aggression against territory that was indisputably Indian.

Mr. Nehru revealed on 16 November 1959 that "after the Longju incident it had been decided to place the entire frontier of India in direct charge of our army".
The correspondence between Prime Ministers was resumed with a letter from Mr. Chou En-lai dated 8 September 1959. It was stiffer in tone than his last communication, before the Tibet revolt and the Longju incident. Having restated China's position in regard to the McMahon Line, he put the question "Mr. Prime Minister, how could China agree to accept under coercion such an illegal line which would have it relinquish its rights and disgrace itself by selling out its territory—and such a large piece of territory as that? The delineation of the Sino-Indian boundary east of Bhutan in all traditional maps is a true reflexion of the actual situation of the customary boundary before the appearance of the so-called McMahon Line."

Here is an important change of front on the question of Chinese maps. For the first time a Chinese territorial claim to NEFA is made explicit. The statement of this claim is however not the main point of the passage, which is concerned rather to emphasize the error of a policy of coercion. The letter then gives a faint echo of the hint of a settlement on the basis of the McMahon Line conveyed in the letter of 23 January 1959. "The Chinese Government has all along adhered to a clear-cut policy on the Sino-Indian border question: on the one hand it affirms that the entire Sino-Indian border has not been delimited, while on the other, it also faces reality, and, taking specially
into account the friendly relationship between India and China, actively seeks for a settlement fair and reasonable to both sides, and never tries unilaterally to change the long-existing state of the border between the two countries pending the settlement of the boundary question. . . . The Chinese Government absolutely does not recognise the so-called McMahon Line, but Chinese troops have never crossed that line. This is for the sake of maintaining unity along the border to facilitate negotiations and settlement of the boundary question, and in no way implies that the Chinese Government has recognised that line." The letter also charges that Indian troops had recently crossed the McMahon Line as shown on the 1914 map.

"Since the outbreak of the rebellion in Tibet, the border situation has become increasingly tense owing to reasons for which the Chinese side cannot be held responsible. Immediately after the fleeing of a large number of Tibetan rebels into India, Indian troops started pressing forward steadily across the eastern section of the Sino-Indian boundary. Changing unilaterally the long-existing state of the border between the two countries, they not only overstepped the so-called McMahon Line as indicated in the map attached to the secret notes exchanged between Britain and the Tibet local authorities, but also exceeded the boundary drawn in current Indian maps which is alleged to represent the so-called McMahon Line, but which in many places actually cuts even deeper into Chinese territory than the McMahon Line. Indian troops invaded and occupied Longju,
intruded into Yashar, and are still in occupation of Shatzi, Khinzheman and Tamaden—all of which are Chinese territory—shielding armed Tibetan rebels in this area. "...The fact that India does not recognise the undelimited state of the Sino-Indian boundary and steps up bringing pressure to bear on China militarily, diplomatically and through public opinion cannot but make one suspect that it is the attempt of India to impose upon China its one-sided claims on the boundary question. It must be pointed out that this attempt will never succeed and such action cannot possibly yield any results other than impairing the friendship of the two countries, further complicating the boundary question and making it more difficult to settle."

The last paragraph of the letter is more conciliatory. "The friendly relations between China and India are based on the Five Principles of peaceful coexistence. The Chinese Government has consistently held that all differences between our two countries must and certainly can be resolved through peaceful consultations and should not be allowed to affect the friendly relationship between the two countries. China looks upon its southwestern border as a border of peace and friendship. I can assure Your Excellency that it is merely for the purpose of preventing remnant armed Tibetan rebels from crossing the border back and forth to carry out harassing activities that the Chinese Government has in recent months despatched guard units to be stationed in the south-eastern part of the Tibet Region of China. This is obviously in the interest of ensuring the
tranquillity of the border and will in no way constitute a threat to India." The letter ends with the hope that the Indian Government will "immediately adopt measures to withdraw the trespassing Indian troops and administrative personnel and restore the long existing state of the boundary between the two countries. Through this, the temporary tension on the Sino-Indian border would be eased at once and the dark clouds hanging over the relations between our two countries would be speedily dispelled, setting at ease our friends who are concerned for Sino-Indian friendly relations and dealing a blow to those who are sowing discord in the Sino-Indian relations and creating tension."

Mr. Nehru felt bitterly that this letter represented an important change of position on the part of the Chinese. Speaking in the Lok Sabha the day that Mr. Chou En-lai's letter was received, he referred to the border incidents and went on "But that is not what we are considering to-day. . . . We are considering something much bigger, and that is . . . the claim laid down in the Chinese maps which for the first time, mind you, now in this last letter of Premier Chou En-lai and the speeches delivered now in their Congress is taking more definite shape. At first, whenever the maps were referred to, it was said, 'Oh, these are old maps, we will revise them.' . . . But now the real thing is that this is held out as something more definite. . . . That kind of treatment or behaviour does seem to me, if I may use the word, very improper."
Later in the same statement he said "But the basic difficulty is this apparent change in the attitude of the Chinese Government when it has come out quite clearly with a claim which it is absolutely and wholly impossible for us to look at. . . . They themselves say, the House will notice, that they are not, in a sense, pressing for that now and that they are prepared for the status quo to continue." He was even more explicit about his feelings in a statement on 27 November 1959. "I believe that in this matter, the Chinese Government has been in error, has behaved badly; it has not behaved fairly to us, has committed what I might say, a breach of faith on us—not a breach of faith of any particular word or document, but broadly speaking breach of faith."

Mr. Nehru sent a very long reply to Mr. Chou En-lai on 26 September 1959 rehearsing the Indian case in detail. He answered the point about the delineation of the McMahon Line. "I have looked into the allegation that the boundary drawn on Indian maps includes in many places even more territory than the McMahon Line, but have been unable to discover any basis for it. If you have in mind the Sino-Indian frontier shown in the Treaty map, the position can be easily explained. As settled between the British and Chinese [sic] representatives at the time of the Simla Conference, the boundary was to follow the natural features, but a reservation was made that Migyitun (and a few other places) would be within Tibetan territory. This was done in order to leave within Tibet the two sacred lakes of Tsari Sarpa and Tso Karpo which were places of pilgrimage
for Tibetans and the village of Migyitun from which the pilgrimage started. At the time of the Simla Convention, the exact topographical features in this area were not known. Later, after the topography of the area had been definitely ascertained, the actual boundary followed the geographical features except where a departure was necessary to leave Migyitun within Tibetan territory. The actual boundary as shown in the Indian maps, therefore, merely gave effect to the treaty map in the area based on definite topography. This was in accordance with established international practice." This is the fullest explanation of the circumstances of the rectification of the line in the Migyitun area, but it still does not explain why the line which is 3 miles south of Migyitun in the 1914 map is immediately south of Migyitun in the revised Indian maps. The letter does not go into the question of the variation of the line at Khinzhemane.

Turning to the issue of the Chinese claim to NEFA, Mr. Nehru's letter said that "no government could possibly discuss the future of such large areas which are an integral part of their territory. We however recognize that the India-China frontier . . . has not been demarcated on the ground and disputes may therefore arise at some places. . . . We agree therefore that the border disputes which have already arisen should be amicably and peacefully settled. We also agree that until a settlement has been reached the status quo should be maintained. . . . Further if any party has trespassed into the other's territory across the traditional frontier, it should
immediately withdraw to its side of the frontier. So far as the Government of India are concerned, at no places at present have they any personnel, civil, police or military, on the Tibetan side of the traditional frontier. There was only one outpost, that at Tamaden, established some months ago, which, subsequent enquiries showed, was somewhat north of the McMahon Line. In keeping with our earlier promise we have already withdrawn it to a point south of the Line. There can therefore be no question of withdrawing Indian personnel at any other place. We would now request that in the same spirit your Government should withdraw their personnel from a number of posts which you have opened in recent months at Spanggur, Mandal and one or two other places in eastern Ladakh. Similarly, your forces should also withdraw from Longju which they forcibly occupied on the 26th. August and which they still continue to occupy. No discussions can be fruitful unless the posts on the Indian side of the traditional frontier now held by the Chinese forces are first evacuated by them and further threats and intimidations immediately cease." He enclosed with his letter a memorandum on the historical and treaty basis of the Indian case.

In requesting the Chinese to withdraw from Longju and other places which they claimed to be within Chinese territory Mr. Nehru was asking for something which was not strictly on a par with the Indian withdrawal from Tamaden, which he now admitted to be outside Indian territory. His statement in the
last sentence quoted above contains the first intimation of the demand, which did not become explicit until March 1962, for a total evacuation by the Chinese from territory claimed as Indian before there could be any discussions on the alignment of the frontier.
THE KONGKA PASS INCIDENT: OCTOBER 1959

On 20-21 October 1959 occurred the second border incident at which shots were exchanged. This was in the disputed area near the Kongka Pass, at the junction of Sinkiang with Tibet, where the frontier leaves, or crosses, the Karakorams, at the eastern end of the western sector. On 20 October 1959 two armed Indians with a guide ran into a Chinese patrol south of the Kongka Pass and were detained. The following day an Indian search party sent out in quest of the missing men again met the Chinese. Shots were exchanged, seventeen Indians were killed and six more were taken prisoner. There was also an unspecified number of casualties on the Chinese side. The Chinese Government got in first with their protest, the Indians following a day later. Each side claimed that the incident took place on its own territory and accused the other side of opening fire first. Once again there was full publicity and much indignation.

On 4 November the Indian Government delivered a further note restating their version of the affair in more detail on the basis of a fuller report. When the note passed on to wider issues, the strength of Indian emotions took wing and left the factual basis far behind. "There has been no doubt about this frontier. . . . Any person with a knowledge of history not only of recent events, but of the past hundreds of years and
more, would appreciate that this traditional and historical frontier of India, has been associated with India's culture and tradition for the last two thousand years or so, and has been an intimate part of India's life and thought. . . . The maps published by the Survey of India since 1867-68 have been showing the boundary between Ladakh on the one hand, and Sinkiang and the Tibet region on the other, as in the present-day official maps published by the Survey of India. . . . The international boundary has been shown for nearly a century in official Indian maps as it is to-day."

None of these statements is true. This note uses the word "aggression" for the first time. "India will continue to resolve all disputes by peaceful methods. But where aggression takes place, the people of India inevitably have to resist by all means available to them."

Mr. Chou En-lai's letter of 7 November, in reply to Mr. Nehru's letter of 26 September, began by referring to the Kongka Pass incident. Mr. Chou deprecated a continuation of the acrimonious exchange of notes and argued that the first task was to prevent the possibility of a recurrence. "I am afraid that if no fully appropriate solution is worked out by the two Governments, border clashes which both sides do not want to see may occur again in the future. . . . There is. . . no conflict of fundamental interests between our two countries. . . . We have no reason to allow the tension on the border between our two countries to continue."

Before dealing with the broader issues raised in the remainder of Mr. Chou's letter
it will be convenient to dispose of the further exchange of
notes on the Kongka Pass incident.

In a note of 12 November the Chinese Government offered
to return the Indian prisoners. This was effected on 14
November. The same day the Chinese Government sent a further
note restating their version of the incident on the basis of
statements made by the Indian prisoners while in custody. In
a note of 24 November the Indian Government raised a new issue:
"the deplorable treatment to which the Indian personnel were
subjected while in Chinese custody." The Chinese Government
replied on 28 November denying and regretting this charge. A
further Indian note of 13 December once again restated their
version of the affair and enclosed a report in 63 paragraphs by
one of the Indians who had been in Chinese custody. "The
Government of India once again record their emphatic protest
against the deplorable treatment to which the Indian personnel
were subjected while in the custody of the Chinese soldiers.
... The Government of India would urge that adequate action
be taken against the persons responsible for subjecting the
helpless Indian prisoners to such inhuman treatment." The
Chinese Government replied on 5 February 1960 repeating their
denial of the charges of improper treatment of the prisoners,
restating their version of the affair and enclosing in turn
a detailed report by the Chinese patrol concerned in the
incident. "Before concluding this note, the Chinese Government
would like to reiterate that it has never had the intention to
argue endlessly with the Indian Government about the Kongka Pass incident. Its closest concern is only to prevent the recurrence of similar unfortunate incidents. . . . They hope that no such incident causing the loss of precious lives on both sides will recur. In view of this, the Chinese Government would like to express its eager desire that both sides would argue no more about the matter which has become a thing of the past, and that they, instead, actively devote all their energies to speedily consulting and agreeing on effective measures so as to ensure the tranquillity of the border and consolidate friendship of the two countries."
Mr. Chou's letter of 7 November 1959 was milder in tone than his last letter of 8 September. After the reference to the Kongka Pass incident quoted above he said that he would reply on another occasion to the many points of detail in Mr. Nehru's last letter (on the historical and treaty basis for the Indian case). He welcomed Mr. Nehru's support for the status quo pending a settlement of the question. He then made two important proposals. "The Chinese Government proposes that the armed forces of China and India each withdraw 20 kms. at once from the so-called McMahon Line in the east, and from the line up to which each side exercises actual control in the west, and that the two sides undertake to refrain from again sending their armed personnel to be stationed in and patrol the zones from which they have evacuated their armed forces, but still maintain civil administrative personnel and unarmed police there for the performance of administrative duties and the maintenance of order. This proposal is in fact an extension of the Indian Government's proposal, contained in its Note dated September 10, that neither side should send its armed personnel to Longju, to the entire border between China and India, and moreover to separate the troops of the two sides by as great a distance as 40 kms. If there is any need to increase this distance, the Chinese Government is also willing
to give it consideration." Secondly, "The Chinese Government proposes that in order to discuss further the boundary question and other questions in the relations between the two countries, the Prime Ministers of the two countries hold talks in the immediate future."

Mr. Nehru sent a long and very carefully considered reply on 16 November 1959. He complained that he had not had any reply on the detailed statement of the historical and treaty basis for the Indian case. "I notice with regret that you have not taken any account of the facts as given by us." Before passing to current issues, he felt obliged to refer to "the resentment aroused in India" by the delay in the release of the Indians captured at the Kongka Pass. He declined the proposal for a reciprocal 20 km. withdrawal. So far as the eastern sector is concerned, "we think that there should not be the slightest risk of any border clash if each Government instructs its outposts not to send out patrols. . . . We have, in fact, instructed our outposts not to send out any forward patrols for the present. It would in fact be extremely difficult in practice to establish a new line of outposts in the rear. The risk of border clashes will be completely eliminated if our suggestion is accepted by your Government. Longju," he went on, "stands on a different footing altogether. . . . We cannot, therefore, agree to any arrangement, even as an interim measure, which would keep your forcible possession intact. The proper course. . . would be for you to withdraw
from Longju. We on our part will not re-occupy it." For the western sector he made a separate proposal. "I regret," he said with reference to the Ladakh border, "I cannot accept the contention that you have been in occupation of the area up to the frontier line shown in your map. On the contrary, the Government of India have exercised jurisdiction up to the frontier line specified by them . . . by sending regular patrols up to the international boundary. . . . It is obvious that there is complete disagreement between the two Governments even about the facts of possession. An agreement about the observance of the status quo would, therefore, be meaningless as the facts concerning the status quo are themselves disputed.

. . . I suggest therefore that in the Ladakh area, both our Governments should agree on the following as an interim measure. The Government of India should withdraw all personnel to the west of the line which the Chinese Government have shown as the international boundary . . . . Similarly, the Chinese Government should withdraw their personnel to the east of the international boundary . . . described by the Government of India." He also declined the proposal for an early meeting of Prime Ministers. "I welcome your suggestion and . . . I am always ready to meet and discuss with Your Excellency.

. . . It is our common desire that such a meeting should bear fruit. The nature of the discussion at our meeting should, therefore, be such that we do not lose ourselves in a forest of data. . . . It is necessary, therefore, that some preliminary
steps are taken and the foundation for our discussions laid.
. . . I feel that we should concentrate our immediate efforts
on reaching interim understanding. . . . Therefore, the
necessary preliminary steps might be taken and the time and
place of meeting, convenient and suitable to Your Excellency
and to me, could be fixed."

Mr. Nehru was fully conscious of the importance of his
responsibilities at this juncture. "There came to me" he told
the Lok Sabha on 27 November 1959, "one of these peak events
of history when a plunge has to be taken in some direction which
may have powerful and far-reaching effects not only on our
country but on Asia and even the world. . . . Here we are,
sitting on the edge of history and all kinds of things are going
to happen in the future. . . . If this unfortunate thing
occurs, we have to face this and we shall become a nation of
armies . . . every single activity, every single thing that
we do--planning etc.--would have to be conditioned by one
major fact, because that will be a struggle for life and death."

This was indeed the crucial moment in the history of
the border question. Should the Indians negotiate or should
they not? Negotiation implied compromise, compromise implied
concessions. The earlier discussions had made it seem probable
that the Indians could get Chinese agreement on the McMahon Line
if they gave up their claim to the Aksai Chin area. Should
Mr. Nehru go for a settlement on this basis? The key-question
was: Could the Chinese Government be trusted? Mr. Nehru's
answer was No. He concluded therefore that there could be no useful agreement. He was fully aware of what the consequences of this decision might be: war between India and China, a war which neither side would win and which would ruin India's dreams of progress. He advanced towards the prospect with open eyes.

As a general proposition however, the proven bad faith of one party does not rule out the possibility of a useful agreement. The key-question should rather have been: would the Chinese have been content with the Aksai Chin area or would they later have gone on to ask for more? On the evidence it would surely have been worth while giving a limited agreement a trial, especially since the Aksai Chin area had no practical use for India and was already in Chinese possession.

Some of the terms of Mr. Nehru's letter of 16 November do not stand up well to the harsh glare of detailed scrutiny. There is no doubt at all about Mr. Nehru's burning sincerity, at this and at all times, or about his passionate faith in the justice of his cause. But there seems already to be an element of self-delusion, of tragic blindness. There is a stretching of the facts about the situation in Ladakh. He said that the Indian Government had sent regular patrols up to the limits of the Indian claim in the western sector and then spoke with scorn of the "complete disagreement between the two Governments even about the facts of possession," which would make meaningless an agreement about the observance of the status quo. There was however no agreement even within the Indian Government about the
facts of possession. Less than a fortnight earlier, on 4 November, an official Indian note had informed the Chinese Government, with reference to the period up to 1958, that "no Indian reconnaissance party was sent to the area in Aksai Chin where the Chinese authorities had built a road." Between these conflicting statements on the Indian side one takes one's choice. It seems more probable that Mr. Nehru was wrong and that before 1958 no Indian patrols went as far as the road after it was built. There is, moreover, something of chop-logic in the argument that because there was no agreement on the facts of possession, there could be no agreement on maintenance of the status quo: each side could, after all, have stayed where it was and not advanced further, without the necessity for any agreed statement of their respective positions at the time, especially if there was a neutral zone of 40 kms. The Chinese proposal for reciprocal withdrawal would have included the evacuation of Longju, on which the Indians felt it necessary to insist as a precondition for even interim discussions. The Indian refusal of the withdrawal proposal was no doubt due in particular to their reluctance to abandon a system of defensive posts recently constructed at such cost of effort. Mr. Nehru's special counter-proposal for neutralising the Ladakh area, that the Chinese should withdraw behind the line claimed by India, was, like his earlier proposal for a Chinese withdrawal from Longju in return for the Indian withdrawal from Tamaden, not on a basis of reciprocity: it would have meant a Chinese withdrawal form a large area that included their strategic
highway, in return for an Indian evacuation, it seems, of a single outpost. These detailed criticisms are however directed at arguments and considerations which are no more than the dressing up of Mr. Nehru's central decision: not to negotiate.

Mr. Chou En-lai replied on 17 December 1959. He repeated his proposal for a reciprocal withdrawal of armed forces but expressed readiness to agree to interim measures. He proposed that the Indian proposal for the military neutralisation of Longju should be applied to the other disputed places as well. He welcomed the Indian Government's proposal for a suspension of forward patrols and announced that "the Chinese Government has, in fact instructed the Chinese frontier guards to stop sending out patrols from all their outposts on the Sino-Indian border after the Kongka Pass incident. Now that the Indian side has also taken the same step, that is of course a happy progress in safeguarding the tranquillity of the border between the two countries. But the Chinese Government would like to ask for clarification on one point, that is: The proposal to stop patrolling should apply to the entire Sino-Indian border, and no different measure should be adopted in the sector of the border between China and India's Ladakh." He expressed surprise at Mr. Nehru's special proposal for the neutralisation of the Ladakh area. "There is no reason to treat this sector of the border as a special case. The line up to which each side exercises actual control in this sector is very clear, just as it is in the other sectors of the Sino-Indian border."
As a matter of fact, the Chinese map published in 1956, to which Your Excellency referred, correctly shows the traditional boundary between the two countries in this sector. Except for the Parigas area . . . India has not occupied any Chinese territory east of this section of the traditional boundary" i.e. the line claimed by China. "Your Excellency's proposal is unfair. . . . India's 'concession' would only be theoretical. . . while China would have to withdraw from a territory of above 33,000 square kilometers." He went on to ask the question to which Mr. Nehru's proposal had laid him open: if the Indian Government considered their proposal proper for the western sector, were they prepared to apply the same principle to the eastern sector, which would involve their withdrawal from the whole of NEFA? "The Chinese Government," he went on, "has not up to now made any demand in regard to the area south of the so-called McMahon Line as a precondition or interim measure, and what I find difficult to understand is why the Indian Government should demand that the Chinese side withdraw one-sidedly from its western frontier area." He also renewed his proposal for an early meeting of Prime Ministers. Unless "some agreements of principles" were first reached at this level, "there is a danger that the concrete discussions of the boundary question by the two sides may bog down in endless and fruitless debates. I therefore make the concrete proposal that the two Prime Ministers begin talks on December 26" in China or Rangoon.
Mr. Nehru's reply, of 21 December 1959, was cold in tone and the reverse of forthcoming. "I deeply regret," he said, "that you have not accepted the very reasonable proposals contained in my letter of 16th November." But he made no reply to the objections made to these proposals in Mr. Chou's letter of 17 December; nor did he respond either to Mr. Chou's proposal of 17 December for the military neutralisation of all the disputed places or to his request for clarification that the Indian Government were prepared to suspend patrols along the whole frontier including the Ladakh area. He repeated however his complaint that the Chinese had still not replied to his letter of 26 September and the Indian note of 4 November setting out the historical and treaty basis of the Indian case. He referred once again to the "deplorable treatment to which the Indian prisoners were subjected by the Chinese forces" after the Kongka Pass incident. "Your Excellency has suggested that you and I should meet on December 26... How can we, Mr. Prime Minister, reach an agreement on principles when there is such complete disagreement about the facts? I would, therefore, prefer to wait for your promised reply to my letter of September 26 and our note of November 4, before we discuss what should be the next step. I wish to add that it is entirely impossible for me to proceed to Rangoon or any other place within the next few days." Once again, the logic is unconvincing: disagreement on the facts did not preclude some agreement on principles, which might help to elucidate the facts. It does not seem wise, either, to have insisted on the Chinese reply
to the statement of the historical and treaty basis of the Indian case before any further steps could be considered; there had already been sufficient exchanges to show that there would be no yielding on these points at this stage.

As requested, the Chinese gave their reply to the September 26 letter and the November 4 note, on 26 December 1959. It covers 22 pages of print. It rehearsed the whole of the Chinese case and referred, in its conclusion, to "the basic fact... that is, the entire boundary between the two countries has never been delimited, and is therefore yet to be settled through negotiations."
The Indians took time to consider and prepare their reply to the Chinese note of 26 December 1959. It took the form of a letter from Mr. Nehru dated 5 February 1960 and a note delivered in Peking on 12 February 1960. Mr. Nehru agreed to meet Mr. Chou En-lai. He told the Lok Sabha on 22 February 1960 that his reason for refusing a meeting in December was that the meeting would then be on the basis of the Chinese statement of the case, as set out in Mr. Chou's letter of 17 December 1959. He wanted to get in a statement of the Indian case before a meeting. This was the purpose of the note of 12 February 1960. It and his letter of 5 February 1960 hung together.

The letter repeated Mr. Nehru's interim proposals of 16 November 1959 and asked for them to be reconsidered; but once again it did not answer either the Chinese objection to the special arrangement proposed in regard to Ladakh or the Chinese counterproposal for military neutralisation of the disputed places. "In the latest note from China, emphasis has been laid on our entire boundary never having been delimited. That is a statement which appears to us to be wholly incorrect, and we cannot accept it. On that basis there can be no negotiations... . For the moment, I do not see any common ground between our respective viewpoints... Although any negotiations on
the basis you have suggested are not possible, still I think it might be helpful for us to meet. I am afraid it is not possible for me to leave India during the next few months. ... I would however be glad if you could take the trouble to come to Delhi. ... I would suggest ... some time in the second half of March."

The accompanying note firmly restated the Indian case in magisterial terms admitting no argument. At the close it repeated the plea for acceptance of Mr. Nehru's interim proposal of 16 November 1959, again without replying to the Chinese objections and counterproposal.

A further brief exchange settled 19 April as the date for the meeting in Delhi.

A Chinese note of 3 April 1960 attempted to prepare the ground for the meeting. Its tone was in marked contrast to that of the Indian note of 12 February 1960, to which it is the reply. "The Chinese Government feels that, no matter how great the present difference between China and India on this particular question, it is after all an issue of limited and temporary nature compared with the fundamental need of the two peoples to maintain friendly cooperation for thousands and ten thousands of years to come. ... It is certainly possible to overcome all difficulties and bring about a settlement of the boundary question satisfactory to both sides. Although the Chinese Government has repeatedly set forth the facts about the boundary and its own stand, yet it has never set any pre-condition for the discussions
between the two sides. The Chinese Government is willing, in the discussions, to explore together with the Indian Government various avenues to a resolution of the differences with a conciliatory and reasonable attitude, and to try its best to promote the success of the discussions." The note expressed the hope that the proposals for an interim agreement put forward in Mr. Chou En-lai's letter of 17 December 1959 would be accepted by the Indian Government, "because the above-mentioned proposals were worked out on the basis of full consideration of the previous proposals of the two sides." The note concluded with an appeal--"The once strained relations between China and India have been improved. Now the eyes of the world are turning toward the forthcoming meeting of the Premiers"--and there was a reference to "fervent hopes for this meeting of historic significance."
The two Prime Ministers met in Delhi from 19-25 April 1960. Neither side has disclosed the course of the discussions, but it is clear that there was no sort of agreement on principles or facts. All that we know of the actual exchanges is that at one point Mr. Chou En-lai proposed "that there exist between the two sides certain common points or points of proximity."

(1) There exist disputes with regard to the boundary between the two sides.

(2) There exists between the two countries a line of actual control up to which each side exercises administrative jurisdiction.

(3) In determining the boundary between the two countries, certain geographical principles such as watersheds, river valleys and mountain passes should be equally applicable to all the sectors of the boundary.

(4) A settlement of the boundary question between the two countries should take into account the national feelings of the two peoples towards the Himalayas and the Karakoram Mountains.

(5) Pending a settlement of the boundary question between the two countries through discussions, both sides should keep to the line of actual control and should not put forward territorial claims as pre-conditions, but individual adjustments may be made.
(6) In order to ensure tranquillity on the border so as to facilitate the discussions, both sides should continue to refrain from patrolling along all the sectors of the boundary."

Mr. Nehru "firmly rejected" this. It is not disclosed why. It was probably the elimination implied in the fifth point of the Indian proposal for reciprocal withdrawal in the Ladakh-Sinkiang sector that was most unacceptable. The Indians have also always shied away from the phrase "the actual line of control" and have been reluctant to admit that any sort of de facto situation has been created on the ground which might be recognised without prejudice to their stand on the rights of the case.

The only agreement reached at the meeting between the Prime Ministers, as announced in the joint communiqué, was "that officials of the two Governments should meet and examine, check and study all historical documents, records, accounts, maps and other material relevant to the boundary question, on which each side relied in support of its stand, and draw up a report for submission to the two Governments. This report would list the points on which there was agreement and the points on which there was disagreement or which should be examined more fully and clarified. This report should prove helpful towards further consideration of these problems by the two Governments." From the previous exchanges it seems probable that the initiative for suggesting this procedure came from the Indian side.
XIX.

THE REPORT OF OFFICIALS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES: JUNE 1960 - AUGUST 1961

The officials of the two sides met on 15 June 1960. The original plan was that they should complete their work by September; but in the event they required three sessions—15 June to 25 July, 19 August to 5 October and 7 November to 12 December. The officials settled nothing. There was in fact not one report but two reports, one from each side. All the familiar arguments were rehearsed, at greater length and in more detail. Nothing was proved, except that there was disagreement between the two sides, as had been fully established before.

In the course of these meetings the Chinese for the first time communicated officially a map showing their delineation of the frontier. The Indians found that at the eastern end of the western sector it differed from the 1956 map which Mr. Chou En-lai had said on 17 December 1959 correctly showed the Chinese claim. The Chinese insist however that the two maps are identical. Whatever the facts, it is the map communicated in 1960 which represented the official statement of the Chinese claim. The Chinese officials questioned the Indian officials closely about the precise alignment of the frontier claimed by India in the Thangla Ridge/Khinzemane and Longju areas and were given in reply exact details, with coordinates and distances. But the
record does not contain any discussion of the relation of the frontier thus claimed to the line drawn on the 1914 map.

While the officials were at work, the border was quiet. There was no incident of any note in the 1960 summer season. "Since the autumn of 1959 there has been no further aggression on our territory by the Chinese," Mr. Nehru told the Lok Sabha in a review of this period which he made on 23 February 1961. "Since August 1959 the position might be said to be stabilised where it was then. There has been no further intrusion by them." The Chinese were still north of the Indian version of the McMahon Line, with the sole exception of the disputed village of Longju, which they still, apparently, occupied.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha on 23 November 1960, Mr. Nehru, from the depths of his disillusionment, referred again to the possibility of war with China, this time in more explicit terms. "If by some great misfortune there is war between India and China, it is going to be a terrible affair. . . . It may last a whole generation. . . . It may put an end to all kinds of what we are doing in our country or it may affect them. All these factors have to be considered and the real fact of the matter is, as I have said, the basic problem is the attitude of China, what the Chinese Government may have in mind and may be thinking of in the present and in the future." He went on to refer to the possibility that the Chinese Government, unlike the Soviet Government, did not accept the concept of coexistence
and believed in the inevitability of war between communism and capitalism.

The correspondance between the two Prime Ministers ceased for the time being, but notes continued to be exchanged through the diplomatic channel. From 30 December 1960 there was an exchange on the implications for the India-China border question of the agreement on the border between China and Burma which had been concluded on 1 October 1960; the language was sharp and neither side gave an inch. In the first half of 1961 there was also an exchange of notes about minor encounters on the border, and over each affair each side stuck resolutely to its own story and rejected the other's. On 4 May 1961 a note of exasperation appears for the first time on the Chinese side. "So long as the Indian Government does not give up its attitude of refusing to negotiate and trying to impose its views on others, the Chinese Government will absolutely not retreat an inch from its stand on the questions of the Sino-Indian boundary. . . . The Indian Government will never succeed in its unreasonable tangling."

The Report of Officials was supposed to lead to further discussions between the two Governments. It was however allowed to rest for several months. Mr. Nehru hoped that the Indian statement of the case would carry conviction to the Chinese. "This official's report, "he told the Lok Sabha on 3 April 1961, "has brought out the basic facts so clearly that I thought that even the Chinese Government
would be affected by them, not suddenly but gradually."
This is an astonishing statement, to anyone who has read the
Report. There is however no doubting Mr. Nehru's sincerity.
He was so convinced of the rightness of India's cause that
he believed that by a sort of natural force it would
eventually impose itself on the Chinese.

In August 1961 the Indians took the initiative in
moving forward from the Report. The Secretary General of the
External Affairs Department stopped at Peking and Shanghai
on his way back from Mongolia and had talks with Mr. Chou
En-lai and others. "But I am afraid the talks he had with
those high Chinese authorities," Mr. Nehru reported on 16
August 1961, "were not productive of much good in so far
as we are concerned in this matter, and it was a repetition
as usual."
THE SITUATION ON THE BORDER IN 1961

Once again, in the summer season of 1961, there was no important incident on the border. The Chinese made no advances and set up no new forward posts. Surprisingly, and without éclat, they withdrew from Longju, which the Indians did not reoccupy. Thus the Chinese were now everywhere north of the McMahon Line as interpreted by the Indians and had "vacated the aggression" at Longju. "So the position in regard to this border situation," Mr. Nehru announced on 16 August 1961, "remains, more or less, what it was. That is, it is static, nothing much is happening. So far as I know there has been no further aggression anywhere, nor has there been, except in one or two places like Longju, any going back by the Chinese. Meanwhile we have been strengthening our position there by building roads, transport, etc."

Hitherto there had only been one Indian post in the western sector on territory claimed as Chinese (Demchok or Parigas). Now in the summer season of 1961 the "strengthening of our positions" of which Mr. Nehru spoke took them for the first time across the line claimed as the frontier by China at one or two other places in the western sector. The Indian advance into the area of the Chinese claim was still on a small scale: the Chinese Government complained of the
establishment of a checkpoint and the building of fortifications. "It would be very erroneous and dangerous," they said, "should the Indian Government take China's attitude of restraint and tolerance as an expression of weakness." The Indian Government did not deny the charges of activities in the areas of which the Chinese complained, replying only that the territory in question was Indian and that they were free to do what they liked in it. "Such logic of the Indian Government is untenable and also most dangerous," the Chinese wrote on 30 November 1961. "If the Indian Government's above logic should be followed, the Chinese Government would have every reason to send troops to cross the so-called 'McMahon Line' and enter the vast area between the crest of the Himalayas and their southern foot." This was the first time that any threat of a move across the McMahon Line had been implied. In the same note the Chinese asserted explicitly that they were observing a ban on patrols in the western sector--"The Chinese Government . . . has kept Chinese troops from sending patrols within 20 kms. on the Chinese side of the boundary."

After the return of the Secretary-General from his unsuccessful talks in Peking and Shanghai, the Indian Government must have recognised that the hopes of converting the Chinese Government by the logic of the Officials' Report were not going to be fulfilled. It seems probable that in the autumn of 1961 the position was reviewed in the light of the Secretary-General's report and that the decision was then taken to press on with the forward policy of establishing
Indian posts in the disputed areas. If this inference is correct, the decision was certainly, once again, taken with a steady look at the possible consequences. "This is a matter of high importance," Mr. Nehru told the Lok Sabha on 5 December 1961, "and I should like to deal with this matter in all seriousness. Basically, what had happened? A certain aggression has taken place on our territory, and many other things backing it have happened or are happening. And how do we deal with it? First of all, what is the objective? Obviously, our objective can only be to get that aggression vacated. How do we get that aggression vacated?—by diplomatic means, by various measures, and ultimately, if you like, by war. Now our policy is to get that aggression vacated fully and wholly. Our policy always is, and always has been in regard to every matter, to try every method, every peaceful method, to gain our objective. It may be that the peaceful method is not successful."

Again he posed the same question: "How should we get that aggression vacated? Always through peaceful methods. Apart from peaceful methods, there are pressures short of war; and then there is war. Now I am free to confess to this House that my whole soul reacts against the idea of war anywhere. . . . However, how can any person rule out war? . . . Even if we have to take that step, we take it certainly, for defence and certainly for the vacation of any aggression. . . . So, one cannot rule out war and we do not rule out war." A little later in the same speech
he said "We are dealing with a physical situation which was completely neglected for the last hundred years or more. And we are dealing with it pretty well, I think, administratively, militarily, building it up, preparing the ground for advance; we are advancing and we are putting up our posts, administrative centers and others." And again: "We go on strengthening our position to deal with the situation whenever we think it is strong enough to be dealt with by us and not from a weak position. Now when we have arrived at this stage of preparation etc.--we lay down the policy--the other matter goes inevitably into the hands of our military or air or defence advisers--the so-called experts. It is for them to decide what steps to take, naturally in terms of our broad policies, taking directions from us. But ultimately it is their decision and we have to follow that. We have been doing that and building up our strength from the base upwards. The roads that we decided to build and have built to-day to a considerable extent are over 2000 miles, all roads in mountainous areas. . . . So, that is the broad policy; the rest becomes a question of military tactics, strategy and the resources one has at one's disposal." And still from the same speech: "We have improved our situation in the border very much in the last year and half. I do not say that it is as good as we want it to be, but it will become that good progressively, growing better and better, and our policy can only be to get this vacation by the
Chinese forces from India's territory. We work to that end, and therein we all agree. Ultimately, if you analyse the situation, Sir, it becomes one of, possibly, some military tactics. We may differ on that. I may have some opinion but I have to abide by the opinion of my military advisers. I know they are anxious to achieve results and they are working to that end." The Indian stand on the border question has often, up to this point, recalled their stand on Kashmir; now one thinks of Goa.

Indian notes of 9 December 1961 and 26 February 1962 continued the argument with the Chinese Government about the establishment of fresh posts in the western sector. The latter note stated "The Government of India fail to understand the constant reference by the Government of China to the need for a final settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question. The boundary between the two countries has long been settled. . . . It is the Government of China who have in recent years sought to change unilaterally by means of force the long-existing status quo. . . . Peace on the border and friendly relations between the two countries can never be restored until the Government of China withdraw from the territory of India which they have unlawfully occupied."
The Chinese, who had contributed nothing to the exchange since the end of November 1961 weighed in with a serious note on 1 March 1962. "Indian encroachments and intrusions into Chinese territory...are...deliberate attempts to realise by force the territorial claims put forward by the Indian Government...The Chinese Government have all along insisted on a settlement of the boundary question through friendly negotiations...After these proposals [for an interim arrangement] were rejected by the Indian side, China has on its own stopped patrolling within 20 kms. on its own side of the boundary. The Chinese Government has done this because it is deeply convinced that maintenance of the status quo of the boundary is the only way to avoid military clashes and an indispensable prerequisite to seeking a peaceful settlement of the boundary question...The Indian Government has...refused to hold negotiations...It has actually been undermining the status quo of the boundary [in the Western sector] and nibbling at Chinese territory by unilateral action...In the past year and more, it has shifted its emphasis in occupying China's territory to the western sector...where Indian troops have steadily pushed forward, continually set up new check-posts and extended their scope of patrol of China's territory. As a result, the situation along the Sino-Indian
border, far from easing, has become increasingly tense since the talks between the Prime Ministers in April 1960. In spite of all this, the Chinese Government still hopes that these matters can be settled reasonably through diplomatic channels. . . . Although the Chinese Government does not recognize the so-called McMahon Line . . . it has strictly restrained all its military and administrative personnel from crossing this line. If, like the Indian Government, the Chinese Government had also taken unilateral actions to violate the status quo of the boundary, what would the relations between the two countries have been like? The Chinese Government has not done so and considers that it should not do so. . . . As far as the Chinese side is concerned, the door for negotiations is always open. . . . However long it may be deferred, the boundary question between China and India will have to be settled peacefully some day. . . . An early settlement is better than a late one."

The Indian Government replied on 13 March 1962. "It is the legitimate right, and indeed the duty, of the Government of India to take all necessary measures to safeguard the territorial integrity of India. . . . The Government of China have . . . taken steps which have . . . compelled the Government of India to adopt protective measures to stop further inroads into Indian territory." There had however been no new steps taken by the Chinese Government in the border areas--on 2 May 1962 Mr. Nehru was able to assure the
House "Since October last there has been no material change in the border situation." Unmindful of Mr. Nehru's earlier admissions about the date of the Chinese entry into Aksai Chin, the note of 13 March continued "Since 1957, Chinese forces have begun a process of intrusion and occupation in the Aksai Chin area of Ladakh"--and with a further flight from fact into fancy "the traditional boundary of India as shown on official Indian maps has been confirmed by tradition, recognized by custom and defined by treaty. Even the Government of China recognised this." The note repeated, in even clearer terms than in the previous December, the Indian position on negotiations. "The Government of India cannot accept that the entire boundary between India and China has not been delimited and should be the subject of negotiations." They could consider "minor mutual adjustments in a few areas of the border." But "a restoration of the status quo through the withdrawal of Chinese forces from Indian territory, into which they have intruded since 1957, is an essential step for the creation of a favourable climate for any negotiations between the two Governments regarding the boundary." This is the first explicit statement that a total evacuation of all territory claimed as Indian was a precondition for substantive talks on the main issues of the border question.

The Chinese reply of 22 March 1962 restated the Chinese position and made a profession of peaceful coexistence. "The socialist system chosen by the people of China determines
that China does not need war, that it would never permit itself to, nor should it ever nor will it ever seize a single inch of a neighbouring country's territory. What China needs from the new-born Asian countries . . . is friendship. China is ready to live in unity with these countries, settle with them the question left over by history and together with them enter the new era of peace and prosperity in Asia. China has never regarded India as its enemy, nor will it ever do so. . . . There is no conflict of fundamental interests between China and India. The Chinese Government still believes that the Sino-Indian boundary question, though encountering difficulties at the present time, must be, and entirely can be, settled in a friendly way through peaceful negotiations. . . . The Chinese Government still hopes that negotiations will continue between the two sides. It is clear that to refuse to maintain the status quo and reject negotiations is to reject a peaceful settlement. Such an important question as the Sino-Indian boundary question should not be treated so lightly. As far as the Chinese side is concerned, the door for negotiations is always open."

The Indian reply of 30 April 1962 repeated their position that a Chinese withdrawal from all territory claimed by India must precede any negotiations. (The note contains a number of further statements which illustrate the state of hallucination in which the Indians were acting at this time. "To say . . . that a Sino-Indian boundary dispute existed earlier than 1959 is contrary to facts.
The records of British rule in India show that the British far from expanding into Tibet or Sinkiang region actually helped the Chinese to consolidate their authority in these regions. It is clear that so far as past history is concerned, there is nothing to show that there was ever a Sino-Indian boundary question. The only legacy left by history in this respect is an unbroken tradition of friendship between the two countries based on mutual respect for a firm, delimited boundary."
On 30 April 1962 the Chinese Government informed the Indian Government that they were resuming patrols in the western sector and might do so along the whole border. Their note alleged that two new Indian posts had been established on either side of a Chinese post, in the western sector; and that there had been 18 Indian intrusions in this area between 11 and 27 April 1962. "Should the Indian Government refuse to withdraw its aggressive posts and continue to carry out provocation against the Chinese post, the Chinese frontier guards will be compelled to defend themselves." The note stated that the Chinese policy of a unilateral suspension of patrols within 20 kms. of the border in the past two years "has not reaped the expected results . . .; the Indian side, taking advantage of the cessation of patrols by Chinese frontier guards, has been pressing forward steadily. . . . In these circumstances, the Chinese Government . . . has ordered Chinese frontier guards to resume border patrols in the sector from Karakoram Pass to Kongka Pass. . . . The Chinese Government still believes that cessation of border patrols
by both India and China will help maintain the status quo of the boundary and will create a favourable atmosphere for the peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question. If India withdraws from Chinese territory the military posts it has set up and no longer makes intrusions into China, the Chinese Government will renew its efforts for the realisation of the above proposition. However, if India continues to invade and occupy China's territory and expand the area of its intrusion and harassment on China's border, the Chinese Government will be compelled to consider the further step of resuming border patrols along the entire Sino-Indian boundary."

It was no doubt with the terms of this note in mind that Mr. Nehru, with unaccustomed objectivity, said in Parliament on 2 May 1962 "The fact is that we also take many steps to strengthen ourselves, to make fresh posts. If you start thinking as the Chinese do--they start thinking on the assumption that the territory in Ladakh, specially in the Aksai Chin area, is theirs and has been theirs--well, everything that we do there is an offence to them. But if we start on the basis of thinking of that territory as ours, as it is, then everything that the Chinese do is an offence. It depends on with what presumption you have started."
The Indian Government replied on 14 May 1962. Their note invited reconsideration of Mr. Nehru's proposal of 16 November 1959, which it reformulated:

"... that, in the Ladakh region, the Government of India should withdraw their personnel to the west of the line shown in the 1956 Chinese map and the Government of China should withdraw their personnel to the east of the international boundary shown in Indian official maps. This will apply not only to armed but also to unarmed and administrative personnel which should be withdrawn and the entire area between the boundaries claimed by the two sides left unoccupied. The adoption of this suggestion will lead to the relaxation of tension in this border region and create the necessary atmosphere for settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary problem by negotiations and discussions. The Government of India are prepared ... to permit, pending negotiations and settlement of the boundary question, the continued use of the Aksai Chin road for Chinese civilian traffic."

The note once again made no reference to the Chinese objections to this proposal or to their counterproposals. Civilian use of the road could scarcely be expected to satisfy the Chinese military command in Western Tibet. Nevertheless, it was evidently a serious proposal, as Mr. Nehru made clear to the Lok Sabha the same day. "We had suggested at one time that they should withdraw according to our maps and we should withdraw according to their maps, leaving the area between which is unadministered. It does not very much matter because it is mountain area where very few people dwell. These
are important and strategic areas but no administration existed there and none is necessary for the time being.

... This applies, may I say, entirely to the Ladakh area and not the eastern area at all, because we are not going to withdraw in the east. In the Ladakh area it meant a very small withdrawal for us--a few villages--and it meant a large withdrawal for them." After referring to the proposal for the continued use of the road, he said with reference to the offer as a whole "I think that was a very fair offer which they did not accept. I still think that is a fair offer. That would immediately give us a base for talks, because without a base one cannot talk merely repeating our respective claims." However mistaken, that was certainly sincere.

The Chinese Government replied on 2 June 1962 restating their earlier objections to Mr. Nehru's proposal. It went on to state that "the most urgent problem in the current Sino-Indian border situation is that the Indian side persists in changing by force the status quo of the Sino-Indian boundary and setting up military strongpoints. ... The Chinese Government consistently stands for a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question through negotiations. Even now ... the door for negotiations is still open so far as the Chinese side is concerned. However, China will never submit before any threat of force."
Throughout the month of May the Chinese Government continued to complain of Indian movements and new posts on what they claimed as Chinese territory in the western sector. The Indian Government protested on 16 June at the setting up of a new Chinese post in the Ladakh area, the first such allegation since the resumption of Chinese patrols on 30 April. On 20 June Mr. Nehru told the Lok Sabha "The fact of the matter is that in this area all kinds of movements are taking place by us as well as by the Chinese authorities. Because of our movements, sometimes going behind the Chinese posts, some apprehension has been created in the minds of the Chinese, and they have also moved. To call them fresh incursions is hardly correct, though it may be an area of half a mile or two miles or something like that has taken place. But I can assure the House that the position as it is is more advantageous to India than it was previously, and the advantage is growing as our roads are being made and other facilities of communication are being established. . . . There have been movements, patrols coming, our movements and theirs. Naturally, our movements are not referred to \[In the the Indian notes, in the White Paper just published, which was the occasion for the statement\]. Theirs are referred to in our notes to the Chinese Government.
But broadly speaking there has been no real advance. They may have moved a few hundred yards this way or that. This is manoeuvring for better positions." This was the first admission of the establishment of Indian posts behind the Chinese posts.
Throughout July the protests at fresh incursions came thick and fast on both sides. The positions of the two sides were now not merely in direct confrontation: they were beginning to interlock. On 10 July a Chinese note complained of three new Indian posts on the Sinkiang border, a new strongpoint west of the Spanggur Lake threatening a Chinese post and a new block-house southwest of the Kongka Pass. On 12 July an Indian note complained of seven new Chinese posts in the Chip Chap River Valley region, one near the Spanggur Lake and one near the Kongka Pass. "Recent Chinese moves have again given the lie to their much vaunted claims of maintaining the status quo on the border and of not sending forward patrols." But this overlooks the notification made by the Chinese on 30 April that they were resuming forward patrols in the sector from the Karakoram Pass to the Kongka Pass. "The Government of India . . . urgently call upon the Government of China . . . to withdraw from Indian territory and restore the status quo on the border as it prevailed until the Chinese aggressive activities in the last few years." It was however the Indian
policy of pushing forward, initiated in 1961 and still in force, rather than the Chinese policy of staying put, adopted in 1960 and maintained up to 20 April 1962, which had altered the *status quo* in the border area in recent years.

On 13 July the Chinese Government alleged that a further Indian reinforcement in the Galwan Valley had cut off the Chinese post there for eight days. "India aims not only to assert its territorial claims on China by armed force, but also deliberately to provoke an armed clash on the border so as to create an anti-Chinese atmosphere. . . . The Chinese Government is extremely unwilling to see any unfortunate incident occurring on the Sino-Indian border." A further Chinese note of 16 July protested against three new Indian posts in the Pangong Lake area and concluded "The Indian side will make a fatal mistake if it should think that China is flabby and can be bullied in view of her self-restraint and forbearance and persist in its act of playing with fire in an attempt to assert its territorial claims by armed force. The Chinese Government sternly demand that the Indian Government immediately withdraw its aggressive strongpoints and stop all its intrusions and provocations."

On 21 July shots were exchanged, for the first time since October 1959, in the Chip Chap Valley. There were no casualties.
Each side accused the other of opening fire. The Chinese note of protest, dated 21 July, concluded with a warning. "At this critical moment the Chinese Government demands that the Indian Government immediately order the Indian troops to stop attacking the aforesaid Chinese troops and withdraw from the area lest the situation be further aggravated. If the Indian Government should ignore the warning of the Chinese Government and continue to persist in its own way India must bear full responsibility for all the consequences that may arise therefrom."

On 26 July the Indian Government sent a second note on the 21 July incident, denying the Chinese charges and restating the Indian version of the affair. The note closed with a renewed offer for talks. Under close scrutiny this is seen to be a restatement of their consistent position, without constituting any new departure. "The Government of India are prepared, as soon as the current tensions have eased and the appropriate climate is created, to enter into further discussions on the India-China boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials as contemplated during the meeting of Prime Minister Chou En-lai with the Prime Minister of India in 1960. The Government of India hope that the Government of China will give a positive response to the concrete suggestions made by the Government of India for relaxation of the current tensions
and for creation of the right climate for negotiations." In other words, the Indians were ready for talks, but if there were to be talks, the right climate must first be created, and the right climate required the prior evacuation by the Chinese of territory claimed as Indian.

The exchange of notes on border incidents in the western sector continued. The Indians accused the Chinese of opening fire, which the Indians did not return, on 27 and 29 July. On 1 August the Chinese Government complained that in the twelve days from 16 July there had been five incidents in which the Indians had opened fire, and that six new strongpoints had been set up in the Pangong Lake area. In notes of 1 and 4 August they accused the Indians of opening fire in the Galwan Valley on 31 July and 1 August and went on to review recent developments. "After the officials' meeting of the two countries [which ended in December 1960] Indian troops first stepped up their encroachment on the Demchok area in Tibet, and then, since last spring, they have successively intruded into such areas as the Chip Chap Valley, the source of the Karakash River, and the Galwan River valley in Sinkiang, and the Pangong and Spanggur Lakes in Tibet. They have successively set up 27 military strongpoints on
Chinese territory and more and more frequently resorted to armed threats against Chinese frontier guards by unwarranted firings which have occurred on 12 occasions up to now." The note went on to take up the offer of talks made in the Indian note of 26 July. "The Chinese Government approves of the suggestion put forth by the Indian Government in its note for further discussions on the Sino-Indian boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials of the two countries. There need not and should not be any pre-conditions for such discussions. As a matter of fact, if only the Indian side stop advancing into Chinese territory, a relaxation of the border situation will be effected at once. Since neither the Chinese nor the Indian Government wants war, and since both Governments want to settle the boundary question peacefully through negotiations, further discussions on the Sino-Indian boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials of the two countries should not be put off any longer. The Chinese Government proposes that such discussions be held as soon as possible, and that the level, date, place and other procedural matters for these discussions be immediately decided upon by consultations through diplomatic channels."

A statement by Mr. Nehru on 6 August confirmed that the Indian forward movements were continuing in the western
sector. "During the last session of Parliament, I referred to the measures taken by Government to stop further Chinese advances into Indian territory. These steps continue to be taken by our Government, and a number of military posts have been established. It may be said that it is very difficult for Chinese forces to advance now, because of the establishment of Indian posts at various points, without an actual conflict between the two." This fits in with the Chinese complaints of being increasingly hemmed in. "It is in this context,"

Mr. Nehru went on, "that the strong and almost abusive Chinese notes must be interpreted. . . . In recent weeks Chinese troops in superior strength have sometimes come up close to our posts with a view to harassing them and intimidating them." He said that this had happened in the Galwan Valley and to a lesser extent in the Chip Chap Valley and in the Pangong Lake area.

In a further statement on 14 August Mr. Nehru said "Somebody said that we have allowed nine new Chinese posts. That is true, and yet it gives a completely wrong idea of what the position is. If they have got 9 posts, we have got 22 or 23 or 24, I do not know how many, three times the number. These posts of theirs are projections, patrol projections of their own posts. They have not gone very far. In fact, it may be said that ever since we got there with our posts, it
has been exceedingly difficult for them to advance further. They may advance a mile outside their own posts, a mile or two, that is a different matter, just as we can advance and we do advance, but broadly speaking we have held them in check, there, and there can be no further advance by them without a major conflict. . . . We built a kind of rampart on this part of Ladakh, and put up numerous military posts, small ones and big ones. It is true that these posts are in constant danger of attack with larger numbers. Well, it does not matter. We have taken the risk and we have moved forward, and we have stopped effectively their further march. If anybody takes the trouble to read the numerous letters of protest that we have received from the Chinese authorities, he will see how angry they have been at our establishing these posts, how they have said, 'You are trying to cut us off; you are trying to encircle us.' The same thing that was said on our side about them are repeated by them about us." He revealed that he had himself told the Chinese Ambassador "that it was drifting badly and the least he could do was to avoid incidents . . . otherwise it would be drifting to war"; and that Mr. Krishna Menon, on his instructions had spoken to the Chinese Foreign Minister at Geneva—"at that time some little
firing had taken place in the Galwan Valley. I told him he must tell them that this thing was drifting and if they were not careful there would be war." Later in the same speech he said "In the mountains, in Ladakh, the situation has arisen and we face it and we will continue to face it and continue to get over it and to push them out. That is a different matter. It may last years. I am not thinking of this crisis being resolved suddenly." In a retrospective statement on 14 November 1962 Mr. Nehru said "We put up those posts to check their advance and they did check their advance. In fact, we pushed them back a little".

The Chinese Government accused the Indians of opening fire on 13 August, in the Galwan Valley, and the Indian Government accused the Chinese of opening fire on 14 August in the Pangong Lake area. An Indian note of 22 August complained of 18 new Chinese military posts in the western sector--10 in the Chip Chap region, 2 in the Galwan Valley region, 4 in the Pangong-Spanggur region and 2 in the Karakash region--"in menacing proximity to existing Indian defense posts in the area."

The Indian Government sent their reply on the question of talks on 22 August. With a logical somersault, they argued that the Chinese refusal to accept the Indian proposal for
withdrawal in the western sector constituted a precondition for the resumption of talks. The Indian position was stated as follows: "It will be clear . . . that an essential preliminary to the holding of further discussions on the basis of the report of the officials of the two sides with a view to resolving differences between the two governments on the boundary question is a definition of measures that should be taken to restore the status quo of the boundary in this region [the western sector] which has been altered by force during the last five years and to remove the current tensions in this area so as to create the necessary climate for purposeful discussions. The Government of India would be glad to receive a representative of the Government of China to discuss these essential preliminary measures." This statement of the Indian position, though more involved than before, was still clear. The basic position remained unchanged. The only talks that the Indians were offering were talks to discuss the appropriate measures to be taken in the western sector to create the right climate for substantive talks on the main boundary question. They had already made it clear that by appropriate measures they meant evacuation by the Chinese of territory claimed as Indian. This precondition however had stood rejected by the Chinese Government since December 1959.
A Chinese note of 27 August reviewed recent incidents and gave a further warning. "The Chinese Government reiterates that the Sino-Indian boundary question must be settled through negotiations and the Indian Government's attempt to realise its ambitious territorial claims by force and to coerce China into submission is bound to fail. If the Indian side should overdo it, the Chinese side will have to resort to self-defence, and the Indian side must bear responsibility for all the consequences arising therefrom."

Shots were fired in the Karakash River area on 26 August, each side accusing the other of opening fire and claiming that it had not been returned. Shots were exchanged in the Chip Chap Valley on 2 September, both Governments protesting. An Indian note of 6 September complained that five Chinese posts had been set up since July 1962 round an Indian defence post in the Galwan Valley and concluded with a warning. "The Government of India . . . have so far themselves refrained from taking any steps which could further aggravate the situation. However, if Chinese forces should persist in their illegal encroachments on Indian defence posts, the responsibility for any consequences that might arise therefrom will rest solely on the Chinese Government."
It is necessary to consider at this point what the resumption of Chinese patrols in the forward area since 30 April amounted to in practice. A Chinese note of 20 September admitted that the new policy included the setting up of additional posts. Was this within the framework of their existing positions, a filling up of gaps and a consolidation? Or did it amount to an expansion of the area of the Chinese Government's occupation? The Indian Government's notes to the Chinese Government favour the latter interpretation; for example, they alleged that Chinese posts were first established in the Chip Chap Valley in July 1962. Indian Government spokesmen in the Lok Sabha have however insisted that the new Chinese posts did not constitute an advance. On 3 September the Minister of State for External Affairs said "the total number of these posts established by the Chinese since May 1962 comes to 30. . . . A large number of these posts, particularly those established in recent months, are extensions of old posts a few miles further and generally within the defensive perimeter of the earlier posts. This is the case particularly in the region of Daulat Beg Oldhi [In the Karakash Valley] and the Chip Chap river valley where the Chinese posts are separated only by short distance from each other. In the
Galwan river valley there are a number of Chinese posts that are close together and are interconnected. These . . . hamper our line of supply to our post by the land route." On the same occasion Mr. Krishna Menon said "The establishment of these posts does not mean advance into our territory." And again "There are no posts put up by the Chinese which represent advances into our territory."
A Chinese note of 10 September complained of 6 new Indian posts in the western sector, making 34 in all. "It was India which, having occupied much territory in the eastern and middle sectors of the Sino-Indian border, turned to press forward into Chinese territory in the western sector of the Sino-Indian border, establishing more aggressive strongpoints and nibbling at Chinese territory. The Indian press has boasted that this was a 'unique triumph for an audacious Napoleonic planning'; and Prime Minister Nehru himself openly admitted in the Indian parliament that 'our movements sometimes go behind the Chinese positions,' and that 'India has opened some new patrol posts endangering the Chinese posts.' One must ask: How can this be called defensive measures? Can this be the 'peaceful objectives' flaunted by the Indian Government? If the Indian Government really has any sincerity for peace, it should, in deeds, immediately stop its intrusions and withdraw its aggressive strongpoints from Chinese territory."

It is correct that on 20 June Mr. Nehru spoke in Parliament of "our movements, sometimes going behind the Chinese posts"; but "new patrol posts endangering the Chinese posts" is not a
direct quotation from any of his speeches in the Lok Sabha, though the words may perhaps have been used in some other forum.

An Indian note of 12 September, though not in answer to the foregoing, amounts to a reply to it. "Chinese forces have not only intruded deep inside Indian territory but there has been no halt in their incessant aggressive forward patrolling and setting up of new posts on Indian territory. It is in the context of these aggressive Chinese activities that Government of India had to take action to prevent further violations of India's territory. This is a purely defensive measure. It is the Chinese who continue their aggressive activities and who have in recent months deliberately manoeuvred to encircle Indian defence posts, to interfere with their line of supply and communications and to resort to unprovoked firing causing clashes and tension in the area."

A Chinese note of 13 September complaining of 4 new Indian posts and 6 incidents in which shots had been fired closed with another warning. "The Indian Government should be aware that shooting and shelling are no child's play; and he who plays with fire will eventually be consumed by fire. If the Indian side should insist on threatening by armed
force the Chinese border defence forces who are duty-bound to defend their territory and thereby arouse their resistance, it must bear the responsibility for all the consequences arising therefrom."

A further note of the same date gave the Chinese Government's reply on the question of talks, but it is preferable to give an account of this in the context of developments in the eastern sector, which now assumed the greater importance. The account of events in the western sector up to 20 October is completed here for convenience.

There was a clash between patrols in the Pangong Lake area on 19 September at which both Governments protested. Indian notes of 21 September and 11 October complained of 4 new Chinese posts in the Chip Chap valley, 1 in the Karakash valley and 2 in the Pangong Lake area. Chinese notes of 24 September and 4 October complained of 1 new Indian post in the Chip Chap valley and 2 in the Pangong Lake area. A further Chinese note of 12 October complained of incidents on 28 September and 3 and 4 October in the Galwan valley.
crossed this international boundary at any point, much less constructed barracks and defence works on the Chinese side. Such defence arrangements as exist are entirely on the Indian side of the boundary. It is not the Indian side that is creating tension in this border area which has been peaceful all along. Reports received by the Government of India from their local authorities indicate that it is the Chinese who have been attempting, since the beginning of September, to cross the international boundary, intrude into Indian territory and to create tension in this border region. . . . The Government of India will hold the Chinese Government responsible for any untoward incident that may occur due to the failure of the Chinese authorities to restrain their forces from crossing the border and attempting to intrude into the Indian territory in this region."

Press reports were circulating in Delhi as early as 12 September that the Chinese forces were not merely "attempting to cross" the Thangla Ridge but had already done so. These reports were at first denied by the Indian Ministry of Defence but were confirmed on 14 September.

Later, after the defeat of 20-24 October, the Indian Government stated as a clear fact that Chinese troops crossed the Thangla Ridge on 8 September and represented this as a turning-point. On 8 November Mr. Nehru told the Lok Sabha "It is true that when we heard on the 8th September of their coming over the Thangla Pass into our territory in some force,
we had quite adequate forces in our posts. We had no doubt some forces there to meet any incursions, but if large forces came over, an ordinary military post can hardly resist them. We took immediate steps to send further forces to reinforce our posts, . . . . The Chinese also started increasing their forces there." On 14 November Mr. Nehru wrote to Mr. Chou En-lai "Apart from the Chinese claims regarding the territorial boundary in various sectors of the India-China boundary, one fact stands out quite clearly. This is the basic fact that till the 8th September, 1962, no Chinese forces had crossed the frontier between India and China in the eastern sector as defined by India, that is, along the highest watershed in the region, in accordance with the Agreement of 1914. It was on 8th September, 1962, that your forces crossed this frontier and threatened the Dhola [i.e. Che Dong] frontier post of India. We took limited defensive measures to reinforce this post and at the same time made repeated approaches to the Chinese Government to withdraw their forces beyond the Thag La ridge which is the frontier in this region."

It was against the background of these events that a further exchange of notes took place on the question of talks. On 13 September the Chinese Government replied to the Indian Government's note of 22 August. The two main paragraphs read as follows:

"In China's opinion it is, after all, not good to maintain prolonged border tension between the two big Asian countries,
China and India. With a view to easing the border tension the Chinese Government once again proposes that the armed forces of each side withdraw 20 kms. along the entire border. It believes that the implementation of this measure will not only immediately ease the border tension but also in a way stabilise the Sino-Indian boundary, pending a peaceful settlement through negotiations."

"The Chinese Government still considers that the Chinese and Indian Governments should quickly hold further discussions on the Sino-Indian boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials of the two countries without setting any pre-conditions. . . . It formally proposes that the two Governments appoint representatives to start these discussions from October 15 first in Peking and then in Delhi, alternately."

The Indian Government replied on 19 September. They said that the Chinese proposal for a reciprocal 20 km. withdrawal "suffers from the serious defect that it leaves the aggressor . . . in possession of the fruits of his aggression." The essence of their note is contained in two paragraphs:

"The Government of India are prepared to hold further discussions at the appropriate level to define measures to restore the status quo in the western sector which has been altered by force in the last few years and to remove the current tensions in that area. The implementation of such measures will create a climate of confidence between the two Governments which alone can make possible constructive discussions to
resolve the differences between the two Governments on the boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials.

"The Government of India are agreeable to these discussions starting from 15th. October, first in Peking and then in Delhi. The Government of India will take further action to discuss and settle the details of these discussions through appropriate channels after the Government of China indicate their acceptance of the proposals in the preceding paragraph."

A Chinese note of 20 September complained of Indian reinforcements and further defence works at Che Dong and charged that on 17 September the Indian forces carried out a small raid on the Chinese post there. A note of 21 September alleged that on 20 September the Indian troops attacked a Chinese sentry post near the Che-jao bridge and that on 20 and 21 September they opened fire, which was returned. It was a small affair, in this account 60 rounds fired by the Indians, 4 by the Chinese, with one Chinese killed and one wounded. The Indian Government replied the same day that it was the Chinese who had opened fire. Three Indian soldiers were injured.

The Chinese note of 20 September went on to announce the resumption of patrols in the eastern and middle sectors. "In order to ease the tension and avoid clashes on the Sino-Indian border, the Chinese Government once unilaterally stopped sending its patrols to the area within 20 kms. on its own side of the entire boundary. However, the Indian side took advantage of
this situation and steadily pressed forward into Chinese territory. The Chinese Government, bearing the sacred duty of defending China's territory and maintaining tranquillity on its border, cannot remain indifferent to the intensified aggressive activities of the Indian side. In order to prevent Indian troops from further nibbling Chinese territory and carrying out armed provocations, the Chinese frontier guards were ordered to resume border patrolling and set up additional posts in the western sector. Now the Indian side, instead of ceasing its aggressive activities in the western sector, has extended them to the eastern and middle sectors. In view of this, the Chinese frontier guards have been ordered to take the same defensive measures in the eastern and middle sectors as in the western sector. The position of the Chinese Government for a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question through negotiations is consistent and remains unchanged. However, should the Indian side continue its intrusion into Chinese territory and carry on its provocations in disregard of the protests and warnings of the Chinese Government, the Indian Government must be held fully responsible for the consequences arising therefrom."

The Indian Government replied on 25 September to this warning, without mentioning the resumption of patrols. "The Indian defence forces have firm instructions to remain within Indian frontiers. They are unmistakably clear as to where the frontier lies in this region. No amount of confused allegations
or aggressive threats, as indicated in the Chinese notes, will deter them from resisting with firmness any violation of the Indian border by Chinese forces whether here or elsewhere. The Government of India hope that the Chinese Government will even now pause and consider the factual position of the boundary in the area where their forces are carrying on their aggressive activities in Indian territory, stop making unwarranted threats, and issue immediate instructions to their intruding forces to cease their aggressive activities on Indian territory and direct them to return to Chinese territory across the frontier to the North of Thagla Ridge. . . . The Government of India will hold the Chinese Government responsible for all the consequences that flow from this deliberate aggression and unwarranted attacks by Chinese forces on Indian forces in Indian territory."

Further Chinese notes of 25, 28 and 29 September gave details of more incidents between 21 and 29 September in which the Indians were represented as opening fire--400 rounds on 21 September, 700 rounds on 25 September--and the Chinese as returning fire in self-defence. There were 3 Chinese killed and 2 wounded on 24 September, 1 killed and 1 wounded on 25 September. The Indian Government sent notes on 25 and 28 September and 1 October discussing the 20 September incident but making no mention of the further incidents between 21 and 29 September.
The circumstantial accounts of these incidents given in the Chinese notes and the unwonted reticence of the Indian Government at the time suggest that the fighting at the Thangla Ridge in September 1962 was not the result of deliberate Chinese aggression or even of Chinese probing attacks preparatory to a later attack. There is insufficient evidence to show that it was the consequence of a new move forward in the Indian Government's policy of pushing the Chinese out. Certainly, in the situation on the ground at the time, with both sides reinforcing in expectation of being attacked, a clash which neither side had planned was always possible.
XXVI.

THE EASTERN SECTOR: 1-10 OCTOBER 1962

A Chinese note of 3 October replied to the Indian note of 19 September on the question of talks "The Chinese Government has never made restoration of the original state of the boundary a pre-condition for the holding of boundary negotiations between China and India. The Chinese Government holds that no pre-conditions should be set for the negotiations of the boundary question. . . . The Indian Government however insists on a pre-condition for the discussions on the boundary question, namely that the so-called status quo of the Sino-Indian boundary in the western sector as conceived by India must first be restored, which means that China must withdraw from vast tracts of its own territory before discussions on the Sino-Indian boundary question can start. This is absolutely unacceptable to the Chinese Government. . . . The Chinese Government is against setting any pre-conditions for the discussions on the Sino-Indian boundary question. But it does not object to discussing any question the Indian side may raise during the discussions on the Sino-Indian boundary question. The Indian side says that only certain questions concerning the western sector of the boundary will be discussed. Why only discuss the western sector? The eastern sector being the most pressing question at present, what reason is there for not discussing it? The Chinese Government now once again proposes that discussions
on the Sino-Indian boundary question be started at once between the two Governments on the basis of the report of the officials of the two sides; that during the discussions questions concerning the middle and eastern sectors of the boundary must be discussed as well as those concerning the western sector, in a word, that neither side should refuse to discuss any question concerning the Sino-Indian boundary that may be raised by the other side. As regards the concrete arrangement, the Chinese Government has noted that the Indian Government has agreed to the proposal for holding discussions from October 15 first in Peking and then in Delhi, alternately. The Chinese Government is prepared to receive on October 15 the representative to be sent by the Indian side."

The Indian Government replied on 6 October. "The Government of India regret that the Chinese Government have not only turned down the proposal to hold further discussions regarding measures to remove the current tensions in the western sector . . . but categorically have stated that any consideration of measures for restoration of the status quo of the boundary unilaterally altered by force is absolutely unacceptable to the Chinese Government. How can any talks take place in the context of this pre-condition?" (There has been some twisting of the Chinese Government's actual words here.) " . . . The Chinese forces have, during the last month, . . . intruded into Indian territory in the eastern sector and have been attacking Indian
territory since 20th. September. ... The Government of China ... are now arguing, on the basis of tensions created by their deliberate aggression, that the eastern sector being the most pressing sector at present, should also be discussed. The Government of India will not enter into any talks and discussions under duress or continuing threat of force. The latest Chinese intrusion must be terminated first. ... The Government of India are prepared to make necessary arrangements for starting discussions in Peking or in Delhi from a mutually convenient date as soon as the latest intrusion by Chinese forces in Indian territory south of the McMahon Line has been terminated. ... and the Chinese Government indicate their acceptance of the proposal made" in the Indian Government's note of 19 September--and the formula (quoted above in Chapter 24) is repeated.

The Chinese Government interpreted this reply as closing the exchange of notes about a resumption of talks which had begun with the Indian Government's note of 26 July 1962. In a note to the Indian Government of 6 November they said "The Indian Government, in its note of October 6, finally categorically shut the door to negotiations." It seems probable that the Chinese initiated at this time a new phase of active preparations for military action to deal with the situation on the border. On 9 October telegraphic communications between Lhasa, where the Indian Consulate-General was still operating, and the outside world were interrupted and were not restored until 25 October.
The Chinese Government explained that this was due to "telegraphic circuit troubles," but it seems more likely that it was a security measure to cover troop movements.

There are also indications that the Indians on their side were preparing for an imminent move forward on the border in the eastern sector. There was much talk in Delhi at this time about pushing the Chinese back. "The Times" of London reported from Delhi on 4 October "It is understood however that the Indian Government's decision that the Chinese must be pushed back over the Thagla ridge is unaltered, and as the Indian army must by now have had ample time for its deployment, the present lull may presage a storm," on 6 October "The Government's first hope was to squeeze out the intruders and to use the minimum of force in doing so. It was, it is believed, only later, when it appeared that the Chinese were not to be herded out, that the army was ordered to eject them with all necessary force," and on 8 October "The Government of India has committed itself to throwing the Chinese out by military action."

A series of Chinese notes described the next clash that ensued in the Thagla Ridge area. 6 October: "In the past few days, the Indian troops have again expanded the scope of their encroachment and set up three more aggressive strongpoints in the Che Dong area giving locations. What is even more serious, the Indian troops have become increasingly unbridled in their armed provocations." 10 October: "On 9th. October 1962 a batch of the Indian troops which had intruded into the
Che Dong area north of the 'McMahon Line' crossed the upper reach of the Kechilang river to establish an aggressive strong point at Chihtung (more than 4 kms. north west of Che Dong). At 09.20 hours on 10th. October the aggressive Indian troops launched from Chihtung a fierce attack on the Chinese frontier guards stationed near Chihtung, killing and wounding 11 Chinese frontier guards. The Chinese frontier guards were compelled to act in self defence; by the afternoon of the 10th., the fighting was still on. At 09.40 hours on the same day, the Indian troops which had intruded into and stationed in Che Dong fired provocative shots at the Chinese frontier guards stationed at Paitsai, which is opposite to Che Dong across the river."

11 October: "The Indians troops . . . continued their frenzied attack and killed and wounded 22 more Chinese frontier guards. The Chinese frontier guards having suffered severe casualties were compelled to strike back in self defence. The aggressive Indian troops fled to the southern bank of the Kechilang river when their attack was thwarted and left behind them 6 corpses and some arms and ammunition." 13 October: "The Indian troops . . . on October 11 intruded into the area . . . to the east and north of the lower reaches of the river. The aggressive Indian troops concerned advanced on the local Chinese frontier posts, with some of them coming as close as 30 meters of the positions of the Chinese frontier guards, and attempted to make an attack. Meanwhile, aggressive Indian troops have been continually
airdropped in the Changto area north of the illegal McMahon Line in preparation for war."

The Indian Government waited until 16 October before giving their account of this affair in the diplomatic correspondence with the Chinese Government and then contented themselves with a single reference to it." The clash on the 10th. of October occurred in an area approximately 2 miles to the north-west of the Dhola Indian post /I.e. Che Dong/. The Chinese threw a grenade at the Indian post at 20.30 hours on the 9th. October. Next morning they followed this up with a severe attack using 2-inch mortar guns, automatic weapons and grenades. The Indian defence forces had to return the Chinese fire in self-defence. In the fighting that ensued, the Indian forces suffered 17 casualties."

These accounts suggest that the clash which reached its climax on 10 October was due to an Indian push forward. "The Times" correspondent in Delhi reported on 12 October that the Indian Government, "having given orders that the Chinese must be thrown back over the border, has been showing signs of impatience" at the delay. The same day Mr. Nehru "confirmed" to journalists that "the Indian army had been ordered to clear the Chinese from Indian territory which they are occupying south of the McMahon Line." "I cannot fix a date," he is reported to have said, "that is entirely for the military."
20 October 1962 marked a turning-point in the history of the border question. The Chinese Government were the first to give their version of what happened, in a note dated 20 October. "The Chinese Government received successive urgent reports from the Chinese frontier guards on October 20th. to the effect that Indian troops had launched massive general attacks against Chinese frontier guards in both Eastern and Western sectors of the Sino-Indian border simultaneously.

... In the Eastern sector, the Indian forces of aggression had in the three days since 17th. October repeatedly directed vehement artillery bombardments against the Chinese frontier guards between Kalung and the Sechang lake in the upper reaches of the Kechilang river, and in the Che-jao bridge area in the middle reaches of the river in the Chedong area in China's Tibet region. At the same time great number of Indian troops had moved continuously to concentrate at Pankangting south of the Chedong bridge. At 7 o'clock (Peking time) in the morning of 20th. October the aggressive Indian forces, under cover of fierce artillery fire launched massive attacks against the Chinese frontier guards all along the Kechilang river and in
the Khinzemane area. In the Western sector the Indian forces of aggression entrenched in the Chip Chap Valley and the Galwan Valley in Sinkiang also launched general attack early in the morning of the 20th. against Chinese frontier guards under the cover of fierce gun fire. Two days before that is on 18th. October the Indian forces occupying the Chip Chap Valley had already begun closing in on the Chinese frontier posts in preparation for these attacks. The above mentioned frenzied attacks by the aggressive Indian forces on Chinese territory in both eastern and western sectors of the Sino-Indian boundary have caused heavy casualties to the Chinese frontier guards. Pressed beyond the limits of forebearance and forced to where no further retreat was possible the Chinese frontier guards were compelled to strike back in self-defence."

The Indian Government replied in a note of 26 October. "At 0500 on 20th. October Chinese intruding forces mounted a fierce offensive with machine gun and heavy mortar fire against Indian defence positions along the Namkha Chu river and also at Khinzemane. The Indian post at Khinzemane was surrounded and wireless contact was lost with the post at 0700 hours the same day. Subsequently the Indian posts at Dhola \[i.e. Che Dong\] and Tsangdhar were overrun by Chinese
troops in major battle offensives. Not only were Indian defence positions on the ground subjected to Chinese attack but Chinese forces also unscrupulously shot down two Indian helicopters which were engaged in evacuating casualties from the area. It will be seen from the above facts that it is Chinese forces and not Indian forces that have 'brazenly unleashed their massive general attacks'. . . . In the Western sector also, Chinese intruding forces similarly launched a series of planned attacks from the evening of 19th. October. Fighting in this area has continued unabated from the 19th. October and Chinese forces have to date over-run several legitimate Indian defence posts in the area. That Chinese attacking forces have been supported by heavy mortar and mountain artillery fire and by tanks indicates beyond doubt that these attacks too form part of a premeditated and large scale Chinese offensive into Indian territory."

Whether or not there was any sort of Indian attack in either sector on 20 October, it is clear that on that day the Chinese forces began a major offensive which had been prepared sufficient time in advance.

The fighting continued for 5 days. Details will not be given here. On 24 October the Chinese advance ceased for the
time being. The Chinese forces had by then evicted the Indian forces from all the new posts in the western sector established since 1959 in the course of the Indian Government's forward policy. In the eastern sector they had cleaned up the Thangla Ridge area and advanced across the McMahon Line as far as Towang; they had freed their positions at Longju; and in the corner near the Burma frontier they had advanced across the McMahon Line to the outskirts of Walong.

On 24 October the Chinese Government issued a statement, the text of which was sent the same day with a letter from Mr. Chou En-lai to Mr. Nehru, the first letter between Prime Ministers since early 1960. The Chinese Government put forward a three-fold proposal "to stop the border clashes, reopen peaceful negotiations and settle the Sino-Indian boundary question":

"1) Both parties affirm that the Sino-Indian boundary question must be settled peacefully through negotiations. Pending a peaceful settlement, the Chinese Government hopes that the Indian Government agree that both parties respect the line of actual control between the two sides along the entire Sino-Indian border, and the armed forces of each side withdraw 20 kms. from this line and disengage.

"2) Provided that the Indian Government agrees to the above proposal, the Chinese Government is willing, through consultation between the two parties, to withdraw its frontier guards in the eastern sector of the border to the north of the line of actual control; at the
same time, both China and India undertake not to cross the line of actual control, i.e. the traditional customary line, in the middle and western sectors of the border. Matters relating to the disengagement of the armed forces of the two parties and the cessation of armed conflict shall be negotiated by officials designated by the Chinese and Indian Government respectively.

"3) The Chinese Government considers that, in order to seek a friendly settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question, talks should be held once again by the Prime Ministers of China and India. At a time considered to be appropriate by both parties, the Chinese Government would welcome the Indian Prime Minister to Peking; if this should be inconvenient to the Indian Government, the Chinese Premier would be ready to go to Delhi for talks."

The Indian Government issued a statement in reply the same day. It set out the Indian Government's position in 7 numbered points. Point (iv) asked the question: what is the 'line of actual control'? Point (v) read in full as follows: "If the Chinese professions of peace and peaceful settlement are really genuine, let them go back at least to the position where they were all along the boundary prior to 8th. September, 1962. India will then be prepared to undertake talks and discussions, at any level mutually agreed, to arrive at agreed measures which should be taken for the easing of tension and correction of the situation created by unilateral forcible alteration of the status quo along the India-China boundary."
This was a modification of the former Indian position on the question of talks. Their precondition for a meeting and talks was no longer a total evacuation of all territory claimed as Indian but only a restoration of the status quo ante 8 September 1962, which would leave the Chinese in possession of the Aksai Chin area; and they were now prepared to discuss the whole frontier, not merely the western sector. But their offer of talks was still confined to preparatory measures for easing tension and did not extend to a settlement of the main issues.

Mr. Chou En-lai's letter covering the Chinese Government statement of 24 October included the sentence "I think we should look ahead, we should take measures to turn the tide." Mr. Nehru replied on 27 October enclosing a copy of the Indian Government statement of 24 October. His letter said "I agree with you that we should look ahead and consider what can be done not merely to turn the tide as you suggest, but to reverse it and make a serious attempt to restore the relations between India and China to the warm and friendly pattern of earlier days and even to improve on that pattern. . . . We are of the considered view that a clear straightforward way of reversing the deteriorating trend in India-China relations
would be for Your Excellency to accept the suggestion made in point (v) of the official reaction of the Government of India and to revert to the position as it prevailed all along the India-China boundary prior to 8th. September 1962."

Mr. Chou's reply of 4 November first answered the question what was the line of actual control mentioned in the Chinese Government's three-point proposal. "The proposal for the armed forces of China and India to withdraw 20 kms. each from the line of actual control and to disengage was first put forward by the Chinese Government ... in my letter to you dated November 7, 1959. Now the Chinese Government has reiterated this proposal. The 'line of actual control' mentioned in the proposal \[5f 24 October 1962\] is basically still the line of actual control as existed between the Chinese and Indian sides on November 7, 1959. To put it concretely, in the eastern sector it coincides in the main with the so-called McMahon Line, and in the western and middle sectors it coincides in the main with the traditional customary line which has consistently been pointed out by China." He urged the merits of his own proposal. "The proposal of the Chinese Government for the armed forces of the two sides to withdraw 20 kms. each from the line of actual control along the entire
boundary and to disengage is precisely designed to create an atmosphere for the peaceful settlement of the boundary question; and even if the boundary question cannot be settled for the time being, avoidance of clashes along the border can be ensured." Of Mr. Nehru's counter-proposal to restore the status quo ante 8 September 1962 he said "Since the state of the Sino-Indian boundary prior to September 8, 1962 has been referred to, I cannot but point out that that state was unfair and pregnant with the danger of border conflict and hence should not be restored."

Both Governments had thus taken a firm stand on the question of interim measures to improve the situation and stop the deteriorating trend. The Chinese Government proposed disengagement on the basis of the status quo of 7 November 1959, i.e. the McMahon Line in the eastern sector and the frontier claimed by China in the middle and western sectors. The issue between them was whether or not the Indians should recover the fruits of their forward policy, the 43 posts established on territory claimed as Chinese in the western sector and the Thangla Ridge area in the eastern. Under both proposals the Chinese would remain in complete possession of the Aksai Chin area and the strategic road.
"The Times" of London reported from Delhi on 29 October 1962: "The Indian Government has accepted an American offer of all assistance to resist and repel the Chinese, and the first air shipments of modern infantry weapons should be arriving in India within a week. The decision to accept American military assistance, reversing policies that India has cherished since she became a nation, was taken formally at a Cabinet meeting to-day, but Mr. Nehru had been convinced already by his service advisers that only with equipment in the quantity and quality that the U.S. could provide would the Indian army be able to defeat the Chinese. When the U.S. Ambassador gave him a letter to-day from President Kennedy offering anything India might need, the Prime Minister's response was immediate acceptance."

The Indian Parliament, which had been in recess during October, held a debate from 8 to 14 November on the motion, which was introduced by Mr. Nehru, "This House affirms the firm resolve of the Indian people to drive out the aggressor from the sacred soil of India, however long and hard the struggle may be." There was impressive unity among the 165 speakers. Towards the end of Mr. Nehru's closing speech he said "I have said that in a war between India and China, it is patent that if you think in terms of victory and defeat--there might be battles and we might push them back, as we hope to--but if either country thinks in terms
of bringing the other to its knees, it manifestly cannot and will not happen. . . . But I appreciate that a war like this cannot be ended as far as I can see by surrender by either party. They are two great countries and neither will surrender. Therefore, some way out has to be found to finish the war in terms honourable to us. We have said that we will finish the war when we liberate our own territory which is in their possession. . . . We have got a big enough task, a tremendous task, which we should realise, to push them back to their own territory from our country. We are going to do it. It is going to be mighty difficult; it might take us a long time." The Government motion was carried unanimously, all standing.

While this debate was in progress, the organ of the Chinese Communist Party, the Peking "People's Daily," came out on 11 November with an editorial accusing the Indian Government of having abandoned non-alignment by accepting American military aid. "Now the Nehru Government is receiving U.S. military aid in addition to economic aid. This is a development of historic significance. It points to the fact that the Nehru Government has finally shed its cloak of non-alignment policy. . . . The more Nehru depends on U.S. imperialism, the greater the need is there for him to meet the needs of U.S. imperialism and persist in opposing China. And the more he persists in opposing China, the greater the need for him to depend on U.S. imperialism. Thus he is caught in a vicious
circle. His gradual shedding of his policy of 'non-alignment' is precisely the inevitable result of his sell-out to U.S. imperialism and his persistent hostility to China. . . . What happened in the past 3 years and more shows conclusively that self-restraint and forbearance exercised time and again by the Chinese Government and people, instead of easing the tense situation on the Sino-Indian border, have whetted the insatiable greed of the expansionists. Hard facts have taught the Chinese people that only by waging hard struggles against these rabid adventurists will it be possible to make them a bit more sober-minded. It seems that the Chinese Government's one-sided desire for peace can hardly make Nehru change his mind. Nevertheless, the Chinese Government and people's firm stand in seeking for a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question will never change. While Nehru is going further and further along the dangerous road of dependence on U.S. imperialism, we ardently hope that all friendly Asian and African countries which cherish Sino-Indian amity, Afro-Asian solidarity and peace in Asia will join in our efforts to bring the Indian Government back to the conference table."

A letter from Mr. Nehru of 14 November transmitted a memorandum giving the Indian Government's considered comments on the Chinese Government's three-point proposal of 24 October. The memorandum concluded as follows: "In short, the Chinese three-point proposal, despite the manner in which it is put forth, is a demand for surrender on terms which have to be
accepted while the Chinese forces in great strength are occupying large areas of Indian territory which they have acquired since their further aggression which commenced on 8th September, 1962, and the massive attack which they started on 20th October, 1962." Mr. Nehru commented in his covering letter "This is a demand to which India will never submit whatever the consequences and however long and hard the struggle may be. We cannot do less than this if we are going to maintain the principles we cherish, namely, peace, good neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence with all our neighbours including China. To do otherwise would mean mere existence at the mercy of an aggressive, arrogant and expansive neighbour."

After a lull of three weeks in the fighting the Chinese advance was resumed on 15 November. In the eastern corner by the Burma border they drove the Indians out of Walong on 18 November. The following day, at the other end of the sector, they broke through the Indian defensive position at Se La, south of Towang. In the western sector the positions remained unchanged.

On 21 November the Chinese Government declared a unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal. After repeating the three-point proposal of 24 October the statement declared the following: "1) Beginning from the day following that of the issuance of the present statement, i.e. from 0000 hours on November 22, 1962, the Chinese frontier guards will cease fire along the entire Indian border. 2) Beginning from December 1, 1962, the Chinese frontier guards will withdraw to positions 20 kms. behind the
line of actual control which existed between China and India on November 7, 1959. In order to ensure the normal movement of the inhabitants of the Sino-Indian border area, forestall the activities of saboteurs and maintain order there, China will set up checkpoints at a number of places on its side of the line of actual control with a certain number of civil police assigned to each checkpoint. The Chinese Government will notify the Indian Government of the location of these checkpoints through diplomatic channels." The statement proposed that officials of the two sides should meet in the various sectors of the border to discuss detailed arrangements. "The Chinese Government sincerely hopes that the Indian Government will make a positive response. Even if the Indian Government fails to make such a response in good time, the Chinese Government will take the initiative to carry out the above-mentioned measures as scheduled." If the Indian troops attacked after the Chinese ceasefire and during the Chinese withdrawal, if they moved back to the McMahon Line and remained on the 'line of actual control' in the middle and western sectors, and if they should reoccupy the Thangla Ridge area and the 43 posts in the western sector--"the Chinese Government solemnly declares that, should the above eventualities occur, China reserves the right to strike back in self-defence, and the Indian Government will be held responsible for all the grave consequences arising therefrom." The statement included near the end a reference to American aid to India. "The
Sino-Indian boundary question is an issue between two Asian countries. China and India should settle this issue peacefully; they should not cross swords on account of this issue and even less allow U.S. imperialism to poke in its hand and develop the present unfortunate border conflict into a war in which Asians are made to fight Asians."
THE RELATION OF THE BORDER QUESTION TO THE
SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE, 1959-1962

The narrative of events is brought to a close at
21 November 1962. It is now necessary to go back and relate
the story of the border dispute to the evolution of the
Sino-Soviet ideological dispute.

The first armed clash on the border, at Longju on
25 August 1959, which brought the India-China border dispute
into full publicity for the first time, occurred as
Mr. Khruschev was preparing for his visit to President Eisenhower.
The build-up for the visit was careful and elaborate; it was
to "melt the ice of the cold war" and usher in a new period
of peaceful competition between the socialist states and
capitalism. The Longju incident struck a most unwelcome
jarring note in the orchestration of publicity. Soviet
displeasure was made evident. Tass came out with a statement
on 9 September 1959, which was carried in "Pravda" and
"Izvestiya". "Certain political circles and the press in
Western countries recently opened up a noisy campaign about an
incident that occurred not long ago on the Chinese-Indian
border, in the region of the Himalayas. This campaign was
obviously directed at driving a wedge between the two largest
states in Asia, the Chinese People's Republic and the Republic of India, whose friendship has great importance in ensuring peace and international cooperation in Asia and in the whole world. Those who inspired it are trying to discredit the idea of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems and to prevent the strengthening of the Asian people's solidarity in the fight to consolidate national independence. Attention is called to the fact that this incident was seized upon by those circles in Western countries, especially in the United States, that are attempting to obstruct the lessening of international tensions and to complicate the situation on the eve of the exchange of visits between Comrade N.S. Khruschev, the Chairman of the U.S.S.R., and D. Eisenhower, the President of the U.S. They calculate that this type of method will paralyze the effort now gaining force in the West, to achieve an understanding with the socialist countries on questions relating to the ending of the 'cold war'. It would be wrong not to express regret that the incident on the Chinese-Indian border took place. The Chinese and Soviet peoples are tied together by indestructible bonds of fraternal friendship based on the great principles of socialist internationalism. Friendly cooperation between the USSR and India according to
the ideas of peaceful coexistence is developing successfully. Attempts to take advantage of the incident that occurred on the Chinese-Indian border for the purpose of fanning the 'cold war' and of disrupting friendships between peoples should be condemned decisively. Soviet leaders express the conviction that the Governments of the Chinese People's Republic and the Republic of India will not let this incident further the aims of those who want the international situation not to improve but to degenerate and who aspire not to permit the emergent lessening of tension in relations between states. The same circles express the conviction that both governments will settle the misunderstanding that has arisen, taking into account their mutual interests in the spirit of the traditional friendship between the peoples of China and India. This will also help strengthen those forces that stand for peace and international cooperation." It is not difficult to read between the lines of this statement and surmise the sort of language that was probably used in the confidential exchanges between Moscow and Peking at the time.

Mr. Khruschev's visit to the United States, which generated the "spirit of Camp David", lasted from 15 to 27 September 1959. Immediately afterwards, and contrary to the
original plan, he visited Peking, from 30 September to
4 October 1959.

An editorial in the Peking "People's Daily" of
27 February 1963, entitled "Whence the differences?--a reply
to Comrade Thorez and other comrades", has revealed both how
much the Tass statement of 9 September 1959 rankled and also
something of the criticisms that were made to the Chinese
leaders at the time. "The truth is that the internal differences
among the fraternal parties were first brought into the open,
not in the summer of 1960, but on the eve of the Camp David
talks in September 1959--on 9th. September 1959, to be exact.
On that day a socialist country, turning a deaf ear to China's
repeated explanations of the true situation and to China's
advice, hastily issued a statement on a Sino-Indian border
incident through its official news agency. Making no
distinction between right and wrong, the statement expressed
'regret' over the border clash and in reality condemned China's
correct stand. They even said that it was 'tragic' and
'deplorable' /not in the Tass statement/. Here is the first
instance in history in which a socialist country, instead of
condemning the armed provocations of the reactionaries of a
capitalist country, condemned another fraternal socialist
country when it was confronted with such armed provocation.
The imperialists and reactionaries immediately sensed that there were differences among the socialist countries, and they made venomous use of this erroneous statement to sow dissension. The bourgeois propaganda machines at that time made a great deal of it, saying that the statement was like a 'diplomatic rocket launched at China' and that 'the language of the statement was to some extent like that of a stern father coldly rebuking a child and telling him to behave himself'. After the Camp David talks, the heads of certain comrades were turned and they became more and more intemperate in their public attacks on the foreign and domestic policies of the Communist Party of China. They publicly abused the Communist Party of China as attempting 'to test by force the stability of the capitalist system', and as 'craving for war like a cock for a fight'..."

The Russian refusal to listen to China's explanations on the border question was also referred to in Wu Hsiu-chuan's statement at the 6th. Congress of the 'Socialist Unity Party of Germany' on 18 January 1963. "The Nehru Government's anti-China campaign and its increasingly reactionary domestic and foreign policies have been aided and abetted by imperialism, U.S. imperialism in particular. It is a matter of regret that
they have also been supported by some self-styled
Marxist-Leninists. Throughout the Sino-Indian boundary
dispute these people have ignored the facts and turned right
and wrong upside down. They have shut their eyes to the
large number of relevant documents made public by socialist
China over the past three years and more, and have turned a
deaf ear to the many notices and explanations given to them
by China."

The Peking "People's Daily" editorial of 31 December 1962
entitled "The differences between Comrade Togliatti and us" brings
out one of the main issues clearly. "To sum up the question of
how to avert world war and safeguard world peace, the Communist
Party of China has consistently stood for the resolute exposure
of imperialism, for strengthening the socialist camp, for firm
support of the national-liberation movements and the people's
revolutionary struggles, for the broadest alliance of all the
peace-loving countries and people of the world, and at the
same time for taking full advantage of the contradictions
among our enemies, and for utilizing the method of negotiation
as well as other forms of struggle. . . . The position taken
by Comrade Togliatti and certain other comrades on the
Sino-Soviet boundary question reflects their point of view on
peaceful coexistence, which is that in carrying out this policy
the socialist countries should make one concession after
another to the capitalist countries, should not fight even
in self-defence when subjected to armed attacks, but should
surrender their territorial sovereignty."

These quotations give some insight into the differences
between the Russians and the Chinese over the India-China border
question. The Russians were impatient with the Chinese
explanations, which no doubt had to go into the intricacies of
the original McMahon Line in relation to Longju. All this seemed
to them of secondary importance in the context of the attempt
to unfreeze the cold war. The Chinese, however, disapproved in
principle of Mr. Khruschev's attempt to set relations with the
United States on a new basis and were not therefore prepared to
submerge what to them was a concrete issue of real importance
in order to give Mr. Khruschev a fair wind to Camp David.
They were also unwilling to capitulate in the border dispute
with India, in which they regarded all the right as being on
their side, simply in order not to cut across the Soviet policy
of encouraging the development of India as an example of
successful national democracy. Most important of all, they
were not prepared to be told by the Russians what to do and
what not to do in a matter in which the application of Marxist-Leninist principles was clear and in which their national interests were involved.

Despite this difference of view, the Chinese behaviour in regard to the border dispute with India up to the late summer of 1959 was in conformity with the principles advocated by the Soviet Union in regard to peaceful coexistence.
SOME COMMENTS ON CHINESE MOTIVES AND
INTENTIONS IN THE BORDER QUESTION

At two points in the narrative the Chinese Government's motives and intentions have been left unclear. Did the Chinese authorities move into the Aksai Chin area in 1950-51 and build the road there in 1956-57 in full awareness of the Indian Government's claim to it, or was there either ignorance or uncertainty at the operative level? Were the replies which the Chinese Government made before 1958 about maps of the frontier published in China a deliberate prevarication, to gain time until the Chinese positions were sufficiently secure, or were they more in the nature of temporising evasions pending the taking of policy decisions on the central issues? It is impossible to say with certainty. Answers to these questions do not however affect the assessment of Chinese motives and intentions during the period 1959 to August 1962.

These two uncertainties aside, the second record brings out with unmistakable clarity that for the Chinese the quarrel with India was essentially a border question. It was not of their seeking, and they would have preferred "friendship"
with India to have continued. They exercised great patience and restraint in avoiding border clashes, even to the extent of remaining in their positions during the two years of the Indian advance. They made every effort, short of capitulation, to hold substantive talks on the main issues and to reach a temporary arrangement pending a more durable settlement. The dispute with India was unnecessary and was an unwanted distraction from the main confrontation with the Americans in the Pacific.

Any view that China invented, or inflated, the border dispute with India for reasons extraneous to the border dispute is not compatible with the record of China's conduct in relation to it. In the light of the sequence of events it is not possible to maintain that China was preparing for an invasion of the whole or part of India; or that China's principal object was to induce a switch of Indian effort and resources from economic construction to defence, in order to remove a possible rival to China's pattern of development in Asia. Neither as nationalists nor as Marxist-Leninists would the Chinese regard the Indian example as a possible rival to the Chinese.

The pattern of Chinese behaviour changed on 20 October 1962. They then abandoned their policy of patience and
restraint and executed a limited military move, prepared in advance, to evict the Indian troops from their gains of the past two years. In this new phase Chinese motives and intentions are still sufficiently explained within the context of the border dispute. Some reaction to the intensified Indian advance was necessary. Chinese intentions were unchanged, only the methods were different—the controlled use of military power in addition to the method of negotiation. As soon as the military move was completed, a new offer for talks went in.

The position reached on the ground at 24 October 1962 was one that the Chinese might well have lived with for a season. The determination of the whole Indian people to continue the war, made manifest in the debate of 8-14 November, was not perhaps a sufficient explanation for the second Chinese offensive of 15-21 November. Here for the first time it seems necessary to look outside the context of the border dispute to understand the reasons for the Chinese Government's behaviour in regard to it. Indian acceptance of American military aid altered the nature of the border dispute. The dispute had been a cause of friction on the surface of the relations between China and a non-aligned Asian state which
were fundamentally characterised by "friendship". It became
overnight an aspect of the antagonism between China and the
United States. The conduct of the affair therefore immediately
assumed a new relevance in the context of the Sino-Soviet
dispute on peaceful coexistence. Here was a test case in
which China was one party and in which the theoretical issues
of the ideological debate were given a practical content. The
test case came immediately after another test case in which
the Soviet Union had been involved in the practical application
of the principles under discussion: Cuba. On 28 October
Mr. Khruschev's "capitulation" over missiles in Cuba was
revealed to the world. On 17-21 November the Chinese
executed their crippling attack on the Indian defences and
proclaimed their unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal. The
conclusion seems inescapable that in this second Chinese
offensive the Chinese leaders were looking as much to their
dispute with the Soviet Union as to their dispute with India.
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