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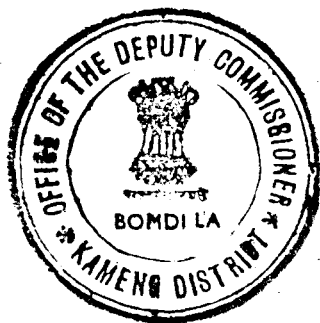
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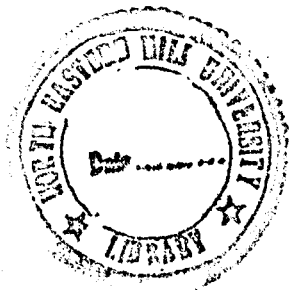




MY YEARS WITH NEHRU

*The  
Chinese  
Betrayal*

B. N. MULLIK



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*To the memory of*  
THE NINE POLICEMEN  
who were killed by the Chinese  
near Hotsprings in Ladakh  
on October 21, 1959,  
and who, by their supreme sacrifice,  
made the country aware of  
the true nature of Communist China



## Preface

The encouragement to write this book first came from Sri Y.B. Chavan, then India's Defence Minister.

Sri Chavan was rather concerned at some unjust and uninformed criticisms that were being levelled at the Government's handling of certain security and defence problems during the time Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister. He felt that even those writers, who wanted to be objective, were handicapped because they did not have access to classified material, without which it was difficult to make a proper analysis of security and defence matters, and they had to depend only on published material or on information fed to them by interested persons. The result was that the analysis made by them gave a rather distorted and one-sided picture to the public. The latter had necessarily to go by what came out in print and could not be blamed for arriving at wrong conclusions. But this was ultimately harmful to the country's interest, as such uninformed criticism tended to erode people's confidence in the leadership. Sri Chavan felt that if someone having inside knowledge could put down all the facts in writing, it could then help objective students to come to a balanced judgment. He also felt that as I had been intimately connected with defence and security problems during these years, and there were many facts within my knowledge which were unknown to others, I should put these down in writing, as far as possible, for the benefit of the public, and that all this knowledge should not get buried with me. So, he encouraged me to write down, in the form of a memoir or in any other form I chose, all that was within my knowledge.

I joined the Intelligence Bureau in 1948 and was its Director from 1950 till after Pandit Nehru's death. I think I enjoyed the trust of Pandit Nehru as well as of successive Home Ministers from Sardar Patel to Sri G. L. Nanda. I was naturally associated with many of the important decisions

that had been taken from time to time during this period about security and defence matters. If I did not put down in writing some of the facts within my knowledge, but unknown to others, they might never see the light of the day. So, I accepted Sri Chavan's advice with the hope that the account given by me might clear some of the misconceptions that had grown over the years. The idea was not to justify any particular decision or action taken but to give the reasons and the compulsions which made such decisions look inevitable in the prevailing circumstances and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions.

When I accepted this work of love, I did not realise the difficulties I would encounter in carrying it out. A Director of the Intelligence Bureau in course of his work comes to know a great deal and many secrets are entrusted to him in absolute confidence. These he can never disclose. Yet some of these might have had an important bearing on the things that happened. Hence, in writing this narrative I often had to decide how much I should disclose and what I must hold back. Whenever a doubt has crossed my mind, I have played for caution. So, I am conscious that many gaps will still be found in this narrative which I am in no position to fill up.

A Director of the Intelligence Bureau does not carry any papers with him when he quits his office. Hence, it had been a difficult task to reconstruct this story lasting over a long period of sixteen years. I did not like to embarrass my friends in the IB by consulting them or seeking any information from them. Hence, I have written this book almost entirely from my memory. I had maintained engagement and movement diaries throughout the whole period and these have helped me to fix the dates of various events, meetings, talks, etc. Also I used to write down points for discussion in my note-books when going to attend a meeting and jot down the decisions taken at the meeting. Some of these books had remained with me. These have helped me to build up this narrative with some amount of confidence. I have also used some published documents, such as *White Papers* published by the Government of India, debates in Parliament, reports of the Ministries filed in Parliament and material

published in books, newspapers and periodicals. These have also helped to refresh my own memory. Where I have used any material from other books, I have acknowledged them at the proper places. I have tried to ensure accuracy as far as possible, but I am conscious that some inaccuracies might have inadvertently crept in. For these I crave the indulgence of the readers.

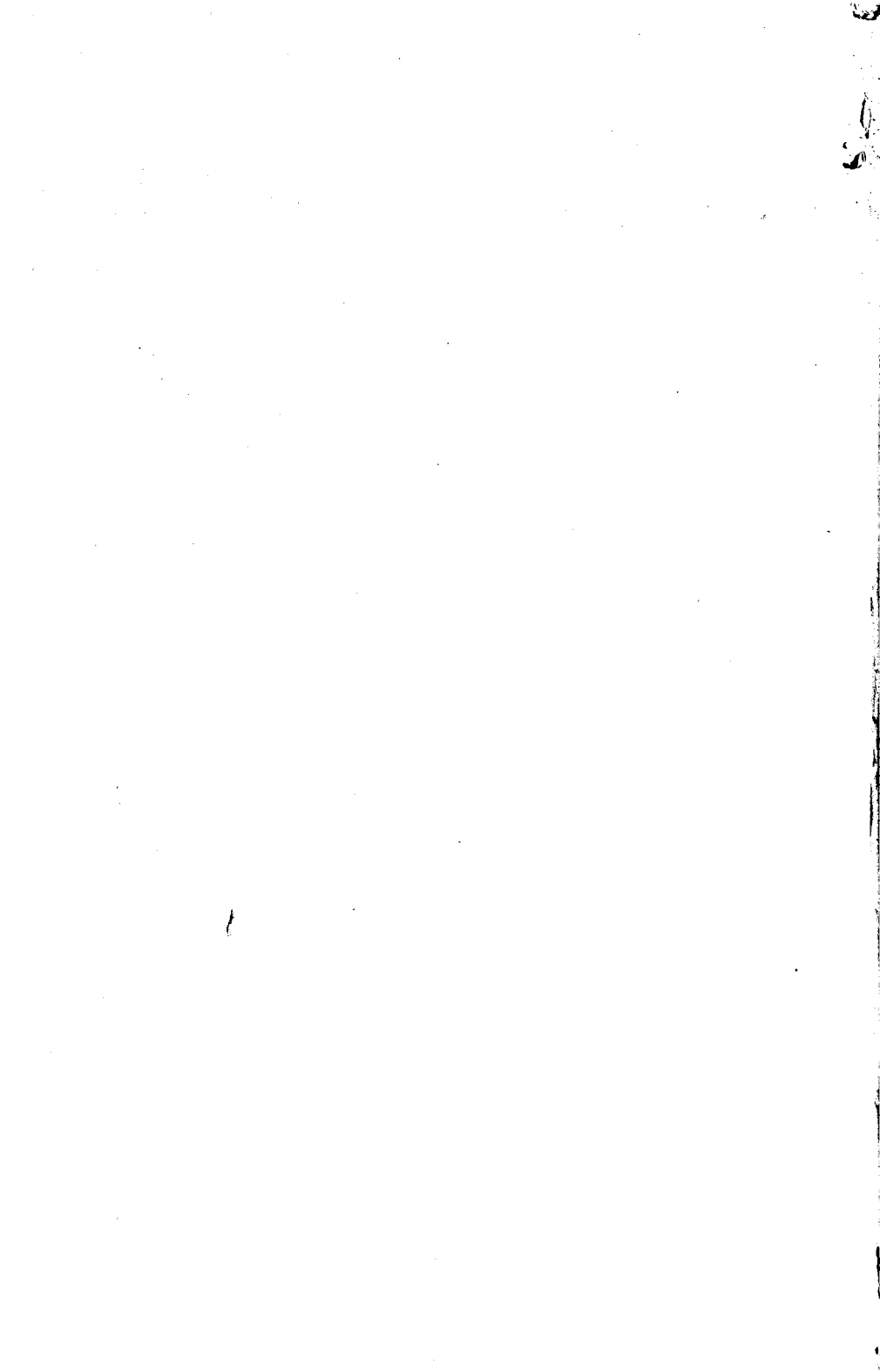
I am grateful to Maj.-Gen. D.K. Palit (retired), who was the Director of Military Operations at the Army Headquarters from 1961 to 1963, for having carefully gone through chapters 20 to 26 which deal with the events that happened in 1962, and the subsequent developments. I also thank Sri K. Subramanyam, Director of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, for going through the manuscript and for scrutinising the last four chapters of this book and giving several valuable suggestions which have been incorporated therein.

I have naturally interpreted the events as seen or experienced and comprehended by me. This may give an impression that I have given undue prominence to myself or to the Intelligence Bureau; but this was not the intention. As the book contains an account of the events as seen from my end, naturally the Intelligence Bureau figures prominently in it. But there was no other way in which I could write it. I acknowledge that, seen from another angle, some of the facts and the events may probably be interpreted differently. The purpose of this book is to provide material for such examination. If it serves that purpose then I shall consider that I have not laboured in vain.

In this book where I have ascribed an opinion to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru or to some other Minister, I have reported it correctly. Where I have given my own interpretation or opinion, that is entirely mine and should not in any way be considered to be representing the opinion of either Pandit Nehru or of other members of his Cabinet or the present Government. For these opinions and interpretations the responsibility is entirely mine.

B. N. MULLIK

New Delhi  
February 15, 1971



## *Acknowledgements*

The following books have been helpful to the author in the preparation of the first four chapters:

*A Short History of Tibet* by H. E. Richardson,  
*The People of Tibet* by Charles Bell,  
*Tibet - Land of Snows* by Guiseppe Tucci,  
*My Land and My People* by the fourteenth Dalai Lama.

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असंख्याः परदोषज्ञा गुणज्ञा अपि केचन ।  
स्वयमेव स्वदोषज्ञा विद्यन्ते यदि पंचषाः ॥

Many are those who see others' faults;  
There are some who see their virtues as well,  
Of those who can see their own faults,  
Alas ! their number is very small.

1918

1919

II

**Independent Tibet**



## I The Roof of the World

TIBET WAS A COUNTRY with an area of about 5,00,000 sq. miles and a population of roughly three millions when the Chinese "liberated" it in 1950. The Tibetans called their homeland "a lofty country, a pure land, the centre of high snow mountains and the source of great rivers". Indeed, it is a lofty country aptly described in books of geography as "the roof of the world", and some of the upland plateaux are between fourteen to eighteen thousand feet high and even the valleys range in height between ten to fourteen thousand feet. It is only in the eastern side that this plateau gradually slopes down to six thousand feet and then falls into the plains of China. It is ringed on all sides excepting the east by high snow-covered mountains; in the north by the Kuen Lun and Tang La ranges; on the western side by the Ladakh mountains; and in the south by the fifteen hundred miles long stretch of the mighty Himalayas. It is also the source of some of the greatest rivers of the world; the Indus, the Sutlej, the Kosi, the Karnali and the Brahmaputra, all of which pass through India; three other rivers, the Salween, the Mekong and the Yangtse flow into Burma, Indo-China and southern China respectively; and the Huang Ho (Yellow River) which has its origin in Inner Tibet and flows into Central China.

The approach to Tibet from the north, west and south is difficult because of the high mountains but is comparatively easier from the east because of the gradual fall in the elevation. The approach from the side of India and Nepal is very difficult because of the massive mountain ranges and there is hardly a pass which is below fourteen thousand feet and many of them are eighteen to nineteen thousand feet in height. They remain snow-covered for six to eight months in the year. However, from the Tibetan side the approach to India is easier, because from a plateau of eleven to

## 2 Political Background

TIBET'S HISTORY goes back to over two thousand years when Tibetan nomadic tribes were harassing the borders of north-west China. These tribes had their separate chiefs and the first attempted evolution of these tribes as a single Tibetan nation was achieved in 127 B.C. by king Nya-Tri-Tsenpo or Namtrhi, and he claimed to be the first king of a united Tibet. He was succeeded by forty generations of kings. The original religion of Tibet was Bon. It was at the time of the twenty-eighth king, Lha-Tho-Ri-Nyen-Tsen, that Buddhism first entered Tibet; but the consolidation of Tibet as a great nation and also the introduction of Buddhism as the State religion was done by the thirty-third king, Song-Tsen-Gampo (born in A.D. 629), who took his conquests far beyond the confines of the present area known as either Inner or Outer Tibet. He was the contemporary of the Chinese Emperor T'ai-Tsung, the founder of the T'ang dynasty. He demanded and married a Chinese princess and, to preserve political balance, also married a Nepalese princess, and it is believed that under their influence he brought two images of Lord Buddha and established them in the famous Jokhang temple which was built during his time and where they still exist. He sent a young minister to India for study and on his return the present Tibetan alphabet was introduced. Besides his conquests, introduction of Buddhism and the alphabet, this king also framed the ten rules of religious service and sixteen rules for public conduct. During his reign, skills in several trades were acquired from India, China and Nepal and these contributed to the improvement of the country's economy. Indeed, king Song-Tsen-Gampo is held in such high regard that his name has come down to the present generation as the incarnation of Chenresi (Avalokiteshwar), the merciful deity who protects Tibet. Song-Tsen-Gampo died in A.D. 650

### **3 Imperialist Intrigues**

IN SPITE OF the Chinese ultra-conservative policy in closing Tibet's doors to foreigners in 1792, Tibet slowly drifted into the stream of international events which in a few years were to alter the face of Asia and the thirteenth Dalai Lama found himself in that current. Energetic and with political shrewdness that grew with age, he ruled Tibet in one of the gravest moments in her history, and saw the fulfilment, albeit briefly, of the prophecies ascribed to Padmasambhava, that after a long period of Chinese occupation the Tibetans would be able to throw off the Chinese overlordship and re-assert their independence. The thirteenth Dalai Lama had, in his youth, come under the influence of a Buryat monk, Dordjieff, and, therefore, had acquired certain leanings towards Russia. He had even accepted an invitation from the Czar to make an official visit to Moscow, though this never came off.

Even before 1792, Tibet had been traversed by various Jesuit and Capuchin monks, who had tried to propagate Christianity and had even established missions, but they had made no progress and by 1792 they had all left Tibet. A few westerners had travelled through Tibet in disguise and written interesting memoirs of their journeys. Tibet always had friendly relations with the Newar rulers of Nepal and this friendship was only broken when the Hindu Gurkhas came to power in that country. But even then trade with Nepal continued and also cultural exchanges. Similarly there was trade with India on a fairly large scale and there were several marts in India and Tibet which were regularly visited by Tibetans and Indians. Buddha Gaya, Sarnath, Sanchi, etc. attracted thousands of Buddhist pilgrims every year and Kailash and Mansarovar hundreds of Hindus from India and Nepal. Tibet had for centuries provided religious leadership in Mongolia and till the end the Mongolians accepted the Dalai Lama as the

## 4 Four Decades of Independence

THE BRITISH QUIETLY ignored the declaration of independence by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan National Assembly. They apprehended that it would not be possible for a weak Tibet to maintain its independence in a predatory world; and with the Russians sweeping fast into Mongolia, the British were alarmed that they might soon penetrate into Tibet also. The British themselves were unwilling to take over the protectorate of Tibet, as they were already over-stretched and had been forced to make a retreat in the Boer War. With the German menace confronting them in Europe, the British were unwilling to further increase their commitments in Asia and to take over the duty of protecting another 2,000 miles of difficult frontier and an area of 5,00,000 sq. miles. The recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet would keep the Russians away. Moreover, the British had a lot of trade interests in China and so would not like to antagonise that country; nor would they like to have Chinese soldiers on the Indian frontiers which eventuality might arise if they accepted the full-scale sovereignty of China over Tibet. It would serve the British interests if a weak and neutralised Tibet enjoying autonomy existed on India's frontiers, so that no elaborate and expensive protective measures would be required to guard them. Probably the British also did not fully comprehend that the old relationship between the Chinese Emperor and the Dalai Lama was a personal one—that of a Patron and a Priest—and there was no political relationship between the Chinese and the Tibetan people as such. With the elimination of the Emperor and the introduction of a republican form of government, that personal tie had also disappeared. In the circumstances, the recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet would be tantamount to the recognition of the supremacy of the Chinese people over the Tibetans—a situation



## **Uneasy Peace**

## **5 Red China Invades Tibet**

WHEN IT BECAME clear that India was becoming independent, the Nationalist Government of China, thinking that the British would no longer be interested in the India-Tibet borders, sent a feeler to the latter in the form of a protest against the presence of Indian Government officials in NEFA. This was rejected on the ground that the area was within the accepted frontiers of India. Soon after India achieved independence, the protest was repeated with the new Government of India, but this was also rejected on the same grounds. The Nationalist Government then changed its approach and in 1948 suggested that the Tibetan Trade Regulations of 1908 were due for revision, ignoring the fact that these regulations had been superseded by the Simla Convention of 1914. After some delay, the Government of India replied that the Trade Regulations of 1908 were no longer valid, as these had been replaced by the Simla Convention of 1914. The Nationalist Government of China then challenged the validity of the Simla Convention, but before India could send a reply, that Government had fallen.

Towards the end of 1948 it was evident that the Kuomintang Government was on the run and that Mao Tse-tung's forces had gained the upper hand. On January 31, 1949, Mao's forces occupied Peking. Though the Nationalist Government had not moved from its wartime capital at Nanking to Peking after the withdrawal of the Japanese forces, there was no doubt that Peking was the traditional capital of China and its occupation by the Communist forces dealt a severe moral blow to the nationalists. News started coming in of large-scale desertions from the Nationalist to the Communist forces. Even whole armies changed sides overnight. In April, 1949, Nanking fell to the Communists and the Nationalist Government collapsed. It moved south

## 6 Reactions in India

THE GOVERNMENT OF India's decision to recognise China's suzerainty over Tibet, its readiness to renounce unilaterally some of the treaty rights it had inherited from the British in Tibet and its refusal to intervene militarily to prevent Chinese entry into that country have often been criticised by persons in the hindsight of subsequent events. It has been claimed that we should have entered into a new treaty with Nationalist China before it was overthrown by the Communists to secure better terms for Tibet and even to guarantee its independence. It has also been argued that we should have followed Lord Curzon's example of 1904 and sent a military expedition into Tibet to thwart the Chinese. It has been urged that we should never have renounced the treaty rights which India had inherited in Tibet from the British. That these criticisms have persisted for such a long time and have been voiced by so many influential persons shows not only the measure of the people's indignation over the Chinese action in Tibet but also reveals the inadequate understanding of history and the realities of the situation as they existed at the time.

That the unprovoked aggression by big and powerful China on small and weak Tibet should rouse the indignation of the Indian people was natural and understandable. Tibet was a peaceful country and bore enmity towards none. The three million religious-minded Tibetans posed no danger to the six hundred millions of Chinese who at this time possessed a war machine second to none in its might. India, emerging from its subordination to centuries-old foreign rule, was naturally horrified at the sight of such a powerful country as China swallowing the handful of Tibetans instead of leaving them in peace and helping them to progress. There was therefore widespread criticism of the Chinese action in Indian newspapers, in public forums and

## 7 India's Northern Frontiers

EXCEPT THE PORTIONS covered by Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, the whole of India's northern international frontier from the trijunction of India, Afghanistan and Sinkiang in the north-west to the trijunction of India, Burma and Tibet in the north-east lies along the Sinkiang and Tibet regions of China. The State of Jammu and Kashmir has Sinkiang to its north and Tibet to the east. The States of old Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have Tibet in the east and the State of Uttar Pradesh has Tibet on the north as the border. Then there are about 700 miles of Nepal-Tibet border. After that come the borders of Sikkim and then of Bhutan with Tibet. From the trijunction of India, Bhutan and Tibet in the west, to the trijunction of India, Burma and Tibet in the east, the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) has Tibet on the northern border.

"The Report of the Officials of the Governments of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question" released by the Government in January, 1961, and printed in the Government of India Press in 1962 gives both the Indian description of the boundary and that put forward by the Chinese. Those who wish to have detailed information about the respective cases put forward by India and China about the boundary may refer to the above publication. But a very informative and concise book on the India-China border is the one by G.N. Rao entitled *The India-China Border—A Reappraisal*. Rao, who was one of the Advisers of the Indian team under J.S. Mehta, was fully acquainted with the border problem.

It is clear from a study of the accounts given by the above-mentioned documents that as between Ladakh on one side and Tibet on its east, the border had been always traditional—the tradition going as far back as the tenth century and had never changed. Places like Demchok, Rudok and Lanak La had been

## 8 New Security Problems

UNDER THE BRITISH the Intelligence Bureau's responsibility was confined only to internal intelligence and all matters of foreign and military intelligence used to be handled directly by His Majesty's Government from London. There used to be a representative of the Intelligence Bureau in London for getting from the British Intelligence such external information as affected internal security of India. When India attained independence, whilst the Intelligence Bureau's responsibilities increased greatly due to the integration of the States with India, it still did not have any responsibility for foreign Intelligence. This responsibility was given some years later (in 1951 to be precise). So, up to that time the Intelligence Bureau's work regarding external Intelligence was directed at neutralising any threats to the internal security arising from the existence of a hostile Pakistan and the emergence of a powerful China on the borders.

Towards the end of 1948 it was clear that the Kuomintang Government was on the run, and that the Communist forces would soon occupy the whole of China. When after capturing Peking in January, 1949, the Communist troops started moving southwards, many of the Chinese families residing in India became anxious about the safety of their relations in China and an appreciable infiltration of Chinese nationals from Mainland China through Burma and Singapore into India commenced. Our first concern then was to stop this illegal infiltration, because there was the potential danger of Chinese Communists also infiltrating in this manner and preparing cells within the large Chinese community which existed at Calcutta, Kalimpong, Bombay and a few other places. The problem was of the utmost concern to West Bengal, because more than three-fourths of the Chinese nationals in India lived in that State and also because the routes from Burma and

## 9 The Quest for Security

THE HIMMATSINGHJI COMMITTEE was a well-balanced team and, besides Major-General Himmatsinghji, Deputy Minister of Defence, as the chairman, included Lt.-General Kulwant Singh, Corps Commander, K. Zakaria, Head of the Historical Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, S.N. Haksar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, and Group Capt. M.S. Chaturvedi from the Indian Air Force as members. Waryam Singh, Deputy Director of the Intelligence Bureau, was also on this Committee and represented both the Intelligence Bureau and the Home Ministry. This Committee, which was called the North and North-East Border Defence Committee,\* went into action immediately and sent its report in two parts. The first part consisted of its recommendations regarding Sikkim, Bhutan, NEFA and the Eastern frontier bordering Burma. This part was submitted in April, 1951. The second part contained the recommendations on Ladakh and the frontier regions of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Nepal and was submitted in September, 1951. Actually the second part was held up to receive the recommendation of another Committee headed by Major-General Thorat, which had been set up to assess the security needs of Nepal and its requirements of Indian assistance—and this latter Committee submitted its report in August, 1951. The Himmatsinghji Committee also had before it the recommendations which had been made by a smaller Committee formed in Assam to assess the dangers in NEFA and suggest the possibility of pushing the Assam Rifles Posts as far towards the frontier as possible.

The North and North-East Border Defence Committee care-

\* Referred to by Kavic in his book *India's Quest for Security* and Mankekar in *Guilty Men of 1962*.

## 10 Panchsheel

THE QUARTERING OF A large Chinese garrison in Lhasa created serious tensions and strains. The Chinese occupied all the open spaces round the city and requisitioned a large number of big houses causing much inconvenience to the people of the town. No people take kindly to the quartering of foreign troops and there was little love lost between the Tibetans and the Chinese. Moreover, the people were not only deprived of their favourite picnic spots, which were now simmering with Chinese troops, but many families lost their homes and had to take shelter in very modest quarters in the bazar. But all this was not so bad as the requisitioning by the Chinese of thousands of tons of wheat and other foodgrains to feed their occupation troops. Communications from China to Lhasa were not yet fit for the transport of all supplies required for the troops and so they had to live off the land. Tibet never had much surplus food and the local people could just manage with whatever they produced. Hence this sudden influx of large numbers of Chinese troops into Lhasa, which almost doubled its population, sent prices rocketing and this caused much distress to the people.

The Dalai Lama's Prime Minister, Lukhangwa, tried his best to persuade the Chinese to remove the troops from the vicinity of Lhasa and to disperse them in the country or send them to the frontiers. But this the Chinese would not do. They kept the troops all round Lhasa on the plea that they were there to protect the Tibetan people. The rejoinder by the Tibetan Ministers, that the only people from whom the Tibetans required protection were the Chinese themselves, brought no reply. This callousness of the Chinese towards the sufferings of the people naturally caused serious resentment amongst the latter. There were public demonstrations and people started composing and openly sing-

## II The Kashmir Princess

THE AIR INDIA INTERNATIONAL Superconstellation plane, "The Kashmir Princess", which had been chartered by the Chinese Government for carrying some members of its delegation to attend the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung (Indonesia) in April, 1955, caught fire after an explosion five hours after it had taken off from Hong Kong on April 11, 1955. The Captain of the aircraft dived to make a landing in the sea, but, due to loss of power because of fire and explosion, the plane crashed in the sea with great impact and broke into parts. All the eleven passengers were killed and so were all the members of the crew excepting three. There was a current belief that the plane had originally been chartered to take the Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, to Djakarta, but he actually travelled via Kunming, Rangoon and Singapore and "The Kashmir Princess" carried only some junior Chinese officers and Press representatives for the conference.

The whole world was shocked by this outrage. It was suspected that someone had planted a time bomb in the plane before its take off from Hong Kong on the assumption that Chou En-lai would be travelling in it. The Indian Press clamoured for a proper investigation to find out who were responsible for it and bring them to book, and various surmises were made involving the KMT, the British and the USA. The plane had crashed in Indonesian waters and the Indonesian maritime authorities, helped by the British Navy, salvaged parts of the wreckage, and there was clear indication that a time device had been used to cause the explosion. Bits of the explosive and the time device were found inside the starboard under-carriage wheelbay of the aircraft. The experts, who examined the wreckage, also found that the damage was inconsistent with the failure of any aircraft part and hence it was clear that the time device was used for this sabotage.

## 12 Nonalignment

IN HIS BOOK, *The Guilty Men of 1962*, Mankekar has given an able exposition of the problem inherent in the triangle of India, Tibet and China. Khera has also traversed the same ground, though in a more discursive way, in his book, *India's Defence Problem*. But Mankekar, in branding Pandit Nehru as one of the guilty men responsible for the happenings of 1962, has, in my opinion, gravely erred. Mankekar's handicap was that he did not have all the inside information about some of the earlier decisions and so he was working on incomplete data. He has marshalled his charges against Pandit Nehru as follows :

“What effective courses of action could India have taken to safeguard her frontiers against a hostile Chinese-dominated Tibet ?

“Firstly in the face of tell-tale evidence of China's evil intention towards India almost from the outset, that India should have recklessly dropped its guard and blindly reposed faith in the Chinese protestations of friendship and peace was a grave blunder. From that blunder flowed all the troubles that India had to face since 1959 at any rate.

“This smug, naive ‘*Bhai-Bhai*’ mentality, that stemmed from wilful blindness, stood in the way of India utilising an eleven year long warning to prepare herself to meet the Chinese menace.

“It could, however, be claimed that it was not so much that India was not alerted by the developments in Tibet in 1950 and thereafter; what went wrong was Nehru's abject reliance on diplomacy—the starry-eyed Nehru brand of it—to counter the danger from China to the neglect of the conventional instrument of policy, namely the armed forces.

“Nehru had been carried away by his own hot-gospeling

### **13 Clouds on the Horizon**

PANDIT NEHRU HAD GIVEN us the guidelines for our security work *vis-a-vis* China and we pursued this aim with single-minded effort. As our resources at the beginning (as explained in Chapter 9) were meagre and we started practically from scratch, it took us considerable time to build up our organisation to cope fully with the threat from China. But as our resources position improved, we went on covering larger areas every year till by the end of 1958 we had occupied posts practically all along the frontier from Karakoram in Ladakh in the north to Kibithoo in NEFA in the north-east. Jointly with the Sikkim Police we held posts all along the frontier in Sikkim and we covered the passes in Nepal along with the Nepal Army. We had our posts at all the important passes in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab and all the passes in South-East Ladakh touching Tibet. However, a gap remained. Whereas along the rest of the frontier the areas were inhabited almost right up to the frontier and, therefore, our check-posts went up to the last inhabited village, which might be only a mile or two short of the pass, in Ladakh, excepting in the south-eastern area, most of the north-eastern and northern areas known as Lingzi Tang, Aksai Chin, Soda Plains and Depsang Plains were completely devoid of any population or even vegetation. The statement that not a blade of grass grew in this area was correct. These places were at an average elevation of over 15,000 feet and there were several passes between 18,000 to 20,000 feet which had to be crossed immediately after leaving Ladakh valley proper to reach these longitudinal flat valleys which were more easily accessible from Sinkiang. The Army in those days had only a militia battalion in Leh and did not hold any post outside the Ladakh valley. Supplies could be received in Leh only by air and had to be transported to distances of more than 150 miles

## 14 The Tibetan Revolt

WHEN IN FEBRUARY 1957 the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet after his visit to India which had commenced the previous November, he entered a country which was seething with discontent and resentment against the Chinese. This was the reason why the Chinese had sent messages to him whilst in India to hurry back to Tibet.

The seeds of this trouble had been sown as early as 1956 in the Kham and Amdo areas. The Khampas, the residents of the Kham province, were ardent Buddhists but born soldiers and they had always maintained an autonomy of their own though professing allegiance to the Dalai Lama. The residents of the Amdo province were the Amdoas and, though they were not so warlike as the Khampas, they were also virile and freedom loving. (Incidentally the Dalai Lama is from the Amdo area). The Amdoas were also ardent Buddhists and even in the best of times owed only nominal allegiance to the temporal authority of the Dalai Lama. The Headquarters of the Kham area is Chamdo. This is the area which had been claimed as a part of Inner Tibet by the Chinese and had been first invaded in October, 1950, and it was near Chamdo that the Tibetan army had been defeated. The Chinese took these areas away from the Dalai Lama's control and placed them under the Chamdo Liberation Committee. After that, while the Chinese were building their road communication through the Kham and Amdo areas, they showed a conciliatory attitude towards the local inhabitants and even tried to take advantage of their traditional hostility against the U and Tsang people.

By 1956 the Chinese had completed their occupation of Central Tibet and had passed on to the frontiers of India and Nepal and, therefore, there was no longer any need for continuing the soft attitude towards the Khampas and the Amdoas. They then tried to

## 15 Threat to India's Integrity

CHINA WAS FURIOUS. The columns of the Chinese official newspapers, *Takung Pao* and *Peking People's Daily*, poured venom against the Government of India, Pandit Nehru and those Indian leaders who had formed a committee to help the Tibetans in distress. They accused Pandit Nehru in the most intemperate language of following a policy of imperialism and expansionism. An inspired article published on May 6, 1959, by the Renmin Ribao and republished in the *Peking Review* dated May 12, 1959, entitled "The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy" took strong exception to the expression of sympathy for the Tibetan people by Prime Minister Nehru and other Indian leaders and alleged that this amounted to interference in China's internal affairs. It held out an implied threat that once China's position in Tibet was fully consolidated, she also might foment trouble in India and would be justified in setting up people's committees to support Assam or Uttar Pradesh to oppose policies followed by the Central Government in these States. It accused Pandit Nehru of not showing respect for truth and propriety when he made accusations against China of violating the Sino-Tibetan Agreement and the assurances that China had given to respect Tibet's autonomy. It questioned Nehru's good faith towards China in his extending a welcome to the Dalai Lama and in his going to Mussoorie to meet him. It alleged that the campaign for Tibet's freedom had been built up in India in which the Congress and its leaders, including its President, Indira Gandhi, had participated.

But more significant than these articles was the statement which the Chinese Ambassador in India made to the Foreign Secretary on May 16. He held India responsible for the abnormalities which had crept in in the relations between India and China and repeated



## **Confrontation**

## **16 China's Aggressive Posture**

ON SEPTEMBER 26, 1959, that is twenty-five days before the Kongka La incident had taken place (October 21, 1959), Pandit Nehru had replied to Chou En-lai's letter dated September 8, in which the latter had called the entire Indo-Tibetan border into question, accused India of causing tension and trouble on the frontier and had also challenged India's right to talk about the frontiers of Sikkim and Bhutan with Tibet. In this letter, Pandit Nehru mentioned that when he had discussed the McMahon Line with Chou En-lai in 1954 and again in 1956 he had gathered the impression that the only problem was to reach an agreement on where exactly that line lay. Even Chou En-lai's letter of January 23, 1959, gave no idea that he was trying to lay a claim to about 40,000 sq. miles of what had been indisputably Indian territory for decades and in some sectors for over a century. Pandit Nehru rebutted the allegation made by the Chinese Prime Minister that India had been applying all sorts of pressures on the Chinese Government to agree to the boundary claimed by India. Pandit Nehru pointed out that, far from doing so, India had been withholding from the public information about the frequent intrusions by Chinese troops into Indian territory and of the construction of the road in Aksai Chin in order not to rouse Indian public opinion against China, a step which, ultimately when the intrusions and violations came to be known, had put the Government of India to a great deal of embarrassment both in Parliament and in the country.

Pandit Nehru maintained that the entire border between India and Tibet had been there for centuries and had been determined by history, geography, custom and tradition. He logically upheld the validity of every treaty which had been entered into by the earlier governments of Tibet and/or China and the British

## **17 China Tries to Isolate India**

CHOU EN-LAI ACCEPTED Pandit Nehru's invitation to come to Delhi to discuss the differences that had arisen over the frontier and fixed April 19 to 25 as the dates of the visit.

But before visiting Delhi, he went about trying to woo Burma and Nepal, which bordered India and which had very friendly relations with India. Indeed, the Indo-Nepalese Pact went so far as to recognise that the two countries should consult each other in case of aggression against either of them.

On January 29, 1960, at the conclusion of General Ne Win's visit to Peking, a border agreement and a treaty of friendship and non-aggression between China and Burma were signed. The border agreement laid down that a joint committee would be set up to survey and demarcate the boundary. Burma agreed to part with certain parts of Burmese territory, Hpimaw, Gawalum, etc. in favour of China and in return got the Namwan tract. Burma also agreed to hand over the areas inhabited by Panhung and Panlao tribes. In any case, the Burmese had no effective control over these areas. But Burma's traditional boundary in the north with Tibet as defined by the McMahon Line was recognised and the watershed principle was accepted though not mentioned in so many words. The only point left undecided was the trijunction of India, Burma and Tibet. The Chinese claimed this to be at Diphu Pass which was five miles south of Talu Pass which was till then recognised as the trijunction. It should be mentioned here that talks with Burma had been going on for several years and had bogged down due to the intransigence of the Chinese who had made claims over large tracts of Burmese territory. So the fact that, during the height of her dispute with India, China suddenly changed her attitude, showed a spirit of accommodation and reason and conceded to Burma practically all that the

## 18 China and the World: 1960-61

CHINA MADE A THOROUGH re-appraisal of the international situation in 1960-61 and came to certain conclusions which were evident from the line of action she adopted during the next few years. It would be useful to go over this for a proper understanding of the motivations and compulsions behind various policies adopted by her towards different countries during this period. The background of the world situation at this time as also the internal conditions in China have to be recalled for a proper understanding of the situation. China was passing through a period of great drought and economic distress. Before the end of 1961 a breach had taken place with Soviet Russia with the latter withdrawing Russian technicians and discontinuing economic aid. There was more than a possibility of conflicts developing in the international field in Laos with the Pathet Lao on one side supported by China and indirectly by Russia and the Phoumi group on the other supported by the United States. The war in South Vietnam had not yet escalated to the proportions which it reached after 1964. China was still apprehensive of an invasion of her mainland by Chiang Kai-shek from Taiwan. China's relations with India had deteriorated over the border issue and Chou En-lai's visit to Delhi in April, 1960, had not produced any significant result. China had hastily concluded treaties with Burma and Nepal and was intending to do so with Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, with regard to Burma, China felt that due to the pressure of events and in a hurry she had made a mistake in making too many concessions.\* In Indonesia, the local government was carrying on a concerted drive against Chinese nationals and

\* The obvious reference was to the fact that China had accepted Burma's northern border with Tibet to be along the McMahon Line as this would strengthen India's claim of that Line being the North-East frontier of India with Tibet.

## 19 The Forward Policy

THERE WAS NO DOUBT that Pandit Nehru was thinking ahead and taking a broad view of all the contingencies that might arise. His talk set us on the task of making a special assessment of China's strength and weakness as a result of the economic difficulties she was facing in consequence of three successive droughts and the withdrawal of Russian economic help. Delving deep into the papers which gave an insight into the Chinese foreign policy as well as military strategy, we came to the conclusion that though there were some basic weaknesses in the Chinese military position, that would affect China only in case of a war with a very powerful country with a modernised Army and Air Force like the United States or the Soviet Union. The shortages which Lin Piao had talked of would not handicap China in a war against India, particularly in a short war, which was all that was apprehended on the frontier at that time. China had made enough stockpiling in bases all over Tibet as well as in the frontier areas to be able to carry on a war of even a couple of months' duration without having to depend too much on supplies from the mainland. Her army in Tibet was well conditioned and her communication system to the frontier was good and, as she had sufficient strength required in Tibet itself, she was in a position to attack India at a place of her own choice, particularly because the offensive would lie in her hands. We communicated the result of this analysis to the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister who agreed with our conclusions. But the Army Headquarters took a different view and held that China did not have the capacity to maintain more than five Divisions in Tibet in peacetime and not more than two Divisions during operations. Even these units would be poorly equipped and did not constitute any real danger to India's security. Thus ensued a disagreement between Intel-

## 20 Confrontation

SOON AFTER THE decision taken at the Prime Minister's meeting that the Army should move into all unoccupied portions of our territory, we were again asked to indicate specifically the areas in NEFA where sizable gaps still existed and which should be occupied because, though by this time the Army Headquarters and the External Affairs Ministry had good knowledge about the Western and Middle Sectors, they were still a little vague about the Eastern Sector. So, in the month of December, 1961, we prepared another review and pointed out ten such gaps with a total area of nearly 5,500 sq. miles in NEFA which still remained physically unoccupied because these areas were very thinly inhabited and were difficult of access. Many of these unoccupied valleys ran east-west parallel to the McMahon Line and entry into them was possible only through the river valleys running north-south. Hence the difficulty was that so long as the road communication did not reach that point in the river valley from which these unoccupied east-west valleys commenced, they remained inaccessible. In this note, we also pointed out where our nearest frontier posts were and where the Chinese were establishing their posts across the border from which they could threaten these vacant areas. We also mentioned that at this time the Chinese were carrying on strong propaganda throughout Tibet telling the local people that they would soon liberate all those areas of Tibet, meaning NEFA, of which India was in unlawful occupation. Actually, this propaganda was producing some adverse effect on the morale of the frontier population in the absence of any physical signs of Indian presence.

In NEFA, operation ONKAR had been introduced in 1960. According to this plan, there was to be a large expansion of the Assam Rifles and units were to be posted all along the frontier

## 21 China Invades India

PANDIT NEHRU LEFT for London for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference on the early morning of September 8. As Morarji Desai was also away, the Prime Minister left Lal Bahadur Shastri and T.T. Krishnamachari jointly in charge. Lt.-Gen. Kaul had earlier proceeded on leave on September 2. His leave had been objected to by the Defence Minister and the Chief of Army Staff, because they apprehended that the Chinese might create trouble before the winter set in.\* But Kaul's relationship with Krishna Menon at this time was rather bad. Since his meeting with Chester Bowles in March, 1962, during which he might have received assurances of American arms supply, Kaul had shown a progressive defiance of the Defence Minister and had pressed him to turn to America for large-scale military assistance. To this Menon would not agree. He wanted to keep his option open to get supplies from any country where it was available. His further argument was that America would put strings except in the case of nominal supplies, which in any event would make little difference. By August, 1962, Kaul and Menon were practically not on talking terms. This was the main reason why Kaul went away on leave at this time, though it was also true that he was tired due to constant hard work and illnesses in the family.

Maj.-Gen. Dhillon, Deputy CGS, officiated as the CGS during Kaul's absence. Lt.-Gen. Sen was the Army Commander in the Eastern Command and under him Lt.-Gen. Umrao Singh was the Corps Commander of the XXIII Corps, which had NEFA in its charge. Maj.-Gen. Naranjan Prasad was the GOC, Tezpur, as Commander of the 4 Division. Lt.-Gen. Daulat Singh was the Army Commander in Western Command and under him Lt.-Gen.

\* B.M. Kaul, *The Untold Story*.

## 22 Dark October

ON OCTOBER 13, Kaul flew back to Tezpur via Calcutta. I was also travelling by the same plane. We talked all through the journey about his plans and the possible Chinese reactions. He looked depressed. It seemed to me that though he had accepted the decision of his superiors, Thapar and Sen, he was not morally convinced that this was the right decision, and was obsessed by the feeling that the Chinese could not be fought—at least in NEFA. I found that he had fairly high temperature and he complained that he had not slept and was tossing in his bed all night. But he was keen to go back to Tezpur to implement the new plan. Before we parted at Calcutta he invited me to accompany him to the front and I agreed. The arrangement was that as soon as he would send me a message I would join him at Tezpur or Tawang. But this opportunity never came.

After the Tsenjong incident, the Chinese moved forward a good deal of reinforcement across the Thagla Ridge. It is not correct that before October 10 the Chinese had massed two Brigades below Thagla. They had just about a Brigade and that was why their reaction to our occupation of Tsenjong was rather belated. They deployed the new troops in battle positions. These movements and locations and even much of the armament was visible to the Indian army and it was quite apparent that the Chinese were preparing for an attack. Indeed, Brigadier Dalvi's account shows that he was quite aware of this Chinese build-up and, therefore, on October 13 and 14, had discussed the matter with the Commander, 4 Division, and had sent messages to the Corps Headquarters for permission to give up this position. He had also opposed the holding of the Tsangley position. Indeed, Kaul's dash to Delhi to plead that not only the attack from but also the defence of the Nyamkachu valley was not possible had created a

## 23 Black November

IMMEDIATELY AFTER OCCUPYING Tawang, the Chinese brought forward their troops with great rapidity and put in concentrated efforts to improve the road from Shao to Bumla and to convert the bridle path from Bumla to Tawang into a motorable road so as to make the entire stretch of road from Tsona to Tawang fit for the use of heavy trucks. They built this road with tremendous speed and completed it within two weeks, a really marvellous engineering feat, exhibiting a much superior road-building technique in this high plateau than that of our engineers. Day after day our forward posts watched the progress of this road and we reported this to the Government. The Air Force also watched the progress anxiously and through our joint efforts we got a full picture of this road as its construction progressed. By watching its progress, we could say definitely that it would be completed by the twelfth of November. It was obvious, therefore, that the Chinese were building this road to bring up reinforcements to Tawang and were determined to make a further thrust into NEFA.

After the withdrawal of the Indian army from the Tawang Sub-division, the question that next arose was where in Kameng the army should make a stand to prevent further Chinese encroachment. The four battalions in the Dhola sector had been irretrievably lost, but the two battalions, i.e. the Sikh Light Infantry and the Garhwal Rifles, which had been deployed for the defence of Tawang, had been withdrawn in good formation and had now taken up positions on the southern side of the Tawang-chu river after blowing up the bridge connecting Tawang with Sela Pass. Should we make our stand here to block any further Chinese advance or, if this position was unsuitable, withdraw further to a more suitable ground? There was serious thinking in the Army Headquarters about the next defence position.

## 24 Evacuation of Tezpur

BY ABOUT November 10, when it was plain that the Chinese were poised for a massive attack on our positions all along the NEFA frontier, it was decided that under the Defence of India Rules further security precautions should be taken in North Bengal and Assam and throughout the country in general to prevent any possible betrayals and acts of sabotage in support of the enemy. There was a large number of Chinese nationals in Assam and many of them were working in the tea gardens north of the Brahmaputra. There was a fair number of Chinese in Kalimpong and Darjeeling besides a very large number of them in Calcutta. Many of them had worked in collusion with the Chinese Consulate in Calcutta till it was closed and it was noticed that there was much jubilation amongst these people over the Chinese victory at Nyamkachu and Kibithoo in the month of October. The State Governments of Assam and West Bengal had both represented to the Government of India that these foreign nationals, who were in obvious sympathy with China, posed a serious security danger when the frontiers were endangered and so they should be detained and removed from at least Assam and North Bengal. In a defence meeting on or about November 13, the Prime Minister enquired from me what steps were being taken to immobilise these persons and I replied that the Home Ministry was considering the necessary steps. The Prime Minister said that all these Chinese nationals should be removed from Assam and North Bengal and he asked me to suggest this action to the Home Minister. When Vishwanathan (Home Secretary) and I met the Home Minister in the afternoon and proposed this action, somehow or other the Home Minister did not react. The question at that time also arose of the detention of some of the Marxist Communist leaders who were talking in equivocal terms about the

## 25 Colombo Proposals

IT IS NOT necessary to go into the details of the terms of the cease-fire unilaterally declared by the Chinese except the following salient points :

- (1) Beginning from the midnight of November 21-22, 1962, the Chinese Frontier Guards would cease fire along the entire border.
- (2) The Chinese would begin a withdrawal from December 1, 1962, and they would withdraw to positions 20 kilometres behind the line of actual control which existed between China and India on November 7, 1959. (The Chinese would thus completely evacuate NEFA and hold positions north of the McMahon Line.)
- (3) In the middle and the western sectors the Chinese Frontier Guards would withdraw 20 kilometres from the line of actual control (which would more or less mean 20 kilometres from their claimed line of 1960. But they would evacuate Demchok, Rezang La, etc.)
- (4) Inside the area in their side of actual control but to be vacated by them, the Chinese would set up checkpoints with civil police and notify their existence to the Government of India.
- (5) The Chinese and Indian Governments should appoint officials to meet at places agreed upon by both the parties to discuss matters relating to the 20 kilometres withdrawal of the armed forces of each party to form a demilitarised zone and the establishment of checkpoints by each party on its side of the line of actual control as well as the return of the captured personnel.
- (6) When the tasks of these officials had yielded results and

## 26 Preparations for the Future

IT WAS OBVIOUS that no longer could Defence be considered as separate from development and both must be regarded as integral and relative parts of the national economic plan. There could not be any economic development at the expense of Defence and at the same time the expenditure on Defence had to bear a relation to the economic development and the total capacity of the country to pay. In the first fifteen years after independence, India had kept her Defence expenditure down and spent most of her efforts on the development of economic resources and had made important advances. In fact, without this development, it would have been impossible for India to withstand the shock of a military defeat on the Himalayas and to accelerate her efforts in making adequate military preparations. However, there could not be any more complacency nor reliance on political negotiations alone to protect India against further Chinese aggression, which in future might be timed simultaneously with a Pakistani aggression from the west. Therefore, the Government of India undertook a large expansion of the Armed Forces and also defence industries and other subsidiary organisations. The details of these plans have been gone into carefully by Khera in *India's Defence Problem* and Kavic in *India's Quest for Security*. It is unnecessary to repeat all the details and only the following summary is given:

- (1) The Indian Army's strength would be raised to 8,25,000 equipped with modern weapons.
- (2) The Air Force strength would be raised to 45 Squadrons of modern aircraft with improved radar facilities and ground defences.
- (3) The naval strength was to be maintained at par with the

# IV

## **Introspection**

## 27 Intelligence

IN ANY PUBLIC controversy about the alleged failure of Intelligence, both the accuser and the accused find themselves in difficulties. No one other than those who are at the receiving end of intelligence can ever make any positive statement about what Intelligence did report or what it did not. And the number of people at the receiving end is generally only two or three and they will not oblige by disclosing the information. So accusations generally are made subjectively on the basis of vague assumptions by or at the instance of interested persons and so are generally wide off the mark. It is equally difficult for Intelligence to defend itself because of the vague nature of charges made, and even if a specific charge is made, in order to refute it, Intelligence would have to disclose facts which it would not be in the interest of the country or the administration to reveal. And against a vague charge that Intelligence has failed an equally vague defence that the charge is unfounded does not make any sense. This very fact that Intelligence cannot reply or does not reply, however, makes it further vulnerable, because people can go on making irresponsible statements against Intelligence without taking the slightest care to ascertain the actual facts. In any case, even if they tried to verify the facts, they would not be able to do so because they would not get them. Moreover, Intelligence does not have, nor does it require, a public relations department to feed the public with propaganda as some other departments do. Therefore, when some other department feeds the press or writers with allegations against Intelligence, vague as they must be, the latter cannot and does not reply. It would be highly undesirable for Intelligence to enter into public controversies about its alleged successes or failures, because then it would have to make certain

## 28 Defence Forces

INDIA'S SHARE of the pre-independence Indian Army of 5,00,000 roughly amounted to about 2,80,000. All the mixed battalions had generally been stripped of their Muslim personnel who had migrated to Pakistan. Immediately after the partition, whilst the Army was still engaged in a big way to fight the communal holocaust in Punjab and other places, the Kashmir war was thrust upon it. This was at first a fight with the tribals, for which the Indian Army had been well trained, and later against units of the Pakistani Army, which till lately were parts of the Indian Army and so were similarly trained and equipped. India had at this time good officers in Kashmir of whom mention may be made of Major-Generals Kulwant Singh and Thimayya, who led the troops well and saved most of Jammu and Kashmir from occupation by Pakistani troops and irregulars.

Cariappa, who was the first Indian Chief of Army Staff, did good service to the army in patterning it after the British and making it non-political and giving it a character. He also organised the non-denominational Guards Battalions with the aim of national integration. In his time the morale of the troops and the officers continued to be high. After him came Generals Rajinder Singhji and Srinagesh. Though some critics have alleged that during their time the Army went into somnolence, this is not correct. During these years, the general stress rightly was on the country's economic development and the army, as a part of the Indian population, understood the implications of this; because, if full economic benefits were not made available to the masses early enough in an appreciable measure, it would be impossible for the Government to justify its existence in a democracy. The Army was a part of the democracy and, under correct leadership, it was willing to play its proper role

## 29 Higher Direction

WAR IS THE culmination of a country's foreign policy and in the prosecution of that policy often lie the seeds of a future war, though its objective may be to secure peace. No doubt, foreign policy is based on the country's own interests and may vary from time to time as different situations develop. Yet, there may be a foreign policy which basically wants to follow the path of peace without any aggressive feeling towards any neighbour or there may be one which is basically aggressive and is directed at securing supremacy over others peacefully or by deceit if possible, otherwise by war. The first was the policy that India followed and this was born out of the path she had chosen for herself in the domestic field, that of democracy, socialism and secularism. On the other hand, China followed the second course and this again was born out of her policy of dictatorship and steamrolling all minorities into Han nationalism.

Whenever a country faces a military defeat, as India did in 1962, it is natural that the foreign policy it has been pursuing would come in for criticism, and one has heard it repeated *ad nauseam* that India's China policy failed in 1962. Looked at from a narrow angle, it no doubt failed, because in spite of India's attempt to maintain peaceful relations with China, she was attacked and defeated. But it would be wrong to conclude from this one single fact that the policy as a whole had failed. Many things have to be taken into consideration to come to a proper judgment. When and in what circumstances was the policy framed? Was it in keeping with India's internal policy and international thinking? Whether the policy was flexible enough to allow India to manoeuvre? Whether the pursuit of the policy alone was responsible for want of preparations in other directions? Whether there were alternatives which could have been followed to avoid the clash

## 30 The Future

IN THE FIRST FOUR chapters of this book we traced the historical developments in Tibet from the earliest times up to 1950 and came to the irresistible conclusion that Tibet enjoyed *de facto* independence at least from 1912 when the Tibetans ousted the Chinese from their territory by armed action and declared their independence. Even though the British, for their own self-interest, continued to recognise some tenuous form of Chinese suzerainty, that did not prevent them from entering into treaties with the Tibetans independently of the Chinese. During the Second World War, when the Chinese, having lost all their outlets to the sea and being hard-pressed by the Japanese, wanted to open a route through Tibet to receive the much-needed supplies from India and the Tibetan Kashag refused permission, the British, though they were allies of China against Japan, upheld Tibet's right to do so. This fact only highlights Tibet's independence. That status was also upheld by the International Commission of Jurists in its report to the United Nations on "The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law" in 1959. The Commission came to the conclusion that "Tibet's position on the expulsion of the Chinese in 1912 can be fairly described as one of *de facto* independence and there are, as explained, strong legal grounds for thinking that any form of local subservience to China had vanished. It is, therefore, submitted that 1911-12 marked the re-emergence of Tibet as a fully sovereign State, independent in fact and in law of Chinese control."

Even in 1950 when the Chinese army entered North-Eastern Tibet, in the protest note which the Government of India sent to China, it stressed the need of a peaceful settlement of the Tibetan problem "by peaceful negotiations adjusting the legitimate Tibetan claim of autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty".

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