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PRIME MINISTER NEHRU'S LETTER
TO PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI

New Delhi
September 26, 1959.

Here is the text of the letter dated 26th September, 1959, from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China. It gives full reply to all the points raised in Premier Chou En-lai's letter of September 8, 1959.

No. 1939-PMH/59

NEW DELHI,
September 26, 1959.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I have received your letter of September 8, 1959. I must say that I was greatly surprised and distressed to read it. You and I discussed the India-China border, and particularly the eastern sector, in 1954 in Peking and in 1956-57 in India. As you know, the boundary in the eastern sector is loosely referred to as the McMahon Line. I do not like this description, but for convenience I propose to refer to it as such. When I discussed this with you, I thought that we were confronted with the problem of reaching an agreement on where exactly the so-called McMahon Line in the eastern sector of the boundary lay. Even when I received your letter of January 23, 1959, I had no idea that the People's Republic of China would lay claim to about 40,000 square miles of what in our view has been indisputably Indian territory for decades and in some sectors for over a century. In your latest letter you have sought to make out a claim to large tracts of Indian territory and have even suggested that the independent Government of India are seeking to reap a benefit from the British aggression against China. Our Parliament and our people deeply resent this allegation. The struggle of the Indian people against any form of imperialism both at home and abroad is known and recognised all over the world and we had thought that China also appreciated and recognised our struggle. It is true that the British occupied and ruled the Indian sub-continent against the wishes of the Indian people. The boundaries of India were, however, settled for centuries by history, geography, custom and tradition. Nowhere indeed has India's dislike of imperialist policies been more clearly shown than in her attitude towards Tibet. The Government of India voluntarily renounced all the extra-territorial rights enjoyed by Britain in Tibet before 1947 and recognised by Treaty that Tibet is a region of China. In the course of the long talks that we had during your last visit to India, you had told me that Tibet had been and was a part of China but that it was an autonomous region.

2. You have suggested in your letter that the Government of India have applied all sorts of pressure on the Chinese Government, including the use of force, to make the Chinese Government accept the Indian demand. This is the reverse of what the Government of India did. We did not release to the public the information which we had about the various border intrusions into our territory by Chinese personnel since 1954, the construction of a road across Indian territory in Ladakh, and the arrest of our personnel in the Aksai

Chin area in 1958 and their detention. We did not give publicity to this in the hope that peaceful solutions of the disputes could be found by agreement by the two countries without public excitement on both sides. In fact our failure to do so has now resulted in sharp but legitimate criticism of the Government both in Parliament and in the press in our country. Far from using force, we sought a peaceful settlement of the disputes. You must be aware of the prolonged negotiations between the Indian and Chinese representatives over Bara Hoti in 1958 and of the notes exchanged between our two Governments on the other disputes. I need hardly tell you that there is great resentment in India at the action of your troops in overpowering our outpost in Longju on our side of the McMahon Line, and although you have up till now not withdrawn your troops, we have not sought to reoccupy the post.

3. You have referred to the maintenance of the long existing *status quo* on the border. The Government of India have always been in favour of it. It is the Chinese Government who have violated it repeatedly in recent years. I can refer, for example, to the construction of a 100-mile road across what has traditionally been Indian territory in the Aksai Chin area, the entry of Chinese survey parties in the Lohit Frontier Division in 1957, the establishment of a camp at Spanggur in 1959, the despatch of armed personnel to Bara Hoti in 1958 and stationing them there in winter against customary practice and last, but not least, the use of force in Longju.

4. It is true that the Sino-Indian boundary has not been formally delimited along its entire length. Indeed the terrain of the Sino-Indian border in many places makes such physical demarcation on the ground impossible. But the entire length of the border has been either defined by treaty or recognised by custom or by both and until now the Chinese Government have not protested against the exercise of jurisdiction by the Government of India upto the customary border. You have yourself acknowledged the fact that no armed clash ever occurred along our border until the beginning of this year. All Chinese Government have respected the Indian border. The fact that previous Chinese Governments were weak is no answer. Not even a protest was registered in accordance with established state practice in this regard, as was done in the case of Burma between 1906 and 1937.

5. Concerning the boundary between Tibet and Ladakh, it is incorrect to say that the then Chinese Central Government did not send anybody to participate in the conclusion of the treaty between Tibet and Kashmir in 1842. The treaty was signed by the representatives of both the Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China. Kalon Sokon, one of the signatories, though by birth a Tibetan, had Chinese rank. Even the Tibetan version of the treaty makes it clear that China was a party to it. Thus, it asserts that "there will never be on any account in future till the world lasts, any deviation even by the hair's breadth and any breach in the alliance, friendship and unity between the King of the world Siri Khalsaji Sahib and Siri Maharaj Sahib Raja-i-Rajagan Raja Sahib Bahadur, and the Khagan of China and the Lama Guru Sahib of Lhasa."

6. It is true that the 1842 treaty referred merely to the "old established frontiers". This was because these frontiers were well-known and did not require any formal delimitation. Even the treaty of 1684 between Ladakh and Tibet stated that "the boundaries fixed in the beginning, when Skyid-Ida-ngeema-gon gave a kingdom to each of his three sons, shall still be maintained." References in the Ladakhi chronicles of the 17th century indicate that the boundary was well-established. Cunningham, whom Your Excellency has referred to with approval, toured the area in 1846. He stated in 1854 that the eastern boundary of Ladakh "is well defined by piles of stones, which were set up after the last expulsion of the Sokpo or Mongol hordes in A.D. 1687 when the Ladakhis received considerable assistance from Kashmir." (*Ladakh*, 1854, page 261). Thus it is clear that for nearly two centuries the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet was well-known and recognized by both sides. There was a constant flow of trade between Ladakh and Tibet during these centuries as provided for by these treaties, and no boundary conflicts ever arose.

7. It has been stated in your letter that China never ratified the 1842 treaty. That China recognised the treaty is clear from the fact that the Chinese official in 1847 informed the British Government: "Respecting the frontiers I beg to remark that the borders of those territories have been sufficiently and distinctly fixed, so that it will be best to adhere to this ancient arrangement and it will prove far more convenient to abstain from any additional measures for fixing them." There was no suggestion that the Chinese Government regarded the treaty as invalid. It is also clear from the statement quoted that not merely was the boundary known, but the boundary was distinctly and sufficiently fixed and there was no divergence of opinion as to where it lay.

8. Further evidence of Chinese acceptance of the 1842 treaty is provided by the fact that the other provisions of the treaty regarding exchange of goods and presents were in operation right up to 1946 without any hindrance from the Chinese Government.

9. It is incorrect to say that down to 1899 the British Government proposed formally to delimit this section of the boundary but that the Chinese Government did not agree. No proposals were made between 1847 and 1899 for any such formal delimitation. The proposal made in 1899 by the British Government referred not to the eastern frontier of Ladakh with Tibet but to the northern frontier of Ladakh and Kashmir with Sinkiang. It was stated in that context that the northern boundary ran along the Kuen Lun range to a point east of 80° east longitude, where it met the eastern boundary of Ladakh. This signified beyond doubt that the whole of Aksai Chin area lay in Indian territory. The Government of China did not object to this proposal.

10. So Ladakh, Tibet and China had all accepted that the frontier between Ladakh and Tibet was the customary boundary. You have stated that the boundary as shown in the Chinese maps follows, more or less, that shown in the map of "Punjab, Western Himalaya and adjoining parts of Tibet" compiled by Walker and attached to Cunningham's book published in 1854. Walker's Map states in the Compilation Index that the document used for this sector is the

"Map of Ladakh and Nari Khorsum by Capt. H. Strachey". Now Strachey toured only a part of Ladakh in 1847-48. He knew little or nothing about Aksai Chin, having never visited the area, and drew the boundary where he thought the main water-parting, which was the natural and old established frontier in this area, lay. Thereafter a number of exploration and survey parties were sent by the Government of India to this region. These parties ascertained the customary frontier on the basis of natural features and such local evidence as was available. Johnson visited the area in 1865 and Frederick Drew, an Englishman in the employ of the Maharaja of Kashmir as Governor of Ladakh, in 1869. Other survey parties in the nineteenth century were those of Hayward, Shaw and Cayle in 1868, Carey in 1885-87, Hamilton Bower in 1891, Littledale in 1895, Welby and Malcolm in 1896, Deasy and Pike in 1896, and Aure Stein in 1900. Accurate maps of the whole Ladakh area thus became possible only from 1865, after the aforementioned surveys had ascertained the exact lie of the watershed; and it is significant that most of the maps since that date show the customary boundary in accordance with the line shown by us in our map rather than the one claimed by China. The later Map of Turkestan of Walker himself published in 1867-68, Drew's map attached to his book *Jammu and Kashmir Territories* (1875), Johnston's Atlas (1882), and maps attached to the Gazetteers of Kashmir published from 1890 onwards all showed boundary lines more or less similar to our present frontier. Even official Chinese maps of the late nineteenth century showed a boundary approximating to our line. It is only in official Chinese maps of the twentieth century that the Chinese Government included large parts of our territory. On the other hand, *The New Atlas and Commercial Gazetteer of China*, published in Shanghai sometimes after 1917 by the North China Daily News and Herald on the basis of authoritative surveys, shows a boundary in the north-west similar to our alignment and a boundary in the north-east which approximates to what later became known as the McMahon Line. I may add that the Chinese maps do not follow even Walker's Map of 1854 where it does not support the assertion made on behalf of China. Thus Walker shows the areas north of Demchok and north of Pangong in India but recent Chinese maps have not followed Walker's map in regard to these areas.

11. You have referred to the sector of the boundary between what is known as the Ari area of Tibet and India. We are told that Ari, which is an abbreviated form of Ngari Khorsum, is south-western Tibet. This is the sector of the boundary between the Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in India and the Tibet region. You have stated that the boundary in this sector has never been formally delimited. In fact, there should be little doubt about the boundary in this sector. Article IV of the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement specifies six passes in this area. There was discussion of these passes between the Chinese and Indian representatives before the Agreement was concluded. Your original draft contained the following: "The Chinese Government agrees to open the following passes." On behalf of India Mr. Kaul then said that these were Indian passes. After some discussion both sides agreed on the following text: "Traders and pilgrims of both countries may travel by the following passes". Your Vice-Foreign Minister remarked in

that context. "This was the fifth concession on our part". This was recognition of the passes as border passes. In fact the Government of India have always been in control of the Indian ends of the passes.

12. I am particularly surprised by your statement that "the so-called McMahon Line was a product of the British policy of aggression against the Tibet Region of China". You further state that the agreement in regard to the frontier between India and Tibet was concluded between the British representative and the representative of the Tibet local authorities and that it has never been recognized by any Chinese Central Government. From this you draw the conclusion that the agreement is illegal. The facts, however, are otherwise. The arrangements for the Simla Conference were made with the full knowledge and consent of the Government of China. The Foreign Minister of China wrote to the British representative on the 7th August 1913 that the Chinese plenipotentiary would proceed to India "to open negotiations for a treaty jointly" with the Tibetan and British plenipotentiaries. It is clear from the proceedings of the conference that not only did the Chinese representative fully participate in the conference but that the Tibetan representative took part in the discussions on an equal footing with the Chinese and the then British Indian representatives. Not only were the frontiers of India with Tibet discussed at the conference, but also the boundaries between Inner Tibet and China, and Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet. At no stage, either then or subsequently, did the Chinese Government object to the discussions on the boundary between India and Tibet at the conference. In the circumstances the agreement which resulted from the conference in regard to the McMahon Line boundary between India and Tibet must, in accordance with accepted international practice, be regarded as binding on both China and Tibet. In fact this was not the first occasion when Tibet concluded an agreement with other countries. In 1856 Tibet concluded an agreement on its own with Nepal. The Convention signed by Britain and Tibet in 1904 was negotiated by the British and Tibetan representatives with the assistance of the Chinese Amban in Tibet.

13. You have stated that for a long time after the exchange of so-called secret notes between Britain and Tibet Britain did not dare to make public the related documents. You have also contended that the McMahon Line "was later marked on the map attached to the Simla Treaty". I am afraid I cannot agree either with your facts or your conclusion. The Chinese representative at the Simla Conference was fully aware of the McMahon Line boundary between India and Tibet. This particular line was discussed between the Tibetan and British Indian representatives, but when the draft convention emerging from the conference was presented on the 22nd April 1914 for signature by the British Indian, Tibetan and Chinese representatives, it had attached to it a map showing the McMahon Line boundary as well as the boundaries between Inner Tibet and China, and Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet. Later, the Chinese Foreign Office in a memorandum, dated the 25th April 1914 listed a number of objections to the boundaries between Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet and Inner Tibet and China. It did not raise any objection to the boundary between Tibet and India as shown in the map attached to the tripartite Simla

Convention. Thereafter, on the 27th April, the Chinese representative initialled both the convention and the map without any objection. Subsequently, in their memorandum, dated the 13th June 1914, the Chinese made fresh proposals regarding the boundaries of Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet. It is significant that no mention was at all made in this memorandum of the boundary between Tibet and India. Almost five years later, on the 30th May 1919, the Government of China again suggested some modifications of the Simla Convention with a view to reaching a final settlement. These modifications related only to the boundaries between Inner Tibet and China and Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet. No reference at all was made to the boundary between Tibet and India (McMahon Line). Looking into the old papers, we find that the British Government withheld the publication of the Simla Convention for several years in the hope that there would be an agreement about the status and boundary of Inner Tibet. The Simla Convention was published in the 1929 edition of Aitchison's *Treaties* and the McMahon Line was shown in the official maps from 1937 onwards. These maps were circulated widely but neither then nor subsequently was any objection raised by the Chinese authorities.

14. I entirely disagree with the inference drawn by you from the exchange of two communications between the Tibetan Bureau in Lhasa and the new Government of India in 1947. The facts are that our Mission in Lhasa forwarded to us a telegram, dated the 16th October 1947 from the Tibetan Bureau. The telegram asked for the return of alleged Tibetan territories on boundaries of India and Tibet "such as Sayul and Walong and in direction of Pemakoe, Lonag, Lopa, Mon, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and others on this side of river Ganges and Lowo, Ladakh etc. upto boundary of Yarkhim." It will be seen that the areas claimed by Tibet had not been defined. If they were to be taken literally, the Tibetan boundary would come down to the line of the river Ganges. The Government of India could not possibly have entertained such a fantastic claim. If they had the faintest idea that this telegram would be made the basis of a subsequent claim to large areas of Indian territory, they would of course have immediately and unequivocally rejected the claim. Not having had such an impression, they sent a reply to the following effect: "The Government of India would be glad to have an assurance that it is the intention of the Tibetan Government to continue relations on the existing basis until new agreements are reached on matters that either party may wish to take up. This is the procedure adopted by all other countries with which India has inherited treaty relations from His Majesty's Government". It would be unfair to deduce from this reply that India undertook to negotiate fresh agreements with Tibet on the frontier question. When the British relinquished power and India attained freedom on the 15th August 1947, the new Government of India inherited the treaty obligations of undivided India. They wished to assure all countries with which the British Government of undivided India had treaties and agreements that the new Government of India would abide by the obligations arising from them. All that the Government of India intended to do in the telegram mentioned in Your Excellency's letter was to convey an assurance to that effect to the Tibetan authorities. There could be no question, so far as India was concerned, of reopening old treaties with Tibet with a view to entertaining, even for purposes of discussion, claims to large areas of Indian territory.

15. It is wrong to say that the frontier east of Bhutan as shown on Chinese maps is the traditional frontier. On the contrary, it is the McMahon Line which correctly represents the customary boundary in this area. The water-parting formed by the crest of the Himalayas is the natural frontier which was accepted for centuries as the boundary by the peoples on both sides. The tribes inhabiting the area south of the McMahon Line—the Monbas, Akas, Daflas, Miris, Abors, and Mishmis—are of the same ethnic stock as the other hill tribes of Assam and have no kinship with the Tibetans. The Tibetans themselves regard these tribes with contempt and group them all together as “Lopas”. It is true that the boundary of two adjacent countries is not determined by the ethnic affiliations of the people living in these countries. Some sort of cultural intercourse between the peoples living on both sides of the frontier is also not uncommon. All the same it is significant that the tribes mentioned above have not been affected in the slightest degree by any Tibetan influence, cultural, political or other, and this can only be due to the fact that the Tibetan authorities have not exercised jurisdiction at any time in this area. On the other hand, Indian administration gradually moved up to these areas. Agreements were signed with the Akas in 1844 and 1888, the Abors in 1862-63 and 1866, and with the Monbas in 1844 and 1853, extending the authority of the Government of India over them. It was the British Government's policy generally to leave the tribes more or less to look after themselves and not seek to establish any detailed administration of these areas such as was to be found in the rest of British Indian territory. All the same British Political Officers visited these areas for settling disputes and such like purposes. Finally, the Sadiya Frontier Tract, approximately 10,000 square miles in area, was formed in 1912, and the Balipara Frontier Tract also comprising about 10,000 square miles, was formed in 1913, i.e., before the Simla Conference met. The Atlas of the Chinese Empire, published in London by the Chinese Inland Mission in 1906, shows as the frontier in this area an alignment which is almost identical with what was settled at Simla in 1914. The area was extensively surveyed in 1911-13. The Lohit area was surveyed by the Mishmi Mission in 1911-12, the Dibhang Valley was surveyed in 1912-13, and the Abor area in 1913. Captain Bailey carried out extensive surveys of the southern limits of Tibetan jurisdiction in the whole area in 1913-14. It was on the basis of all this detailed information that the boundary was settled between India and Tibet in 1914. It is clear, therefore, that the McMahon Line was not an arbitrary imposition on a weak Tibet by the Government of India. It formalized the natural, traditional, ethnic and administrative boundary in the area.

16. Your Excellency has referred to a map published by the Survey of India in 1917 and a map in the 1929 edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. The Survey of India map shows the line claimed by China but on the same sheet, in the index map, the McMahon Line is also shown. The reason for this is that the British Indian Government were reluctant to issue new maps of India showing only the McMahon Line in the hope that China would accept the Simla Convention as a whole. As for the map in the 1929 edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, it is true that in the eastern sector it shows roughly the line now claimed by China. But the same map shows the whole of Aksai Chin as a part of Ladakh. It would therefore be unfair to quote the authority of the Encyclopaedia Britannica

in support of the Chinese claim in one sector of the boundary and to reject it in respect of the other. In fact, if maps published privately in other countries are to be cited as evidence, we can refer to a large number of such maps in our support. For example, the map of *Asie Meridionale* published by Andriveau-Coujon in Paris in 1876 and the map of *Asie Orientale* published by the same firm in 1881 show the whole tribal area as outside Tibet. The Atlas of the Chinese Empire published by the China Inland Mission in 1906 shows a boundary which approximates to the McMahon Line. The British War Office Map of the Chinese Empire published in October 1907 shows almost the entire tribal territory in India. The map in Sir Francis Younghusband's volume *India and Tibet* published in London in 1910 shows the Tribal area in India; and so does the map in Sir Charles Bell's book *Tibet Past and Present* (Oxford 1924).

17. It is not clear to us what exactly is the implication of your statement that the boundaries of Sikkim and Bhutan do not fall within the scope of the present discussion. In fact, Chinese maps show sizeable areas of Bhutan as part of Tibet. Under treaty relationships with Bhutan, the Government of India are the only competent authority to take up with other Governments matters concerning Bhutan's external relations, and in fact we have taken up with your Government a number of matters on behalf of the Bhutan Government. The rectification of errors in Chinese maps regarding the boundary of Bhutan with Tibet is therefore a matter which has to be discussed along with the boundary of India with the Tibet region of China in the same sector. As regards Sikkim, the Chinese Government recognised as far back as 1890 that the Government of India "has direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that State". This Convention of 1890 also defined the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet; and the boundary was later, in 1895, demarcated. There is thus no dispute regarding the boundary of Sikkim with the Tibet region.

18. You have stated that the Sino-Indian boundary is about 2,000 kilometres in length, is wholly undelimited, and that it is not Chinese maps but British and Indian maps that have been unilaterally altering the Sino-Indian boundary. In fact, the Sino-Indian boundary (apart from the boundary of Sikkim and Bhutan with Tibet) extends over 3,520 kilometres. It is wrong to say that this long boundary is wholly undelimited. The frontier east of Bhutan has been explicitly delineated on the 1914 treaty map. The frontier of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh has been clarified by implication by the mention of six passes in the 1954 Agreement. As for the charge that British and Indian maps have been unilaterally altering the boundary, the fact is that early British maps showed the boundary roughly where the British thought the water-parting was at the time. Later, as more topographical as well as local information about the water-parting was obtained, the boundary was shown with greater precision on the subsequent maps. The discrepancies between the earlier and later maps are also explained in part by the fact that British cartographers as a rule showed in their maps the administrative boundaries irrespective of the actual alignment of the frontier. Therefore, as administration was gradually extended in the frontier areas, corresponding changes were made in the boundaries on the later maps. Thus the map of India published by the Survey of India in 1895 (1"=128 miles).

showed the unadministered areas of northern Burma and north-eastern India upto what subsequently came to be known as the McMahon Line by a light orange colour wash as distinct from the deeper colours used for the rest of the Indian territory. The Memorandum on Native States in India published by the Government of India in 1903 has a map in Volume II showing this whole tribal area as a part of India. The fact is that the present frontiers of India have always been the historic frontiers, but administration in the British period was only gradually extended up to these frontiers. Shortly after India attained independence in 1947 the Government of India decided, as a matter of policy, to bring these frontier areas under more direct administrative control to enable them to share in the benefits of a welfare state subject to the protection of their distinct social and cultural patterns. It is not true to say that it was only after the recent Tibetan crisis and the entry into India of a large number of Tibetans that Indian troops started advancing steadily in the North-East Frontier Agency. In fact administrative personnel, civil and police, had been functioning in these areas right up to the McMahon frontier for several years before the recent disturbances broke out in Tibet. However, we did not have any military force anywhere in the border areas. There was only an armed constabulary in support of the civil personnel and even the frontier posts were manned by this constabulary. It was only when our outpost at Longju was overpowered by superior Chinese military force and our personnel elsewhere along the frontier were being intimidated by Chinese forces that we decided to place the responsibility for the protection of the frontier on our army.

19. It should be clear from what has been stated in previous paragraphs that it is the Chinese maps that have altered the boundary alignments through the years to include large areas of Indian territory in China. It should also be stated that Chinese maps published even after 1949 have not adhered to any definite frontier. Different maps show different alignments in the same sector.

20. I am sorry to have to say that it is the Chinese Government who have been trying unilaterally to change the long-existing state of the border. There is no other explanation for the presence of Chinese personnel in Bara Hoti and of Chinese troops in the Aksai Chin area, Khurnak Fort, Mandal, Spanggur, Khinzemane and Longju, and for Chinese intrusions in the Spiti area, Shipki pass, the Nilang-Jadhang area, Sangcha, Lapthal, and the Dichu Valley. Nor is it correct to say that Chinese troops have never crossed the McMahon Line. Both Khinzemane and Longju are south of this line.

21. The Government of India emphatically repudiate the allegation that in recent times they have "invaded and occupied" a number of places in the middle sector of the boundary. In fact it is the Chinese forces which have made persistent efforts in recent times to come into and occupy indisputably Indian territory. Details of intrusions and attempted intrusions by Chinese forces have been given in the attached note. These intrusions have been particularly marked in the Spanggur area, where Chinese forces have been pushing forward in an aggressive manner during the last year or two in disregard of the traditional frontier. The Chinese have only

recently established a new camp near the western extremity of the Spanggur lake at a point which even according to some official Chinese maps is in Indian territory. It is not for us to comment on the reports of large-scale movements of Chinese forces in the Tibetan frontier areas. We hope that these moves do not signify a new policy of actively probing into Indian territory along the whole length of the Sino-Indian frontier.

22. Reports have reached us that some Chinese officers in Tibet have repeatedly proclaimed that the Chinese authorities will before long take possession of Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh and our North-East Frontier Agency. I do not know what authority they had to make these remarks but I would like to draw Your Excellency's attention to them as these remarks have naturally added to the tension on the frontier.

23. Your Excellency has spoken of Indian parties having trespassed into Chinese territory. Nowhere have our personnel done so. Even if they had done so through an error of judgment at any point in the barren wastes of some far-flung frontier region, we would have expected that a friendly Government would promptly bring it to our notice for remedial action. Instead, last year when an Indian party was engaged on routine administrative patrol near Haji Langar in Ladakh, your forces arrested them and did not inform us of the arrest until we had enquired of you almost five weeks later. In the meantime our personnel were subjected to threats, harsh treatment and severe interrogation. Surely this is not the manner in which the personnel of a friendly Government should have been treated.

24. The charge that India has been shielding armed Tibetan rebels in the frontier areas in the north-east is wholly unfounded and we firmly reject it. On the contrary, our personnel disarmed the Tibetan rebels as soon as they crossed the frontier into Indian territory and insisted on their moving well away from the frontier areas. The few who showed disinclination to do so were told that they would not get asylum in India and made to leave our territory finally.

25. There is no truth in the allegation that Indian aircraft have repeatedly violated Chinese territorial air in this area. We have issued definite instruction to all our aircraft to avoid trespass into Chinese air space and we are assured that this instruction has been carefully observed. You will appreciate, however, that aircraft engaged in supply dropping missions to a frontier outpost may accidentally cross the international frontier or appear to do so even though it has not actually crossed the frontier. Our anxiety to respect the Chinese territorial air space would be clear from the fact that when in July last the officer in charge of our outpost at Longju fell seriously ill we informed your Government that we would be para-dropping a doctor. The object of our giving the information to your Government was to ensure that you would not misunderstand it if by error of judgment our aircraft should cross into Chinese territory in flying over a frontier outpost. For the same reason we also gave you information in advance that survey operations would be carried out from the air on our side of the border during the

months from November 1959 to February 1960. Incidentally, the information that we gave you about Longju would disprove any suggestion that we had surreptitiously started an outpost on Chinese territory. Had we done so, we would not have given its location to your Government.

26. 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 Indian maps in the Migyitun area which differs slightly from the boundary shown in the Treaty map, the position can be easily explained. As settled between the British and the Chinese 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.

27. I entirely disagree with your view that the tense situation that has arisen on the border has been caused by Indian trespassing and provocation. In fact, as the attached note will show, it is the Chinese who have trespassed into Indian territory across the traditional border at a number of places in recent years. You have mentioned that we in India have staged a second so-called anti-Chinese campaign. This, if I may say so, is the reverse of the actual position. Despite the regrettable happenings on the frontier of our two countries, we in India have conducted ourselves with great restraint and moderation. At a number of places your forces assumed a threatening attitude; at others they actually came into our territory. Such incidents concerning as they did the integrity of India, were very serious, but in our anxiety not to create feelings against your Government we deliberately avoided giving publicity to them. Questions in Parliament had, however, to be answered and the facts could not be withheld. When the facts thus became known, the reaction both in Parliament and among the public was one of dismay and great resentment. There was criticism of our Government both in Parliament and the press for our failure to give publicity to these developments at an earlier stage. Under the Indian Constitution Parliament is supreme. India has also a free press and the Government could not restrain public criticism. In the circumstances, to allege that the Government of India built up pressure on China in any manner is a complete misreading of the facts of the situation. It is also based on complete misunderstanding of the constitutional procedures under which the Government, Parliament and the press function in India. Needless to say, such an allegation is entirely baseless.

28. I have stated before and wish to affirm once again that the Government of India attach great importance to the maintenance of friendly relations with China. They have hitherto sought to conduct their relations with China, as with other countries, in the spirit of Panch Sheel. This indeed had always been India's policy even before the five principles were enunciated. It is therefore all the more a matter of regret and surprise to us that China should now have put forth claims to large areas of Indian territory inhabited by hundreds of thousands of Indian nationals, which have been under the administrative jurisdiction of India for many years. No Government could possibly discuss the future of such large areas which are an integral part of their territory. We however recognise that the India-China frontier which extends over more than 3,500 kilometres has not been demarcated on the ground and disputes may therefore arise at some places along the traditional frontier as to whether these places lie on the Indian or the Tibetan side of this traditional frontier. 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. In the meantime both sides should respect the traditional frontier and neither party should seek to alter the *status quo* in any manner. 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 Tamadem, 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 any 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.

29. Mr. Prime Minister, I regret that I have had to write to you at this length and in such detail. But I must frankly say that your letter of the 8th September has come as a great shock to us. India was one of the first countries to extend recognition to the People's Republic of China and for the last ten years we have consistently sought to maintain and strengthen our friendship with your country. When our two countries signed the 1954 Agreement in regard to the Tibet region I hoped that the main problems which history had bequeathed to us in the relations between India and China had been peacefully and finally settled. Five years later, you have now brought forward, with all insistence, a problem which dwarfs in importance all that we have discussed in recent years and, I thought, settled. I appreciate your statement that China looks upon her

south-western border as a border of peace and friendship. This hope and this promise could be fulfilled only if China would not bring within the scope of what should essentially be a border dispute, claims to thousands of square miles of territory which have been and are integral part of the territory of India.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) JAWAHARLAL NEHRU.

A NOTE ON THE BORDER DISPUTES

A. Aksai Chin

As shown in the text of the letter, Aksai Chin is a part of Ladakh. The Chinese Government have now admitted that in 1956 they built a highway from Tibet to Sinkiang, running for about a hundred miles through this territory. In September 1957, it was announced that this road had been completed. The next year Indian personnel carrying out routine patrol duties were arrested near Hagi Langar in north-east Aksai Chin, taken to Suget Karol and detained for five weeks. The leader of the Indian patrol was placed in solitary confinement, and all documents were seized. When the Government of India protested at the serious and continuous occupation of our territory which road-building implied, and enquired whether the Chinese authorities had any knowledge of the Indian patrol, they admitted that they had detained the Indian party. Later the party was released at the Karakoram pass.

B. The Pangong Area

The customary boundary between Ladakh and Tibet in this region lies from Lanak La (34° 24' North and 79° 34' East) along the eastern and southern watershed of the Changchen Mo and the southern watershed of the Chumesang, and then along the southern bank of the Chumesang and the eastern bank of the Changlung Lungpa. Skirting the western extremity of the eastern half of Pangong Tso, the boundary thereafter follows the Ang watershed and cutting across Spanggur Tso, follows the north-eastern and northern watershed of the Indus. In recent years Chinese armed personnel have crossed this border in several places, fanned out and occupied Indian territory illegally. In July 1958 the Government of India protested against the Chinese occupation of Khurnak Fort, about 1½ miles within the Indian frontier. This fort has from time immemorial been within Ladakh, and has never been the subject of dispute. Even at a conference on certain pastures grounds in this area, attended by the representatives of Tibet and Kashmir and a British Commissioner in 1924, the jurisdiction of India over this fort was not disputed. However, there has been no reply as yet to the note of the Government of India.

In July 1959 it was learnt that a Chinese armed detachment had entered Indian territory in the Spanggur area south of the Pangong Lake, and had established a camp at Spanggur. When an Indian police party on its way to Khurnak approached them, it was overpowered. The Government of India protested, but the Chinese Government in their reply asserted that this was Chinese territory. This statement is contradicted even by the boundary alignment in this sector shown on Chinese maps, for example, the Map of the Administrative Areas of the Chinese Republic (1948), in which the

boundary cuts across the eastern extremity of the Spanggur Lake. Spanggur stands on the western edge of the lake. Though the Government of India would have been justified in dislodging this Chinese camp, they have refrained from doing so in the hope that the Chinese would themselves withdraw.

C. Demchok

Demchok, or Parigas, is another area which India is supposed to have "invaded and occupied". This is part of the Hanle region in south-eastern Ladakh. Ladakhi chronicles of the 17th century and accounts of travellers of the 18th and 19th centuries all state that Demchok was a part of Ladakh. The Kailash range, which is the eastern watershed of the Indus, lies east of Demchok. Strachey, who visited this area in 1847, confirmed this position, and Walker, on the authority of Strachey, showed the boundary in this region as running east of Demchok village. The pasture grounds between Demchok and the Kailash range have been used by Indian villagers for a long time past. All revenue records of this century prove that taxes were collected in this area by the Jammu and Kashmir Government, and a checkpost has been maintained in this area for several decades.

D. The Spiti Area

Premier Chou En-lai's letter alleges Indian "invasion" of Chuva and Chu-je, i.e. the Spiti area in the Punjab State. The Spiti valley is, however, traditional Indian territory. The frontier in this area is the major watershed between the Pare Chu and the Spiti systems. As far back as 1879 the "Map of Hundes or Ngari Khorsum and Monyol" issued by the Trigonometrical Survey of India showed the boundary along this watershed. In 1956 a Chinese survey party visited this area and sought to place boundary stones on Indian territory, and in 1957 a Chinese patrol party was noticed there. The Government of India drew the attention of the Chinese Government to these violations of Indian territory. The Chinese authorities neither denied the charge nor claimed this territory to be a part of Tibet. They did not appear even to have an exact knowledge of this terrain, for they asked India for details of latitude and longitude. A wall map of the People's Republic of China published in November 1953 (Ya Kuang Publishing Society) shows this area within India. To speak of Indian aggression in this area is, therefore, to say the least, astonishing.

E. Shipki Pass

Shipki pass is the first of the six border passes mentioned in the 1954 agreement. This has always been the limit of Indian territory. All old maps indicated this as the border pass. The Government of India have constructed a road up to this point and have been maintaining it for many years; and in 1954 the words "Hindustan-Tibet" were engraved on a rock flanking the pass on the left. In the summer of 1956 a Chinese patrol was found on the Indian side of the pass and well within Indian territory. On being asked to

withdraw the Chinese personnel threw stones and threatened to use hand grenades. The commander of the Chinese patrol contended that he had received instructions to patrol the area up to Hupsang Khud and if the Indian party went beyond Hupsang Khud he "would oppose it with arms". Hupsang Khud is four miles from Shipki pass on the Indian side. Indian protests to the Government of China against this incursion remain unanswered.

F. The Nilang-Jadhang Area

Premier Chou En-lai states that there have been historical disputes regarding many places in the sector of the boundary between Ladakh and Nepal, and gives as an example the area of Sang and Tsungsha, south-west of Tsaparang Dzong in Tibet. In fact this is the only area in regard to which the Chinese authorities have raised a dispute. Sang is Jadhang village, Tsungsha is Nilang village and Tsaparang Dzong is the district headquarters in this part of Tibet. The Chinese Premier accuses India of having invaded and occupied Puling-Sumdo, that is Pulam Sumda, a village in the Nilang-Jadhang area.

It is not true that this area had always belonged to China and that the British occupied it only thirty to forty years ago. By the middle of the seventeenth century Nilang formed part of Bushahr state (now in Himachal Pradesh of India). A copper-plate inscription of 1667 A.D. records a treaty of mutual defence between Bushahr and Tehri and the cession to Tehri of Nilang. So clearly Nilang was then in India. Documents of the 18th century show that Tehri was administering the area. The inhabitants of this area are Garhwali by stock and not Tibetan.

In 1804 Nepalese troops are said to have destroyed Nilang village but in 1850 the Tehri Durbar re-established the village of Nilang and a hamlet named Jadhang, further north. In 1914 the Tibetans tried to set up a boundary pillar at Gum Gum Nala south of Nilang, and four years later the Tehri Durbar in its turn erected three boundary pillars at the border pass of Tsangchok La.

In 1926 a boundary commission consisting of Tibetan, Tehri and British representatives met at Nilang. Considerable evidence was produced by the Tehri Government in their own favour. It included ownership rights in land, proof of construction of roads and buildings and collection of land revenues for centuries. The only evidence the Tibetans could produce was that their agents had occasionally collected a tax levied on trade with Tibet. The territory continued under the administration of the Tehri Durbar and, after the merger of Tehri state in Uttar Pradesh (India) in 1948, under the administration of the Government of Uttar Pradesh. Since 1951 no taxes at all have been paid by these villagers to Tibetans, as they have discontinued the practice of visiting Tibet for trade.

The area of Nilang-Jadhang is situated south of the main watershed in this region, along which the six border passes mentioned in the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement are situated. In April 1956 it was found that some armed Chinese personnel had intruded into this:

area without securing the permission of the Indian authorities. A protest was lodged by the Government of India on 2nd May 1956, but till now there has been no reply to this protest from the Chinese Government.

G. Bara Hoti

Bara Hoti, which the Chinese call Wu-je and accuse the Government of India of having occupied, is a small area (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ square miles) in the State of Uttar Pradesh (India). The area lies between the main watershed of the Sutlej and the Alakhnanda, which is the boundary in this sector, and the highest range of the Himalayas further south. Revenue records and other official documents of the 19th century establish that the watershed is the traditional frontier between India and Tibet in this region. It has been shown in Indian maps since 1850, when maps of this region based on surveys were first drawn. Even Chinese maps up to 1958 show the watershed as the frontier. Bara Hoti which is south of the watershed must, therefore, be regarded as within India. Till 1954 neither the Tibetans nor the Chinese seriously challenged this position, but since then Chinese personnel have persistently visited this area. There was a conference in Delhi to consider this question in April-May 1958. The Indian representatives proposed that pending a settlement of the dispute no armed personnel should be sent to the area. The Chinese Government agreed to this, but rejected the further proposal that neither side should send civilian personnel to the area. The Government of India, therefore, have continued to send civilian personnel to the area to exercise their long-established civil jurisdiction in this area. Bara Hoti has for centuries been under a *patwari*, and officials of Garhwal district have been touring it regularly. To describe the continuation of this administration as "aggression" is therefore, a distortion of facts. The accusation is more applicable to the Chinese Government, who sent not merely civilian officials but an armed party to the area in 1958 in contravention of the agreement at the Delhi conference. The Government of India have scrupulously adhered to the interim agreement not to send armed personnel and have not allowed even the revenue officials to carry arms for self-protection. Furthermore, the Chinese personnel stayed at Bara Hoti in 1958 for part of the winter also, contrary to normal practice.

India's proposal at the conference that even civilian personnel should not be sent to the area shows the extent to which she was willing to go in the interest of a peaceful settlement. The only major argument that the Chinese side brought forward was that certain Tibetan agents called Sarjis came occasionally to this area to collect imposts. These men, however, were not regular officials of the Chinese Government but merely promoters of trade who came to declare Indo-Tibetan trade open and to inspect the cattle which was coming from or going to Tibet to see if it was diseased. They collected taxes only from Tibetans who had come down to trade and not from the local villagers. And even against these visits of the Tibetan Sarjis, the Government of India had always been making repeated protests.

Indeed, it was revealed at the Conference at Delhi in 1958 that the Chinese did not even know what area they meant by Wu-je. They therefore, pressed for a local enquiry as that would enable them to know what area they were claiming.

Two other places south-east of Bara Hoti also mentioned in Premier Chou En-Lai's letter as "invaded and occupied" by India are Sangcha or Sangcha Malla, and Lapthal. They are situated in Almora District in Uttar Pradesh, on the Indian side of the Balcha Dhura pass. This pass is located on the water-parting which is the traditional boundary in this area between India and Tibet. This is confirmed by Edwin Atkinson in his volume *The Himalayan Districts of North-Western Provinces of India* (1886). Sangcha Malla is two miles south of the border and Lapthal six miles south. No Chinese map has ever shown these places within Tibet, and they have never before been claimed by either Tibet or China. It was only in October 1958, when the Indian check-posts retired as usual because of the onset of winter, that Chinese personnel entered Indian territory and established outposts at these two places. A protest of the Government of India on 10th December 1958 has elicited no reply.

H. Yasher, Khinzemane and Shatze

Premier Chou En-lai alleges that Indian troops intruded into Yasher and are still in occupation of Shatze and Khinzemane. The Government of India are aware of no such place or area as Yasher. Judging from its location on the small-scale maps recently published in Chinese newspapers, it is presumably a small area north-east of Height 15721 in the Simla Convention Map. Here the boundary runs due north and the territory that is marked as Yasher is inside India. Indian personnel, in this area have been given strict orders not to cross the boundary and they have scrupulously observed these orders. If the village Lung is being referred to as Yasher, then it can be categorically stated that Indian troops have never occupied it.

Khinzemane is south of the Thangla range which forms the international boundary in this area. In fact Chinese troops intruded into Khinzemane and tried to overawe Indian personnel there. Khinzemane and the Droksar pastures near it in the North East Frontier Agency of India have for years belonged to the Indian village of Lumpo. The villages of Le and Timang in Tibet have been allowed to use these pastures on payment for pasture rights to the Indian village of Lumpo. There is no record of the Tibetan authorities ever having exercised jurisdiction in the region south of the Thangla range. As for Shatze, it is south of Khinzemane and well within Indian territory.

I. Longju and Migyitun

Premier Chou En-lai says that Indian troops have not only overstepped the McMahon Line as indicated in the map attached to the notes exchanged between Britain and Tibet, but have also advanced across the boundary drawn on current Indian maps, and these maps

are alleged in many places to cut even deeper into Chinese territory than the McMahon Line. It is alleged that Indian troops "invaded and occupied" Longju and launched armed attacks on Chinese frontier guards stationed at Migyitun, leaving no option to the Chinese frontier guards but to fire back in self-defence.

It has been stated in the text of the letter that the representation of the McMahon Line on Indian maps strictly conforms to the line shown in the Simla Convention Map. Indian troops have not crossed the boundary as drawn on current Indian maps. The Indo-Tibetan boundary drawn at the Simla Conference departed from the watershed in the Subansiri area in order to leave in Tibet the sacred lakes of Tso Karpo and Tsari Tsarpa, the village of Migyitun to which Tibetans attach importance as the starting point of the twelve-year pilgrimage, the route from Migyitun to the lakes, and another shorter pilgrimage route known as Tsari Nyingpa. The boundary alignment on current Indian maps carefully leaves these territories in Tibet. The international boundary here runs just south of the village of Migyitun. Longju which is entirely distinct from Migyitun lies $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles further south of the border. It cannot be a part of Migyitun, which was a decaying village of twelve huts in 1913 and had further deteriorated to six huts and a monastic inn in 1935. The lands attached to Migyitun village were few and extended to a very short distance from the village.

Until Chinese troops recently trespassed into Longju no administrative control was ever exercised over this village by the Tibetan authorities. The detachment of Indian armed constabulary was instructed only to resist trespassers and to use force only in self-defence. It was the Chinese who first fired at the Indian forward picket and later overwhelmed by force the Indian outpost at Longju. This deliberate attack in superior numbers on an Indian outpost could have no justification at all. However, even though Longju is undoubtedly Indian territory, the Government of India are prepared to discuss with the Chinese Government the exact alignment of the McMahon Line in the Longju area. The Government of India have also offered not to send their personnel back to Longju provided that the Chinese Government also would withdraw their forces. The Chinese Government have not so far replied to this offer.