



# **Explaining the Rise and Fall of Trust in India's Relations with Pakistan and China in the 1950s**

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**Abstract:** Jawaharlal Nehru’s trust-building efforts with his Pakistani and Chinese counterparts in the 1950s are important moments in global history to shed light on the nature of trust-building between rivals in international relations. Due to their inattention to its socially-contingent nature, existing theories of trust in IR cannot provide compelling explanations for how rivals can build trust in the absence of costly signals, institutions, and shared identities. To address this, I offer a “thick description” of trust and argue that social factors, which exist in the micro-environments of elites—such as discrepant information, the personal reputations of leaders, shared weaknesses, and initial reciprocity—are integral to explaining the trust-building process between rivals [something I refer to as “strategic trust”]. Uncovering them allows us to better understand when face-to-face diplomacy is likely to be more effective as a medium of trust-building and why there is variation in trusting outcomes even as actor’s dispositional traits remain constant. I also limit the scope conditions for these social factors by showing that trust can either be “blocked” by spoilers (leading to disappointment) or “overridden” if actors are unable to live up to positive expectations of behaviour (leading to betrayal). I use historical methods, case study research, and interpretive process tracing to study two cases of trusting *success* in India-Pakistan and India-China relations, viz. the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement [1950] and The Panchsheel Phase [1954-1957], and two cases of trusting *failure*, viz. Nehru-Bogra talks on Kashmir [1953-1955] and Nehru-Zhou border talks [1960]. I argue that trust is as much a social relationship as it is a psychological state of being and actors consider social factors associated with their counterparts before making trusting choices. However, while widening the possibilities of trust-building, I also caution against the risks of disappointment and betrayal. Trust is a useful tool to overcome rivalries, but only if leaders are equally attuned to its promises as well as pitfalls.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMFA	Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CPI	Communist Party of India
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
INC	Indian National Congress
IB	Intelligence Bureau
KMT	Kuomintang
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
NEFA	North East Frontier Agency
N-LA	Nehru-Liaquat Agreement
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America

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## Introduction

In October 1954, Jawaharlal Nehru made his first visit as India's Prime Minister to Beijing. Talks with his Chinese counterparts Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai covered a wide array of issues, such as the political struggles of Asia, the rise of Anglo-American military alliances, and the regional order both India and China saw desirable. The common theme underlying their discussions was the need to build mutual trust. India-China relations had been strained since China's occupation of Tibet in 1950 due to fears over a disputed frontier and a Communist-Bourgeois ideological rivalry spurred by the Cold War. But in the four years hence, Nehru and Zhou had started to build a trusting relationship on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. India's ambassador to China, N. Raghavan, at a banquet hosted during Nehru's visit, said: "what China does in Tibet is China's own business. India trusts China. When I was appointed ambassador to China, Nehru instructed me to trust China, just as China trusts India". Mao replied: "yes, we trust India. With India [on the border], we can have good sleep".<sup>1</sup> This was not speechmaking. Archival records show that Nehru and Zhou did trust each other. India facilitated essential trade that sustained Chinese troop presence in Tibet, whilst China permitted the Dalai Lama to visit India for the Buddha Jayanti celebrations despite security concerns in Tibet. Ironically, it was because of this trusting relationship and a subsequent sense of betrayal that the dispute over the Sino-Indian border proved diplomatically insoluble during Nehru-Zhou talks (1960). During this same period, trust-building was visible between Nehru and Pakistan's Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan on the subject of Minority Rights (1950) to resolve the refugee crisis on the Bengal border, but trust-building failed to remedy the Kashmir dispute during talks between Nehru and his Pakistani counterpart Mohammed Ali Bogra (1953-1955).

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<sup>1</sup> Conversation between Mao Zedong and Jawaharlal Nehru at a banquet hosted by India's ambassador N. Raghavan on 25 October 1954. Avtar Singh Bhasin (ed.), *India-China Relations 1947-2000: A Documentary Study*, (New Delhi: Geetika Publishers, 2018), vol. II, pp. 1300.

How were leaders in the India-China and India-Pakistan dyad—widely considered two of the most intractable rivalries in world politics since World War II—able to build trust in the 1950s? And if they did so, why did trust prove beneficial in some cases but not in others? Due to inattention to the socially contingent nature of trust-building between rivals, existing theories of trust in IR cannot provide compelling answers. In this thesis, I argue that we need to develop a “thick conception” of trust to remedy this gap. Rationalist scholars repurpose signalling literature on deterrence for reassurance and trust-building. They argue that if favourable pay-off structures are present and rivals are willing to use “costly signals” to indicate their trustworthiness, trust-building is possible. A costly signal helps receivers “separate the trustworthy types from the untrustworthy types...by virtue of the fact that they are so costly that one would hesitate to send them if one were untrustworthy”. According to Rationalists, actors can use costly signals for reassurance since they act against external pay-offs and punishments, thereby reducing the perceived role of ulterior motives in the sender’s decision making.<sup>2</sup> But the India-China and India-Pakistan cases involved concessions on vexing issues of territorial sovereignty and national identity (i.e. difficult to resolve through side-payments) and neither countenanced the use of costly signals prior to trust-building due to fear of defection.

Constructivist scholars of trust account for wider social and intersubjective factors and the possibility of relational trust.<sup>3</sup> Kalypso Nicolaïdis’ study of EU integration for example, claims that because of an inability to access other’s intentions, trust is “predicated on identifying and strengthening the ties that bind”.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, in Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett’s conceptualisation of security communities, shared knowledge, meanings, and ideas of liberalism and democracy, and in turn collective identity and cultural homogeneity, are preconditions for

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<sup>2</sup> See Andrew H. Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Clara Weinhardt, “Relational trust in international cooperation: The case of North-South trade negotiations,” *Journal of Trust Research*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2015), pp. 33. Also see Ali Bilgic, “Trust in world politics: converting ‘identity’ into a source of security through trust-learning,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 1 (2014), pp. 36-51.

<sup>4</sup> Kalypso Nicolaïdis, “Trusting the Poles? Constructing Europe through mutual recognition,” *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14, no. 5 (2007), pp. 683.

the existence of trust.<sup>5</sup> But Nehru and Liaquat did not see each other as sharing regime types despite their somewhat comparable democratic beginnings, mainly due to a deep rooted Hindu-Muslim divide post-Partition (1947). How could these two rivals then build trust to resolve the Refugee Crisis on the Bengal border through a shared understanding of Minority Rights? Similarly, Nehru and Zhou were caught in the ideological binaries of the early Cold War. India's leaders feared the subversive prowess of Chinese Communism just as China's leaders mistrusted India's non-alignment. Instead of creating new in-groups or shared identities, trust-building in these cases more humbly depended on offsetting the fundamentalism of opposing identities and the assumption of harm associated with them.<sup>6</sup>

Institutionalist scholars believe trusting relations can develop when institutions alter the decision-making environment and help reduce suspicion and risk of exploitation through rules, norms, and principles. As Aaron Hoffman argues, institutions can aid trust-building between rivals when they fulfil a dual purpose: protect parties from potential exploitation by their external partners and shield leaders from domestic opponents. Institutions can give actors a voice in collective decision-making and avoid extreme exploitation by others. They also provide some sort of hedge against domestic opponents who may challenge a leader's image as a trustor.<sup>7</sup> However, Nehru and Liaquat resolved the Refugee Crisis bilaterally. In fact, there was a strong reluctance to cede sovereign interests to any institutional mediation after the deadlock on the Kashmir issue. For Nehru and Zhou on the other hand, there was no institutional set up available due to Communist China's non-admission to the UN. Third-party mediation was not acceptable to them either.

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<sup>5</sup> See Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> K. M. Fierke, "Terrorism and trust in Northern Ireland," *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2009), pp. 499.

<sup>7</sup> Aaron M. Hoffman, *Building Trust Overcoming Suspicion in International Conflict* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

Finally, psychology-based theories interpret trust as a mental state (heuristic/bias) based on positive behavioural expectations, which shape the perceptions, judgements and decisions of trustors.<sup>8</sup> Contra realist dismissal of “cheap talk”, the primary mode for establishing trusting relationships of this nature is interpersonal diplomacy. Nicholas Wheeler argues that face-to-face contact allows leaders to gain vital information about the trustworthiness of their counterparts. Verbal and non-verbal behaviours can become credible markers of ‘the truthfulness’ of an image projected by a state.<sup>9</sup> Todd Hall and Keren-Yarhi Milo have also argued that “personal impressions”—due to the vividness of information and possibility of affective display—can be important indicators of an individual’s sincerity and trustworthiness.<sup>10</sup> However, interpersonal diplomacy does play a necessary but ultimately insufficient role in the cases under scrutiny in this thesis. This is because psychological factors can only partially explain how trusting relationships develop. After all, trust is not nearly as frequent as is interpersonal diplomacy. Trust is about more than just face-to-face contact.

The question I ask is:

How can we make sense of the success and failure of India’s trust-building efforts with rivals, Pakistan and China, in the 1950s? And, how can this analysis shed light on trust-building between rivals in international relations more generally?

This thesis offers a “thick description” of trust and argues that trust is contingent on social factors that are integral to explaining the trust-building process between rivals—both, in terms of its development and breakdown. Social factors help link trusting as a mental process to trusting as a relational process. How else would we explain the “factors [that] account for the

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<sup>8</sup> See Jonathan Mercer, “Rationality and Psychology in International Politics,” *International Organization*, vol. 59, no. 1 (2005), pp. 77-106; Torsten Michel, “Time to Get Emotional: Phronetic Reflections on the Concept of Trust in International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 19, no. 4 (2013), pp. 869-90.

<sup>9</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Trusting Enemies: Interpersonal Relationships in International Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Todd Hall and Keren-Yarhi Milo, “The Personal Touch: Leaders’ Impressions, Costly Signalling, and Assessments of Sincerity in International Affairs,” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 56, no. 3 (2012), pp. 560. Also see Seanon S. Wong, “Emotions and the communication of intentions in face-to-face diplomacy,” *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2016), pp. 144-167.

gap between successful intention understanding and the achievement of trust”<sup>11</sup> For instance, without uncovering the micro-foundations of the trustor’s belief that others will reciprocate their cooperation, it is difficult to explain why Nehru and Zhou were able to build trust during face-to-face interactions between 1954-1957 but failed to do so in 1960. Or alternatively, explain why Nehru and Liaquat built trust during the Refugee Crisis but Nehru and Bogra could not replicate this success on the Kashmir issue. Without an appreciation of the socially contingent nature of trust we cannot explain when interpersonal exchanges become operative in conflict situations and more potent as sites for trust-building. Some scholars do provide rich contextual explanations, but treat them as epiphenomenal rather than integral to the trust-building process. This leads to the tenuous claim that mere “intuition understandings”<sup>12</sup> from face-to-face contacts—as exclusive sources of information—can overcome the limits imposed by thick social structures that rivals operate within. As Chris Reus Smit argues, social neuroscience “is not sufficient, in and of itself, to understand how emotions work in social contexts, especially complex ones”.<sup>13</sup>

A “thick description”, following broadly from the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, understands the task of theory-building not as one of an “experimental science in search of law” but an “interpretive science in search of meaning”. While the standards of ethnographic study in this respect are steep, there are some general implications that are useful for my purposes. A thick description demands that researchers look for the essential background knowledge of rivals or the “socially established structures of meaning” that allow them to make sense of their environment and helps frame their trusting preferences. In Geertz’s words, it means “setting down the meaning social actions have for the actors whose actions they are”.<sup>14</sup> As I have argued,

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<sup>11</sup> Andrew Ross, “10-30 on Face-to-Face Diplomacy: Social Neuroscience and International Relations, *H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable*, volume X, no. 30 (2019), <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/4247078/h-diploissf-roundtable-10-30-face-face-diplomacy-social>.

<sup>12</sup> Marcus Holmes, *Face-to-face Diplomacy: Social Neuroscience and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>13</sup> Chris Reus-Smit, “Emotions and the social,” *International Theory*, vol. 6, no. 3 (2014), pp. 537.

<sup>14</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

IR scholars have not shed light on the “social” story of trusting rivals. I argue that social factors, such as *discrepant information*, *the personal reputations of leaders*, *shared weaknesses*, and *initial reciprocity*—which exist in the micro-environments of elites—are crucial to enable trust-building between rivals. I identify these factors as “social” not because they represent the general fabric of society, but rather since they are created and become known through processes of interactionism and information-sharing at the elite level and because their significations persist in contested social spaces. Stephen Pampinella describes this as the “relational ontology of the social world,” which prioritises the “constitutive effects of social interactions over fixed unit attributes and essential categories”.<sup>15</sup>

A thick description of trust has two advantages: first, it allows me to supplement dispositional traits as explanans for trust-building with interaction variables and uncover the relational nature of trust between rivals.<sup>16</sup> For instance, in Chapter 1, I show that historical learning and anti-imperialism can support the making of *empathy entrepreneurs*, who are actors that possess inherent empathic capacity and are able to convey their empathic readings to rival counterparts. Empathy, while insufficient, is essential to the trust-building process, and so, it is useful to identify specific socio-historical circumstances that favour its presence in leaders. Building on this, I further argue that the four social factors can facilitate trust-building through face-to-face diplomacy. This helps explain why trust between rivals may be issue specific despite a wider use of reassurances. If social factors supporting a leader’s image of their counterpart as trustworthy only relates to one domain, this will not unconsciously transfer to others. Second, not only does the focus on social contexts allow the thesis to examine how trust develops, it also clarifies the limits of developing trusting ties between rivals outside the risk of voluntary defection, i.e. the risk of disappointment for weak leaders and the risk of betrayal when rivals

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<sup>15</sup> Tobias Lemke, Andrew A. Szarejko, Jessica Auchter, Alexander D. Barder, Daniel Green, Stephen Pampinella & Swati Srivastava, “Forum: doing historical international relations,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* (2022), pp. 5.

<sup>16</sup> See Joshua D. Kertzer, *Resolve in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). On self-monitoring see Keren Yarhi-Milo, *Who Fights for Reputation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

develop trusting expectations that are difficult to live up to. Trust is not a panacea for overcoming rivalries. It can be “blocked” before resulting in a positive outcome or “overridden” afterwards in the trust maintenance phase, as I will demonstrate later.

### **Rationale for Study**

At the intersection of Area Studies and International Relations, I argue that theorising inductively from a single case study (with multiple subcases) can contribute to general theory on trust in IR. While this requires relaxing usual demands of case study research as a scientific method that demand engagement with multiple action-contexts so that inferences about generality can be made across time and space, it offers several other advantages. First, as per George and Bennett, deviant case studies, which do not conform to expectations of existing theories and allow unusual research access can serve an exploratory purpose if they “inductively identify new factors, hypotheses, causal mechanisms, and causal paths”.<sup>17</sup> The cases of trust-building examined here fulfil this criteria since they transpired in the absence of institutions, interdependencies, issue linkages, analogous regime types, shared identity, common threat perceptions, and the use of costly signals. Second, even formative, intensive, and tightly focused single case studies can travel to other spatial and temporal geographies that share its key situational features. For example, this thesis could lead to a revision of existing accounts of trusting relationships between India and Pakistan under A.B. Vajpayee-Nawaz Sharif (1999) and India-China under Rajiv Gandhi-Deng Xiaoping (late 1980s). Third, while I use a single case study, I further divide it into four subcases; one of success and one of failure each for India’s trust-building efforts with Pakistan and China. This enables theoretical generalizations on a higher conceptual level than the subcases themselves (albeit still tentative and contingent) about heretofore unstudied phenomena. Agreeing with Vincent Pouliot, I take the position that “social causality is established locally, but with an eye to producing analytically general insights”.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 104.

<sup>18</sup> Vincent Pouliot, “Practice Tracing,” in Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel (eds.) *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 237-260.

The inability to explain the rise and fall of trust-building in India-Pakistan and India-China relations in the 1950s is symptomatic of two general lacunae in IR. First, the over-emphasis on the behaviours of Great Powers and Western histories has led to a relative ignorance of the behaviour of subordinate actors in the Global South. Apart from a few exceptions,<sup>19</sup> the dominant models and understandings of trust in IR remain Eurocentric. For example, rationalist models of “costly signalling” are derived from US-Soviet interactions during the Cold War, while institutionalist and constructivist scholars draw on the European Union’s experience. But theories derived from alternate Global South histories—where such pre-conditions do not exist—that can account for the trusting efforts of states in their initial stages of economic development with weak domestic institutions and a history of imperialism, who were still able to build trust in some cases but failed in others, are so far missing from the literature. In this respect, the cases examined here represent important moments in global history. Second, the study of South Asia in IR has been dominated by conflict studies.<sup>20</sup> Neglecting cases of trust-building and the parochialism of present narratives has unfortunately helped perpetuate orientalist tropes of squabbling nations of the Global South being unable to bring their processes of state-building, governance, and diplomacy to match the “high standards” set by their civilized Western peers, thereby necessitating the latter’s “enlightened” intervention. By uncovering hitherto unexamined archival material and challenging existing historiography, this thesis will seek to de-naturalise such a conflict-oriented framing of the region.

For IR, this thesis aims to aid an ongoing “recovery of self” for non-Western histories. Ethnocentric accounts of the Cold War have treated the Global South as “peripheral” and an

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<sup>19</sup> See Nicholas Wheeler, “I Had Gone to Lahore With a Message of Goodwill But in Return We Got Kargil”: The Promise and Perils of “Leaps of Trust” in India-Pakistan Relations.” *India Review*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2010), pp. 319-44; Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India-Pakistan Relationship, 1947-1952* (London: Hurst Publishers, 2020).

<sup>20</sup> See Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, “The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies.” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2 (2006), pp. 329-52.

object of the Superpower rivalry in the latter's pursuit of strategic dominance.<sup>21</sup> However, attempts are seldom made to analyse how innovation and ideas in the Global South influenced the trajectory of the Cold War, and how the normative malleability of the era was used by elites in these states to fashion a parallel modernity. India's trust-building efforts with Pakistan and China in the Nehru years are exemplary in this regard. Already, Amitav Acharya's work on the localization of norms in South and South-East Asia, for instance, has highlighted how Nehru's ideas delegitimized forms of collective defence in Asia and helped negotiate how "sovereignty as a condition of legitimate statehood" was translated into "sovereignty as rules of conduct".<sup>22</sup> I am sympathetic to the Global IR agenda "for greater inclusiveness and diversity in our discipline" and its privileging of the Area Studies tradition.<sup>23</sup> In accordance, I will demonstrate how these regional histories and actors—normally considered the preserve of Area Studies—can contribute to, and perhaps even analytically exceed, the repertoire of understandings of traditional sites of enquiry in IR.

Finally, this thesis also contributes to the study of India's foreign policy in the Nehru years. Existing attempts at excavating Nehru's political thought for IR have fallen short of presenting the full import of his ideas.<sup>24</sup> For example, Priya Chacko mentions Nehru's rejection of the "fear complex" as part of a larger "politics of friendship" but does not meaningfully bring his distinct third-world sensibilities into dialogue with existing IR scholarship.<sup>25</sup> Andrew Kennedy, on the other hand, examining Nehru's moral efficacy beliefs, contends that pre-independence encounters with foreign dignitaries such as Arthur Louis Johnson (President

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<sup>21</sup> See Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

<sup>22</sup> Amitav Acharya, "Why is there no NATO in Asia? the normative origins of Asian multilateralism," Cambridge, Weatherhead Centre for International Affairs, Harvard University (2005), pp. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Amitav Acharya, "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 58, no. 4 (2014), pp. 649.

<sup>24</sup> See T.A. Keenleyside, "Prelude to Power: The Meaning of Non-Alignment Before Indian Independence," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 53, no. 3 (1980), pp. 461-483; Willard Range, *Jawaharlal Nehru's World View: A Theory of International Relations* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1961).

<sup>25</sup> Priya Chacko, *Indian Foreign Policy: The politics of postcolonial identity from 1947 to 2004* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 55.

Franklin Roosevelt's personal representative to India) and other British representatives, instilled a belief in his ability to accomplish requisite ends through diplomatic means, even when "international norms and institutions offered no assurance".<sup>26</sup> However, he does not clarify why these encounters—oddly only with white men—were "enactive mastery experiences" for Nehru and imparted enormous faith in diplomatic bargaining. Kennedy's causal claims are tenuous and disregard Nehru's reflexivity and appreciation of structural and personal limitations. This thesis will seek to improve upon these accounts of Nehru's foreign policy. I argue that Nehru thought about international relations through a lens that critiqued fear and sought to generate trust-building as a mode to challenge power politics. I explore how he framed his reality, made choices as trust-building processes evolved, and more importantly, uncover how these "local actor theorisations" can help us rethink existing IR literature on trust.<sup>27</sup>

### **Strategic Trust**

Before I proceed further, it is important to define trust. Examinations of single (deviant) case studies need to "build self-consciously upon previous studies and variable definitions as much as possible"<sup>28</sup> to enable comparability. This thesis will examine trust-building between fearful states and not ignorant states. As opposed to trust-building between allies or neutrals, rivals need to overcome distrust and the conviction that the other is intent on causing harm. When fear animates the workings of the security dilemma in rivalries, it sets a high information threshold to build trust. However, for rationalists, who are agnostic about the causal effects of anarchy, the problem of access to information only makes states "ignorant". As Rathbun argues, uncertainty of this type can be overcome through the formation of institutions that revise payoff structures and facilitate the careful "parsing [of] evidence to better assess the intentions of others". On the other hand, in the realist vision of uncertainty, fearful states "systematically discard or discount

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<sup>26</sup> Andrew Kennedy, *The International Ambitions of Mao and Nehru: National Efficacy Beliefs and the Making of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 44.

<sup>27</sup> Kate Sullivan de Estrada, "IR's recourse to Area Studies: Siloisation Anxiety and the Disruptive Promise of Exceptionalism," *St Antony's International Review*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2020), pp. 207-214.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. BCSIA Studies in International Security (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 2005) pp. 100.

information about the intentions of others that shows them to be less than hostile. Rather than gather information, they accumulate power” in preparation for worst-case scenarios as they have “[already] made a judgment about inherent traits of the other side”.<sup>29</sup> While realists are mistaken in assuming that such negativity bias is a naturalised and an inescapable condition of world politics, they do enjoy descriptive accuracy in terms of explaining the nature of most rivalries. I define rivalries as relationships in which there is mutual acceptance of uncertainty as fear.<sup>30</sup> The empirical chapters that follow will demonstrate that such fearful relational ties existed prior to trust-building.

This assumption also affects the nature of trust between rivals as opposed to allies. A central contribution of this thesis is to argue that a “strategic” variety of trust—distinct from both calculative and bonded trust—explains the former. The issue with calculative (rational-choice) trust, as Jonathan Mercer explains, is that rationalists “drain the psychology from trust by turning it into a consequence of incentives”. This removes “both the need for trust and the opportunity to trust...[because] if it depends on external evidence, transparency, iteration, or incentives, then trust adds nothing to the explanation”.<sup>31</sup> Trust as a mental attitude instead comprises of positive expectations based on perceived attributes of the trustee and not solely exogenous factors. For instance, as we will see in Chapter 2, Nehru and his Pakistani counterpart Liaquat Ali Khan made the decision to trust each other partly based on their reputations as secularists. Similarly, in Chapter 3, I argue that Nehru and Zhou were able to build trust because they both saw each other as moderates on the Communist-Bourgeoisie continuum. In both cases, trust-building entailed a judgement about the nature of the trusted

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<sup>29</sup> Brian C. Rathbun, “It takes all types: social psychology, trust, and the international relations paradigm in our minds,” *International Theory*, vol. 1, no. 3 (2009), pp. 368.

<sup>30</sup> Brian C. Rathbun, “Uncertain about Uncertainty: Understanding the Multiple Meanings of a Crucial Concept in International Relations Theory,” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 51, no. 3 (2007), pp. 533-57.

<sup>31</sup> Jonathan Mercer, “Rationality and Psychology in International Politics,” *International Organization*, vol. 59, no. 1 (2005), pp. 95.

party based on social factors rather than a mere appreciation of the structure of preferences and general material conditions.

The other type is bonded trust. Wheeler describes it as “two bonded partners who have come to place a high value on the other’s security and care about that person’s well-being as an end in itself”. Bonded trust is beyond probabilistic reasoning and risk calculation. Leaders previously driven by calculative trust—through face-to-face contact—learn to “place a high value on the other’s security and care about that person’s well-being as an end in itself.” They enter a “mental state of trust suspension” where the dangers of future uncertainty and predation—although they can never be objectively purged—are removed from the subjective view of the actors. At this stage, rivals/egoists have “escaped the ambiguity of signal interpretation” due to “a subjective certainty that each other’s signals are sincerely aimed at communicating their peaceful intent”.<sup>32</sup> While Wheeler’s description meets conceptual requirements of trust as a phenomenon, it muddies the distinction between trust and blind faith. As Deborah Welch Larson posits, the type of trust he describes is “so deep that it seems somewhat rare in international relations, particularly amongst states that start from position of enmity”.<sup>33</sup> Of the three cases he examines (i.e. between India-Pakistan in 1999, USA-Iran in 2009-2010, and the USA-Soviet Union, 1985–1989), Wheeler only finds evidence for bonded trust between Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Raegan. To summarise, calculative trust is disingenuous to the very nature of trust, while bonded trust is limited in empirical application and possibly too demanding for rivalries.

I argue that strategic trust is the middle path. It remains true to psychological aspects of trust but also accounts for the limits of trust-building between rivals. I define strategic trust in line with extant scholarship as the expectation of non-harm to one’s interest and well-being

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<sup>32</sup> Nicholas Wheeler, *Trusting Enemies*, pp. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Deborah W. Larson, “Review: Trusting enemies,” *International Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 6 (2018), pp. 1438.

based on a belief of the subject's trustworthiness, despite objective unknowability and attending uncertainty. Such views of trustworthiness include assessments of the trustee's benevolent intentions, willingness (signalling commitment), and capability (signalling competence). Trust as a mental heuristic allows trustors to knowingly enter beneficial relationships that might leave them vulnerable to exploitation in the future. It indicates an acceptance of dependency or "a willingness to place the fate of one's interests under the control of others" beyond functional role expectations.<sup>34</sup> Like Wheeler, I also hold trust of this type between rivals to be "interpersonal" or produced through an interactive process between political elites.<sup>35</sup> In his words, trust is limited to those "with whom there are dense and thick interactions and for whom there is significant experience to draw on".<sup>36</sup> Finally, trust has both, affective and cognitive dimensions, and is a felt sense of security based on a "balance of cognitive control and non-cognitive stability".<sup>37</sup>

In Chapter 1, I lay out in greater detail the social contingency of strategic trust. This will be a conceptual framework of the micro-environment and undergirding social factors that can support the trusting choices of the rivals. However, it is important to highlight here that the development of strategic trust can also involve material, psychological, and other types of social factors left unexamined in this thesis. I define strategic trust as a distinctive type of trusting relationship between rivals. But it is hardly exclusive to the type of social explanations I put forth. I focus on the "social" aspect of strategic trust as I argue this has so far been lacking in the existing scholarship and is crucial to explaining its development. However, this conceptualisation of strategic trust offers analytical leverage for a wider range of scholars and also presents a pathway for an integrated research agenda on trusting rivals in IR.

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<sup>34</sup> Aaron M. Hoffman, "A Conceptualization of Trust in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations*, 8, no. 3 (2002): 375-401.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Brian C. Rathbun, *Trust in International Cooperation: International Security Institutions, Domestic Politics and American Multilateralism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 14.

<sup>37</sup> Lawrence C. Becker, "Trust as Non-Cognitive Security about Motives," *Ethics*, vol. 107, no. 1 (1996), pp. 58.

I call this trust “strategic” because it diverges from calculative and bonded trust in three ways. First, it is minimalist rather than maximalist (bonding) and not purely an emotional disposition. As opposed to viewing trust statically, as either present or absent, I argue that trust changes over time—developing, building, declining—and can be present between rivals at the lower end of the trusting continuum, exclusive of deeper intimacies and moral transformations of interests and identities.<sup>38</sup> Strategic trust may not forge deeper shared identities, but rather, it reduces the expectation of harm that comes with having different ones. At this stage, trust is not solely a product of “automatic empathy and intuitive reasoning”. As Joshua Baker has argued, for rivals the subjective suspension of irresolvable uncertainty is “deliberate, motivated, and conscious...which are arguably [all] necessary components for the development of reflexive understandings of self and other”.<sup>39</sup> This is because trust-building amongst rivals requires significant mental and political effort. Not only do leaders have to overcome enemy images of their rivals, they also have to bargain with conflicting institutional partners and domestic publics. Calculative trust on the other hand, erroneously reduces this cognitive effort to predictive analysis. Rather, a subjective certainty based on the trusted party’s attributes produces strategic trust.

Second, strategic trust is based on mutual care for shared interests rather than moral obligations or ethical qualities. As Hoffman elucidates, “unless actors cease caring about themselves, they will prefer strategies that satisfy, rather than undermine, their self-interest”.<sup>40</sup> But such agreement is difficult between rivals since they have conflictual interests on significant issues and risk severe strategic or reputational losses if their confidence proves misplaced.

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<sup>38</sup> Denise M. Rousseau, Sim B. Sitkin, Ronald S. Burt and Colin Camerer, “Introduction to Special Topic Forum: Not so Different after All: A Cross-Discipline View of Trust,” *The Academy of Management Review*, vol. 23, no. 3 (1998), pp. 393-404.

<sup>39</sup> Joshua Baker, “The Empathic Foundations of Security dilemma De-escalation,” *Political Psychology*, vol. 40, no. 6 (2019), pp. 1252.

<sup>40</sup> Aaron M. Hoffman, “A Conceptualization of Trust in International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 8, no. 3 (2002), pp. 383.

Potential gains from cooperation (e.g. decline in military spending), although ever-present, are not compelling enough to build trust. So, how do shared interests become a basis for strategic trust? It does so when rivals are able to identify and communicate each other's *care* for, and willingness to pursue, overriding and non-conflictual interests over conflictual ones. Robert Jervis calls these "dominating common interests". He adds: "if actors care about what happens to others and believe that others care about them, they will develop trust and can cooperate for mutual benefit".<sup>41</sup> Strategic trustors recognise that their long-term interests and vision of a desirable future cannot be achieved without reliance upon the other. They believe their counterpart will reciprocate since they too appreciate this reality and therefore value the relationship enough to not defect and pursue alternate gains. Unlike calculative trust, strategic trust does not assume that a particular assemblage of material interests and cost-benefit calculations can facilitate trust-building by itself.<sup>42</sup> Rivals must be persuaded by their counterpart's *care* for the beneficial relationship and preference for non-conflictual interests over conflictual ones. Such preferences are difficult to rationally deduce and personal attributes of actors become important in this process (e.g. trusted party is seen as "reasonable" or "pragmatic"). Unlike bonded trust however, strategic trust does not assume that the two rivals care about each other's well-being as an end in itself either, or due to the belief that they will "do what is right". This is also why strategic trust is not as robust against socially contextual spoilers or repeated signals of uncooperative intentions.

Third, strategic trust coexists simultaneously with low levels of distrust. I understand distrust as "a precarious or indecisive attitude whereby the behaviour of others is approached with caution".<sup>43</sup> Recent scholarship has rejected the notion that trust and distrust are opposite ends of a continuum and instead highlights that "trust and distrust coexist and can be

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 204.

<sup>42</sup> See Russell Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002).

<sup>43</sup> Nicholas Wheeler, *Trusting Enemies*, pp. 22.

experienced simultaneously”.<sup>44</sup> This is why the absence of trust does not mean distrust or vice versa. Following on from this, subjective certainty of their counterpart’s trustworthiness for strategic trustors is not absolute and residual concerns about future uncertainty remain. Strategic trust solves the problem of accessing private information but not entirely that of time inconsistency.<sup>45</sup> Concerns over not being able to achieve “stable peace”<sup>46</sup> due to changes in leadership, variations in material conditions, technology, institutions, regimes etc., can remain. Strategic trustors believe that factors facilitating the trusting relationship are stable, but not permanently so. For instance, “some ASEAN states [such as Singapore and Malaysia] continue to develop contingency plans for potential military conflict among themselves”.<sup>47</sup> Despite their trusting relationship, these states still harbour concerns about future political trends. This is however dissimilar to calculative trust, which is entirely epiphenomenal to payoff structures. Strategic trustors have stable and positive expectations about the future behaviour of their counterparts, but these are considered unforeseeable in the long-term. Inversely, an absolute conviction in having escaped the security dilemma and the overhang of future uncertainty as well as an unyielding faith in the trustworthiness of the counterpart is a property of bonded trust. Bonding trustors have a greater risk appetite when making trusting choices than strategic trustors.

<b>TYPE</b>	<b>NATURE</b>	<b>MOTIVATION OF ACTORS</b>	<b>RESPONSE TO THE SECURITY DILEMMA</b>
Calculative	Confidence	Structure of Preferences	Security Dilemma dynamics and Trust is entirely epiphenomenal to payoff structures.
Strategic	Minimal Trust	Mutual Care for Shared Interests	Actors believe they have access to private information but cannot entirely overcome

<sup>44</sup> Angelos Kostis and Malin Harryson Näsholm, “Towards A Research Agenda on How, When and Why Trust and Distrust Matter to Coopetition,” *Journal of Trust Research*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2020), pp. 71.

<sup>45</sup> Joshua Kertzer. “10-30 on Face-to-Face Diplomacy: Social Neuroscience and International Relations,” *H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable*, vol. X, no. 30, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/4247078/h-diploissf-roundtable-10-30-face-face-diplomacy-social>.

<sup>46</sup> Charles Kupchan describes it as a situation in which war has become unthinkable. See Charles Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 2012).

<sup>47</sup> Vincent Keating and Nicholas Wheeler, “Chapter II: Concepts and Practices of Cooperative Security,” in Vojtech Mastny and Zhu Liqun (eds.), *The Legacy of the Cold War Perspectives on Security, Cooperation, and Conflict* (Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014).

			the problem of future uncertainty.
Bonding	Maximal Trust	Each Other's Well-Being as An End in Itself	Actors believe they have escaped the security dilemma and the overhang of future uncertainty.

*0.1 Types of Trust*

**Methodology and Sources**

Having identified the universe—that is, trusting relationships between rivals—of which India’s trust-building efforts with China and Pakistan in the Nehru years are instances of, and justified the research objective and uses of a single (deviant) case study with multiple subcases, I now turn to methodology and other aspects of the research design. These should allow the thesis to examine the internal validity of causal mechanisms and “locate the intermediate factors lying between some structural cause and its purported effect”.<sup>48</sup> I use interpretive process tracing to support causal claims, and to make sense of the statements made by actors and their plausible motives. This implies an inductive exploration of in-depth case studies without generating law-like statements. In process tracing, “multiple types of evidence are employed for the verification of a single inference” to develop a rigorous empirical strategy.<sup>49</sup> Specifically, alternative explanations and theory-driven counterfactuals are vital in identifying causal processes and controlling for risks of equifinality.<sup>50</sup> I use an interpretivist mode of process tracing. As Stefano Guzzini argues, the “significance of the input—and indeed the input itself—are not endogenous to the process” of analysis.<sup>51</sup> Epistemologically speaking, like Pouliot, I too argue for the “positivist assumption of an objective, readily quantifiable, and external reality” to be replaced by “the post-foundationalist notion that theoretical constructs are mere heuristic devices which social scientists apply to their observations in order to classify them”.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 45.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 173.

<sup>50</sup> G. Goertz and J. S. Levy, *Explaining war and peace: Case studies and necessary condition counterfactuals* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>51</sup> Stefano Guzzini, *The Return of Geopolitics in Europe? Social Mechanisms and Foreign Policy Identity Crises* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 4-5.

<sup>52</sup> Vincent Pouliot, *International Security in Practice: The Politics of NATO–Russia Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 76.

On case selection: I look to uncover empirical cases that have hitherto remained unexplored in IR. While there are other cases of trust-building between rivals in South Asia, such as between Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif in 1999 or between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his Chinese counterpart Deng Xiaoping in the late 1980s, these have been studied before.<sup>53</sup> By examining the India-Pakistan and India Pakistan dyad in the 1950s, it is my intention to provide a historiographical intervention along with a theoretical one and to expand the known universe of cases of trust-building between rivals in international relations. Moreover, these are also hard cases for the study of social contexts within which trust-building between rivals can take place due to the absence of other possible positive influences. First, the early Cold War period was marked by normative and institutional ambiguity. UN's ability to maintain peace and security was hamstring by the politics of the Cold War and norms governing the post-war order still were still under negotiation. This in turn reduced its ability to manage conflict. Despite the UN Security Council taking note, this period saw multiple military interventions in the region: India in Jammu and Kashmir, Junagadh, and Hyderabad, Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir, and China in Tibet. Second, these states had subordinate status in the global pecking order and were simultaneously faced with the challenge of weak institutional structures, domestic instability, as well as colonial trauma and victimhood; factors Mohammed Ayoob describes as driving conflict and insecurity in the region.<sup>54</sup> Lastly, the deep-rooted ideological fundamentalism of these states during this period also favoured heightened securitization, i.e. Hindu-Muslim and Bourgeois-Communist.

The inattention to fear's effects and its acceptance as a "natural condition" within Western-realist IR has been, in large part, due to its justifications being written from the vantage

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<sup>53</sup> See Nicholas Wheeler, *Trusting Enemies*; Chiara Cervasio, *The Empathic De-escalation of security dilemma and Status Dilemma Dynamics in India-China relations, 1986-2000*, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2021.

<sup>54</sup> Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995).

points, or on the basis of the histories, of great powers. India, Pakistan, and China in the 1950s offer a distinct vantage point to critically assess the ordering function of fear in world politics. These states did not have the material wherewithal to mobilise fear in pursuit of their wider ambitions. To the contrary, the Cold War and the coming of military alliances and great power intervention in their regions threatened to curtail their autonomy and flexibility in terms of decision-making. Moreover, due to their post-colonial histories and the general prevalence of anti-hegemonic thinking in these spaces (although diverse), actors in these states were better placed to develop a reflexive understanding of fear.

My study demands access to such actors in India, Pakistan, and China. Chief amongst them was India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Trust-building requires at least one empathy entrepreneur who is willing and capable of taking the first step to initiate the process. It is in this respect that Nehru assumes a central role in the empirical enquiry to follow. I also discuss the influence of Indian diplomats and politicians on India's decision-making during this period. Similarly, on the Pakistani side, I assess the role of Prime Ministers Liaquat Ali Khan and later Muhammed Ali Bogra as well as Governor General Ghulam Muhammed. The role of diplomats such as Zafrulla Khan and Army leaders such as Iskandar Mirza and Ayub Khan are also considered. On the Chinese side, Zhou Enlai was the main architect of the relationship with India, playing a dominant role in both its rise and fall. Here too I address the role of other central PRC officials such as Mao Zedong, Chen Yi, Liu Shaoqi, and other Chinese diplomats and politicians dealing with India. But it was Zhou, albeit acting within the broader contours of Mao's ideological vision, who was the driving force behind China's relations with non-aligned Asian countries such as India. Not only did Zhou frame China's diplomatic outreach to India, he also led the Chinese delegation at the Bandung Conference in 1955. As China's Foreign Minister and Premier, Zhou seemed—at least nominally—to occupy an official role similar to that of Nehru's in India. In all three states, the range of actors relevant for the study has been decided on the basis of an understanding of the decision-making apparatus at the time with respect to the specific states.

On sources: I make use of a wide range of archives, which include the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, National Archives of India, British National Archives, British Library, and the Bodleian Library. I examine speeches and correspondences of Nehru, his associates, diplomats, and other relevant government functionaries. A rich variety of private papers, newspapers, memoirs, and diaries are available on the Indian side. For example, the Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru (Series I, Volumes 1-15 and Series II, Volumes 1-85), edited by Sarvepalli Gopal and later by Ravinder Kumar and H.Y. Sharada Prasad, include an enormous collection of Nehru's private letters and public speeches from 1903-1964. However, access to archival material in Pakistan and China is restricted. On Pakistan's side, memoirs of former diplomats and National Assembly debates along with national dailies such as *The Dawn* and *The Tribune* are the main sources for historical reconstruction. On the Chinese side, due to limits of access as well as language, I rely on the Selected Works of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, translations of the *People's Daily*, the Wilson Centre Digital Archive, *The Peking Review*, and other scholarly works that contain primary documents from China's Foreign Ministry Archives (these have been closed since 2012) and the Foreign Relations of the United States digital archives. Due to limited availability of Pakistani and Chinese sources, I also mine the extensive Indian archives for Pakistani and Chinese letters, correspondences, and transcripts of meetings. Arunabh Ghosh and Sören Urbansky have recently promoted "doing history" in foreign archives as an important resource for historians.<sup>55</sup> As the wide use of archival material indicates, I take leaders and their verbal and written communications seriously. While doing so, I am careful of contextual meanings, presence of multiple audiences, and discontinuities between public and private scripts. I adopt a "strategy of triangulation and consilience" that assembles several pieces of evidence from independent or unrelated sources to converge on

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<sup>55</sup> Arunabh Ghosh and Sören Urbansky, "China from Without: Doing PRC History in Foreign Archives--Editorial Introduction," *The PRC History Review*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2018), pp. 1-3.

specific narrations of historical events. As Holmes has argued, “the problems associated with memoirs still remain, but triangulation and consilience severely undercut the issue”.<sup>56</sup>

A related issue to consider is how one looks for strategic trust in the archives. Since there can be other causes for cooperation, cooperative behaviour itself is insufficient to demonstrate the existence of trust. Instead, following on from an approach based on historical triangulation, I argue that there are two key indicators of trust: first, changes in beliefs and perceptions of the rival’s intentions, and second, policy decisions that create dependencies and vulnerabilities (these can include formal written agreements as well as uncoordinated and ad hoc policy choices but exclude vulnerabilities imposed by force of circumstance).<sup>57</sup> This empirical threshold builds on the basic definition of trust adopted in this thesis as the disposition of actors to enter beneficial relationships that make one vulnerable based on positive expectations of the trusted party’s integrity, willingness, and character. There are however challenges to this mode of measurement for trust. Keating and Ruzicka claim that “accepting someone’s word as a proof of the existence of a trusting relationship has serious limits”. Political actors frequently use strategic language to mask hidden motives and may also rationalise trusting behaviour to uphold their image and provide social justification.<sup>58</sup> While these concerns are valid, triangulation, interpretive process tracing, and intensive case work help mitigate them to a large extent. As Philipp Brugger argues, “when relying on narratives provided by political actors, it is important to account for their image concerns and current political objectives”.<sup>59</sup> But an extreme position on inaccessibility to private beliefs of actors is excessive and makes the use of diplomatic history in IR nearly impossible.

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<sup>56</sup> Marcus Holmes, *Face-to-Face Diplomacy: Social Neuroscience and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 79.

<sup>57</sup> See Bill McEvily and Marco Tortoriello, “Measuring trust in organisational research: Review and recommendations,” *Journal of Trust Research*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2011), pp. 23-63.

<sup>58</sup> Vincent Keating and Jan Ruzicka, “Trusting Relationships in International Politics: No Need to Hedge,” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 40, no. 4 (2014), pp. 753-70.

<sup>59</sup> Philipp Brugger, “Trust as a discourse: Concept and measurement strategy – First results from a study on German trust in the USA,” *Journal of Trust Research*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2015), pp. 85.

Keating and Ruzicka also object to the acceptance of vulnerability as a behavioural marker of trust. They argue: “to state that a trusting relationship can be identified by observing actors voluntarily accepting vulnerability cannot be correct if trust has the function of cognitively reducing risk and uncertainty”.<sup>60</sup> But the cognitive elimination of risk is a property of bonded trust and not strategic trust. It is implausible to assume that rivals would not cognitively recognise and feel the risks of entering trusting relationships with each other in moments of transition. If conscious agency is not involved, it is debatable whether trust exists at all. This is also why strategic trustors may retain hedging strategies that provide a degree of safety if their trust proves mistaken. Hedging practices can also continue due to the institutional memory of the state’s security apparatus or as a partial safety blanket put in place to satisfy domestic pressure groups. Contrary to bonding trust, strategic trust—due to its minimalist nature—is compatible with such hedging, monitoring, verifying, and establishing of diverse mechanisms to safeguard against potential breaches of trust to a nominal extent. In fact, as Wheeler argues, in certain situations rivals may “only agree to intrusive methods of verification if they have expectations as to the other party’s trustworthiness”.<sup>61</sup> Thus, to show strategic trust, we need to look for the conscious acceptance of vulnerability and gradual reductions in hedging practices, or at the very least, no attempts to increase their force and reduce existing vulnerabilities.

It is also important to consider the referent for trust. As Brugger claims, to “talk about a state trusting in another state is counterintuitive and seems to overextend the state as person metaphor beyond any reasonable extent”.<sup>62</sup> Accordingly, I examine the presence of strategic trust at the interpersonal level rather than suggesting India, Pakistan or China built trust at the state level. This means that while I examine social factors and situate their causality in much

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> See Nicholas Wheeler, Joshua Baker, and Laura Considine, “Trust or verification? Accepting vulnerability in the making of the INF Treaty,” in Martin Klimke, Reinhild Kreis, and Christian F. Ostermann (eds.), *Trust but Verify: The Politics of Uncertainty and the Transformation of the Cold War Order, 1969-1991* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

<sup>62</sup> Philipp Brugger, “Trust as a discourse: Concept and measurement strategy – First results from a study on German trust in the USA,” *Journal of Trust Research*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2015), pp. 81.

wider terms, I assess their influence on leaders, diplomats, negotiators, and specific political actors. Even amongst them trusting expectations may not be uniform. As I will later show, there were divergences between those who shared Nehru, Zhou and Liaquat's empathy and trust, and those who did not, and only begrudgingly accepted the official stance of the government, staying sceptical and hawkish thereafter. This was especially true for officials who did not have prior empathic capacity. Interpersonal trust is limited to key leaders and their backers. As they are not free from the pressures of bargaining, the success of trust-building with rivals relies upon the ability of leaders to gather enough institutional and political support for their policy positions and form dominant coalitions within the decision-making apparatus. All studies of trust therefore, assume some autonomous decision-making role and skilled statesmanship on behalf of leaders. But, this thesis is also able to lay bare such institutional bargaining instead of bracketing it out. Variance in signal interpretation between different actors is a critical site to demonstrate the causal effects of empathy. Moreover, it reveals that when disputes assume a very public nature trust-building can levy personal and political costs leaders must be willing to bear.

Finally, I discuss the main limitation of this thesis: methodological Statism. As Sankaran Krishna might charge, while theorising trust-building at the interstate level, the thesis expiates "statist violence on the stateless" and glosses over the constitutive inequities that have often accompanied the formation of the nation-state and consequently the modern international system.<sup>63</sup> Both cases of success in trust-building between India-Pakistan and India-China in the 1950s came at the cost of violence at the sub-state level. For example, as India and Pakistan devised ways to work towards a peaceful resolution of the Refugee Crisis to ensure the survival of their respective statehoods, their cooperation left millions of Hindus and Muslims on the wrong side of the border perilously exposed to violence perpetrated by majority communities. A.J. Kamra's book titled "The Prolonged Partition and its Pogroms"—although polemical—captures the testimonies of violence against Hindus in East Bengal between 1946 and 1964 in

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<sup>63</sup> Sankaran Krishna, "China is China, Not the Non-West: David Kang, Eurocentrism, and Global Politics," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 77, no. 1 (2017), pp. 99.

vivid detail.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, trust in India-China relations in the 1950s conceded Tibetan lives and their aspirations for self-determination. Historian Claude Arpi, borrowing from Indian parliamentarian J.B. Kripalani, refers to the Panchsheel (Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence) as “born in sin”.<sup>65</sup> This thesis studies trust-building between rivals at the interstate level. But the ethical desirability of such trust should not always be taken for granted. There is certainly an emancipatory potential in the political ideas of resistance against power politics in the Global South and practices of trust-building that I will uncover here. However, while doing so, I am careful not to “sanitise” these histories and its violent consequences for its many victims.<sup>66</sup>

## **Chapter Plan**

Chapter 1 will provide a conceptual framework for the empirical cases that are to follow and an exposition of the concepts that can help us make sense of the socially contingent nature of strategic trust. The chapter begins by detailing and critiquing the current (mis)treatment of social contexts necessary for trust-building in rationalist, constructivist, institutionalist, and psychology-based accounts. The following three sections propose ways to address this problem. The second section discusses the influence of historical learning and anti-imperialism on the making of empathy entrepreneurs. The third section justifies this claim by using the example of India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. The fourth section explores four social factors—namely discrepant information, personal reputations of leaders, shared weaknesses, and initial reciprocity—that facilitate the trust-building process. The final section on trusting failure explores the possibility of trust being blocked by socially contextual factors, leading to disappointment and trust being overridden, leading to betrayal as rivals develop trusting expectations that are difficult to live up to.

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<sup>64</sup> See A.J. Kamra. *The Prolonged Partition and Its Pogroms: Testimonies on Violence against Hindus in East Bengal, 1946-64* (New Delhi: Voice of India, 2000).

<sup>65</sup> Claude Arpi, *Born in Sin: The Panchsheel Agreement: The Sacrifice of Tibet* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2004).

<sup>66</sup> Kate Sullivan de Estrada, “IR’s recourse to Area Studies: Siloisation Anxiety and the Disruptive Promise of Exceptionalism,” *St Antony’s International Review*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2020), pp. 207-214.

The next two chapters are studies of successful trust-building between India-Pakistan and India-China in the 1950s. Chapter 2 examines the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement, which followed the Refugee Crisis on the Bengal border in 1950. Partition related violence had led to an uncontrollable stream of Hindu and Muslim refugees migrating in distress across the border to India and Pakistan. This challenged the very survival of the two newly-born and impoverished states and led them to the brink of war. However, Nehru and Liaquat were able to build trust and forge a shared understanding of Minority Rights to resolve this vexing issue. This was possible because of Nehru's role as an empathy entrepreneur. He recognised the complexity of Pakistan's military motives and the role of fear in driving them and was thereafter also able to share this understanding with Liaquat. Subsequently, during Liaquat's visit to Delhi for crisis negotiations, both leaders began a trust-building process. Discrepant information provided by Nehru and Liaquat's ability and willingness to reign in domestic detractors and the latter's ability to address India's fears of Pakistan's status as a theocratic state, their moderate reputation and secular credentials, the shared weaknesses of their respective state administrations in managing the crisis, and the positive reciprocity of both sides after the signing of the agreement, were all necessary factors in the trust-building process. The chapter shows how both states mutually accepted vulnerabilities by forming a Joint Commission to tackle the issue of Minority Rights and resolve the Refugee Crisis.

Chapter 3 analyses the Panchsheel phase between India and China (1954-1957) and how Nehru and Zhou overcame mutual fears relating to a disputed frontier and the ideological rivalry of the early Cold War period. Despite divergent regime types and the thorny boundary issue, both leaders were able to build trust and escape the security dilemma, albeit temporarily. After Communist China's occupation of Tibet in 1950, India and China became neighbours for the first time in history, inheriting a 2100-mile long and un-demarcated border. Their interactions prior to and after the occupation of Tibet heightened fears on both sides. India was fearful of China's rejection of the McMahon Line, the Communist takeover of Sikkim, Bhutan,

and Nepal, as well as external support to the Communist Party of India in its bid to overthrow the Indian Government. On the other hand, Communist China was fearful of India's challenge to its legitimacy in Tibet, non-alignment being a false veneer to hide India's true Anglo-American leanings, and of India's intention to enforce unequal treaties on the border. Thus, in 1950 began a challenging process to militarise the Himalayas and stake claim to what each side believed was their sovereign territory. However, Nehru eventually came to believe that Chinese actions in Tibet were not indicative of its inherent expansionism. He was also able to convince his Chinese counterparts Zhou Enlai that India, and other smaller Asian states, were similarly responding to fears of Chinese expansionism. Both agreed to the need to build mutual trust. This was however only possible because of the sudden but deliberate shift in PRC propaganda and foreign policy towards the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the moderate reputations of Zhou and Nehru on the Bourgeois-Communist continuum, the shared military and administrative weaknesses of both states in border areas, and their joint efforts to uphold the Five Principles in their mutual and regional dealings. Both sides demonstrably accepted the vulnerabilities of trusting each other: India provided vital sustenance for Chinese troops in Tibet, while the Chinese risked Dalai Lama's visit to India even as the Tibetan revolution was taking shape.

The next two chapters examine cases of trusting failure. Chapter 4 examines the risk of trust being blocked, leading to disappointment rather than a positive outcome. This was evident in the failure of the Bogra-Nehru talks between 1953 and 1955 on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Under Nehru and Bogra, strategic trust was taking shape and India-Pakistan relations were better than ever since Partition. In 1953, after talks with Nehru, Bogra left New Delhi with a workable plan for a regional plebiscite under the aegis of a neutral plebiscite administrator. However, Pakistan's fragile domestic regime could not justify a compromise on the principle of an overall plebiscite and the peace anxieties of a settlement on Kashmir via distributive bargaining. In 1953, Bogra was forced to renege on the terms he agreed with Nehru. In 1955, Nehru and Bogra, under the instructions of Governor General Ghulam Muhammed, returned

to the negotiating table and considered territorial swaps as a means to resolve the dispute. However, once again, the Pakistani delegation led by Bogra and Interior Minister Iskandar Mirza could not accept the ceasefire line with minor rectifications as the status quo. They appealed to Nehru's magnanimity and demanded larger concessions from the Indian side as a means to validate their decision to settle the issue outside the remit of a plebiscite. Or else, Mirza feared, a compromise would spell the end of their government in Pakistan. Predictably, talks failed. According to my model, trust may be "blocked" if actors are unable to withstand the pressures of domestic spoilers and gain control over public and elite opinion.

Chapter 5 elucidates the risk of trust being overridden, leading to betrayal. It examines the failure of the Nehru-Zhou talks on the disputed border and turns current historiography on its head by arguing that it was not the absence but the presence of trust in the first place that prevented diplomatic resolution of the border issue. Due to the pulls of domestic social contexts, Nehru could not deny the Dalai Lama asylum even as the Tibetan revolution reached its apogee, while China could not formally accept the McMahon Line as the Tibetan revolution intensified. Indian and Chinese trustors had developed expectations that the other could not live up to, leading to a sense of betrayal and dispute escalation on both sides. This led to the failure of the Nehru-Zhou talks in 1960. This episode of trusting failure demonstrates that even in the trust maintenance phase (i.e. after strategic trust has been built), socially contextual spoilers, which force an unforeseen mismatch between trusting expectations and the actions of the trusted party, can disrupt the trusting relationship and irreparably harm the prospects of a diplomatic settlement.

Overall, I find that explanations centred on social contingency play a key role, both in terms of explaining trust-building as well its breakdown. On empathy, it is evident that historical learning and anti-hegemonic thinking was crucial in terms of providing Nehru with a reflexive understanding of the role of fear in world politics and revealing to him the workings of the security dilemma. To his credit, not only did Nehru have such empathic capacity as a critical

thinker, he was also successful in his efforts to establish empathic conveyance with his counterparts in Pakistan and China. Second, social factors such as discrepant information, personal reputations of leaders, shared weaknesses, and initial reciprocity played a vital role in facilitating trust-building. Without them, it would be difficult to explain the development of strategic trust in these cases and the embrace of vulnerability by rivals. Strategic trust was built because these social factors were present to support the trustworthy image of the respective actors. Finally, I also find that trust can be blocked by socially contextual spoilers or can be overridden, denying the benefits of building strategic trust. There are two risks of trust-building outside that of defection. There is a risk of disappointment, which is present when weak leaders and their regimes cannot isolate the trusting relationship from socially contextual spoilers. The second risk is that of betrayal, which is a feeling of disillusionment after a trusted party fails to live up to positive expectations of behaviour engendered during the trusting process. Overall, it is demonstrated that for scholars and practitioners who are interested in understanding the benefits and perils of trust in international relations, a deeper understanding of its social contingency is crucial.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Social Contingency and Strategic Trust**

Existing literature on trust in IR does not provide thick descriptions of the trusting choices of rivals. Hence, it cannot fully contemplate the causal effects of social factors that facilitate trust-building between rivals, nor caution against risks of failure once trusting relationships have been formed. This chapter will detail this critique and suggest ways to address it. I begin by laying out the treatment of social contexts in rationalist, institutionalist, constructivist, and psychology-based theories of trust. Then, in response, the following sections reflect on the advantages of studying the social contingency of strategic trust. The second and third section uses the example of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, to explain how historical learning can impact a leader's empathic capacity. Empathy is a key pre-requisite to initiate the process of trust-building between rivals. However, existing accounts have focused on dispositional explanans and experiential or crisis learning, discounting ways in which empathy can also be contingent on wider contexts, such as anti-imperialist readings of history and worldviews. The fourth section then proposes four social factors, namely discrepant information, personal reputations of the leaders, shared weaknesses, and initial reciprocity, whose collective effect provides a favourable context in rivalries for strategic trust to develop. Conversely, the final section explores the limits of these social factors as sources of trust. It contests a quixotic view of trust-building as a panacea for conflict termination and explores how trust can either be "blocked" before leading to a positive outcome (leading to disappointment) or "overridden" as contextual factors make it difficult for actors to live up to positive expectations of behaviour during the trust maintenance phase (leading to betrayal). This chapter provides a conceptual framework to help frame ways in which social factors can aid processes of trust-building, while also highlighting the limits of their scope conditions.

#### **Bringing the Social Back In**

Literature on trust in IR that uncovers the modes through which dispositions of trust develop among rivals and how they then translate into cooperative behaviour can be divided into four groups: rationalist, constructivist, institutionalist, and psychology-based theories. They each bring a unique set of theoretical priors to explain the interactive processes and social contexts through which trust emerges. Rationalists assume pay-off structures and material incentives provide the crucial context for the development of trusting relationships. As Andrew Kydd argues, under conditions of uncertainty, all egoists need to discern is their rival's shared interests (increasing sucker's pay-off), status quo orientation, and willingness to reciprocate (aided by the use of costly signals and reciprocal exchanges) to arrive at a strategically defensible decision to cooperate, despite the possibility of defection.<sup>67</sup> Charles Kupchan too contends that "reconciliation begins with such an act of unilateral accommodation". He argues that this act needs to be both "costly and unambiguous" and can typically only be afforded by the stronger power.<sup>68</sup> The most commonly cited examples of costly signals are Mikhail Gorbachev's ratification of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 1987, the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan in 1988, and the commitment to non-interference in the Eastern European revolutions in 1989 at the end of the Cold War. Rationalists argue that Moscow could undertake these costly signals for reassurance because of the nuclear safety blanket, which lowered the risk of defection and made gains of cooperation more attractive considering the Soviet Union's desperate economic situation domestically.<sup>69</sup>

However, mere "information" in the absence of cognitive reflexivity and favourable social factors cannot act as a transformative pivot for trust-building "because even apparently costly

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<sup>67</sup> See Andrew Kydd, "Trust, Reassurance, and Cooperation." *International Organization*, 54, no. 2 (2000), pp. 325-57; Andrew Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing: Why Security Seekers Do Not Fight Each Other," *Security Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1997), pp. 114-55; Andrew Kydd, "Game Theory and the Spiral Model," *World Politics*, vol. 49, no. 3 (1997), pp. 371-400; Andrew Kydd, "Overcoming Mistrust," *Rationality and Society*, vol. 12, no. 4 (2000), pp. 397-424; Andrew H. Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

<sup>68</sup> Charles Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2012).

<sup>69</sup> Charles Glaser, *Rational Theory of International Politics: The Logic of Competition and Cooperation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

signals [can] conceal hidden interests that are unknowable for the recipient”.<sup>70</sup> As Nicholas Wheeler has argued, Gorbachev “fully understood that making concessions entailed increasing Soviet vulnerability if the United States interpreted this as a sign of weakness, and chose to exploit it as Soviet hardliners feared it would. Gorbachev sought further talks not out of a sense of invulnerability, but rather out of trust”. Although they may have contributed positively to Gorbachev’s efforts to gather domestic support for his accommodative policies, even hardships and economic pressures did not inevitably lead to the path of conciliation for the Soviet Union.<sup>71</sup> Rump materialism is ill-suited to explaining trust-building between rivals as trust is surplus in accounts of instrumental reasoning. A trusting relationship requires actors to have positive expectations of the capacity, willingness, and integrity of the trusted party and an acceptance of some degree of vulnerability. What rationalists mistake for trust is reliance. Not only are the two entirely different analytical categories, in some cases, as Torsten Michel claims, “trust precedes rational behaviour [and] reliance follows from it”.<sup>72</sup>

For Constructivists, the necessary social context for trust-building lies in the ability of rivals to adopt new (positive) meanings and roles.<sup>73</sup> Alexander Wendt describes “altercasting” as one pathway that can elicit such ideational change. He argues, “in altercasting, ego tries to induce alter to take on a new identity (and thereby enlist alter in ego’s effort to change itself) by treating alter as if it already had that identity”. Since identities are created through constitutive practices in symbolic interactionist theories, if these practices change, so can the role conception of actors. Wendt argues that unilateral actions and self-binding commitments of this nature can

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<sup>70</sup> Philipp Brugger, “Trust as a discourse: Concept and measurement strategy – First results from a study on German trust in the USA,” *Journal of Trust Research*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2015), pp. 80.

<sup>71</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler, “Investigating Diplomatic Transformations,” *International Affairs*, vol. 89, no. 2 (2013), pp. 493.

<sup>72</sup> Torsten Michel, “Time to get emotional: Phronetic reflections on the concept of trust in International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 19, no. 4 (2013), pp. 886.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Urban Crawford, “The Curious Tale of the Dog That Did Not Bark: Explaining Canada’s Non-acquisition of an Independent Nuclear Arsenal, 1945–1957,” *International Journal (Toronto)*, vol. 69, no. 3 (2014), pp. 308-33; Michael Urban Crawford, “A Fearful Asymmetry: Diefenbaker, the Canadian Military and Trust during the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, vol. 21, no. 3 (2015), pp. 257-71.

“teach other states that one’s own state can be trusted and should not be viewed as a threat to their security”. Wendt too returns to Gorbachev’s “New Thinking” as a good example of such unilateral actions, mainly the withdrawal from Afghanistan and Eastern Europe and implementing asymmetric cuts in nuclear and conventional forces.<sup>74</sup> Altercasting quite usefully recognises the ability of actors to engage in critical self-reflection and make choices designed to bring about intentional change. But it still has limited utility in explaining the transformation of negative identities. Both, the circumstances in which ego decides to pursue conciliatory gestures despite not knowing whether the alter is likely to reciprocate or defect, and the processes through which the “stickiness” of negative identities is overcome and trust is built, remain under-theorised. In other words, the process through which actors learn to suspend existing fears, assume reformed identities, and begin to act optimistically towards an adversary in its wake, is absent. This problem would also affect alter’s response to ego as conciliatory gestures are not always motivated by the internalisation of new identities, and can mask exogenous pressures or predatory motives. In most cases, trust-building between rivals precedes the transformation of identities rather than being produced as an outcome of it.

Institutionalists argue that institutions provide an ideal social context for rivals to build trust. Aaron Hoffman claims institutions can serve two key functions in the trust-building process. First, they help reduce suspicion and risk of exploitation through rules, norms, principles, and threat of collective sanctions, and by giving actors an effective voice in collective decision-making to avoid exploitation. Under conditions of anarchy, states fearing exploitation by rivals will remain unable to trust “unless the penalties for trusting are reduced”. Institutions can curb unrestrained competition and provide a regulatory framework to make dire outcomes less likely, and also act as sites of socialization and learning:<sup>75</sup> Second, they can shield the

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<sup>74</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”. *International Organization*, vol. 46, no. 2 (1992), pp. 391-425. Also see Alexander Wendt, *A Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>75</sup> Aaron M. Hoffman, *Building Trust Overcoming Suspicion in International Conflict* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), pp. 8.

national leadership from domestic opponents who may seek to challenge the trusting process for short-term political gains. Institutions as social contexts for trust-building between rivals however, have two shortcomings. First, like rationalists, such accounts—at least partially—tend to view trust as an outcome of access to superior information (i.e. negative sanctions/structural constraints enforced by institutions). Here, trust has a diminished role. It only plays a small part in hiding blind spots in agreements and overcoming the limits of control measures like monitoring and verification. Second, even if one assumes that institutions produce fiduciary trust—Hoffman defines it as the “responsibility to fulfil the trust placed [in trustees] even if it means sacrificing some of their own benefits”—a certain degree of what Rathbun calls “generalised trust”<sup>76</sup> would be necessary in the first place for former rivals to willingly cede sovereignty and accept institutional restraints. This is why institutions are better suited to explaining trusting relations between alliances rather than rivals. After all, even generalised trustors learn to “eventually defect in the face of defection, when others continually refuse to reciprocate”.<sup>77</sup> Rivalries present the challenge of overcoming fear, negative learning and identities, as opposed to mere uncertainty.

Finally, psychology-based theories view trust as a mental state based upon behavioural expectations, which positively shapes the perceptions, judgements and decisions of actors. As a moralistic-emotive attitude, trust is irreducible to representational knowledge and not entirely beholden to rational control (i.e. qualitatively different from functional cooperation).<sup>78</sup> Though, due to their exclusive focus on human psychology, these accounts treat social and contextual factors as epiphenomenal, rather than integral, to the trust-building process. For example, Wheeler argues that it was through “face-to-face dialogues that Reagan and Gorbachev became

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<sup>76</sup> Generalised trust is an optimistic view of human nature and based on the quality of the trustor, not the relationship or even the characteristic of the specific target of distrust or trust (dispositional).

<sup>77</sup> Brian C. Rathbun, “From Vicious to Virtuous Circle: Moralistic Trust, Diffuse Reciprocity, and the American Security Commitment to Europe,” *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 18, no. 2 (2012), pp. 329.

<sup>78</sup> See Jonathan Mercer, “Rationality and Psychology in International Politics,” *International Organization*, vol. 59, no. 1 (2005), pp. 77-106.

mutually reassured that their counterpart did not believe that nuclear weapons had any other military purpose than deterrence.” They were able to develop “a relationship of bonded trust in which each inhabited a mental space of trust as suspension in relation to the other”.<sup>79</sup> However, reliance on unobservables such as intuition understandings, micro-expressions, the grammar of body language, or personal chemistry between leaders to explain trust-building between rivals has explanatory limitations. A deeper understanding of what goes on in the “minds of humans” is indeed important in terms of uncovering the psychology of trusting behaviour and to demonstrate the vitality of face-to-face diplomacy. But the psychological dynamics of trusting (which are hardly static) cannot entirely explain its social manifestation and account for variations in outcomes of face-to-face diplomacy. What remains unanswered is: what are the social factors that make face-to-face diplomacy operative as a mode of trust-building between rivals?

Wheeler and Marcus Holmes have sought to devise a “predictive theory of social bond formation” by relying on the works of micro-sociologist Randall Collins on interaction ritual chains. They argue that four “interaction elements” are necessary for positive social bonds to emerge between leaders: bodily co-presence, barriers to outsiders, mutual focus of attention, and shared mood. In other words, leaders need to read each other’s micro-expressions, protect their interaction from external spoilers, be able to empathise with each other’s fears (i.e. security dilemma sensibility), and positively identify common interests. It is still unclear how much this framework improves upon previous psychological models. Bodily co-presence and barriers to outsiders usefully emphasise the value of face-to-face diplomacy vis-à-vis other forms of interactions such as in-text communications. Nevertheless, these factors are may not be useful to explain variations across cases of face-to-face diplomacy. Mutual focus of attention or the exercise of empathy, as I will argue below, is a crucial pre-requisite, but not a sufficient condition for trust-building. These interaction elements are ultimately not intended to provide a

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<sup>79</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler. *Trusting Enemies: Interpersonal Relationships in International Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 184-185.

“social story” of trust in IR, one that can account for its contingent nature. As Wheeler and Holmes concede, the “next theoretical move is to interrogate how a narrowly defined interactional order [at the interpersonal level] can be broadened to account more fully for social structure”.<sup>80</sup> The next four sections will look to make headway on this front.

### **Historical Learning and The Making of Empathy Entrepreneurs**

Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler first defined security dilemma sensibility as “an actor’s intention and capacity to perceive the motives behind, and to show responsiveness towards, the potential complexity of the military intentions of others. In particular, it refers to the ability to understand the role that fear might play in their attitudes and behaviour, including, crucially, the role that one’s own actions may play in provoking that fear”. Building on the pioneering texts of John Herz and Herbert Butterfield,<sup>81</sup> Booth and Wheeler interpret the challenge posed by the security dilemma as decision making under the existential condition of unresolvable uncertainty (comprising of the dilemmas of interpretation and response). Leaders lack access to private information or the intentions of their counterparts. Yet, as opposed to “fatalist” realist theorising,<sup>82</sup> they argue that “negative outcomes are not essential to [this] definition of a security dilemma” and “positive outcomes are available in principle, and sometimes in practice”—implying that states under certain circumstances can in fact transcend what Robert Jervis<sup>83</sup> described as the spiral of mutual fear and hostility and the ambiguity of signalling.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler and Marcus Holmes, “The strength of weak bonds: Substituting bodily copresence in diplomatic social bonding,” *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 27, no. 3 (2021), pp. 747.

<sup>81</sup> See John Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism: A Study in Theories and Realities* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1959); Herbert Butterfield, *International Conflict in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (London: Routledge, 1960).

<sup>82</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (London: Norton, 2003).

<sup>83</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976).

<sup>84</sup> Nicholas Wheeler and Ken Booth, *The security dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 7.

To escape the security dilemma, actors must first be able to empathise with, and identify, the fearful or defensive orientations of their rivals, instead of assuming them to be predatory. Contrary to richer definitions of empathy in the psychology literature, I define empathy narrowly as the belief that one understands the cognitive and affective states of others (perspective-taking) and as a reflexive orientation towards fear and its consequences. It is a pivot that allows for a reconfiguration of bilateral ties and the relational structures within which they are socially embedded. The logic is simple: if the security dilemma spiral is produced by misperception, fear, and inadvertence, a recognition of how competitive excesses are produced, is the first step towards unravelling it. At this stage, while actors do not have reliable readings of each other's intentions, empathy breeds "reasonable doubt" about a rival's intentions being benign. In Herz's words, it does not "resolve the dilemma entirely, of course, for one could never be entirely certain; but it might at least take some of the sting out of it and insert a wedge toward a more rational, less fear-ridden, less ideology-laden, and less emotion-beset attitude through a kind of psychoanalysis in the international field where lifting one factor into the realm of the conscious might become part of the healing process".<sup>85</sup> Following on from this understanding, I define an empathy entrepreneur as an actor who possesses such empathic capacity and attempts to convey their interpretation of the security dilemma spiral to their rival and establish empathic conveyance.

Between rivals, empathy creates a predisposition to trust despite the presence of other negative emotions. It humanises enemies, mitigates ideological fundamentalism, and awakens leaders to the reality that disputes over security, identity, or recognition need not be zero-sum and can instead be settled through distributive bargaining. Once leaders understand how socio-psychological processes can generate, sustain, and escalate conflict, they begin to identify and implement the changes necessary to counteract and reverse this conflict dynamic. As Joshua Baker asserts, with respect to conflict resolution, empathy "positively impact[s] upon de-

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<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Nicholas J. Wheeler, 'To Put Oneself into the Other Fellow's Place': John Herz, the security dilemma and the Nuclear Age," *International Relations*, vol. 22, no. 4 (2008), pp. 495.

escalation by leading actors to moderate their positions on key issues of contestation, reinterpret their interests, and broaden the zone of possible agreement between themselves and their adversary”.<sup>86</sup> Even when actors believe their rival’s fears are unfounded, empathy can bring to light the role of situational (both domestic and international) and relational factors in constituting the military motives of rivals. As Ralph White argues, realistic empathy “does not necessarily imply sympathy, or tolerance, or liking, or agreement with [rivals]—but simply understanding”.<sup>87</sup> While the mere presence of empathy does not guarantee a positive outcome, it is a precondition for any trust-building between rivals. Leaders with strong enemy images who fail to empathise tend to view security measures of their rivals as predatory and attribute them to hostile national characteristics, like political ideology or appetite for expansionism. Since these are rigid and monolithic, the prospects for trust in these cases are non-existent. Such rivals will not seek to escape the security dilemma through trust-building.

One needs to ask though, what empirical basis guides existing understandings of empathy as security dilemma sensibility in IR? If empathy has the type of prominence detailed above for the process of trust-building, how have social contexts that are conducive to the making of empathy entrepreneurs (potential trust-builders) been theorised? Scholarly works have provided extensive evidence for the positive effects of empathy in conflict transformation across diverse geographies and multiple time periods.<sup>88</sup> However, they remain constrained to dispositional explanans and experiential or crisis learning. Baker examines the development of high-ranking U.S. officials’ empathic capacity towards Iran and their nuclear program before the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He finds that the Obama administration’s acceptance “that past U.S. administrations were at least partly responsible for causing Iranian insecurity and stoking security dilemma dynamics between the two states” was a

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<sup>86</sup> Joshua Baker, “The Empathic Foundations of security dilemma De-escalation,” *Political Psychology*, vol. 40, no. 6 (2019), pp. 1252.

<sup>87</sup> R. K. White, *Nobody wanted war: Misperception in Vietnam and other wars* (New York: Garden City, 1968).

<sup>88</sup> See Naomi Head, “Transforming Conflict: Trust, Empathy, and Dialogue,” *International Journal of Peace Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2012), pp. 33-55.

positive factor in their efforts to build trust with Iran. In these cases, empathy was a consequence of “prior-held beliefs and intuitions alongside sustained internal deliberation”.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, Marcus Holmes and Keren Yarhi-Milo argue through their analysis of the Middle East peace process summits in Camp David that skilled mediators who “can step in and build relational empathy between disputants” increase the likelihood of an agreement. They argue “relations and interactions, in addition to beliefs and dispositions, are important”.<sup>90</sup> Likewise, Wheeler also claims that crisis learning (such as the Able Archer Crisis and its effects on Raegan and Gorbachev) or experiential learning through personal interactions (such as between Vajpayee and Sharif during the signing of the Lahore Declaration) can play a vital role in engendering empathy in leaders.<sup>91</sup> But none of these accounts consider the possibility that historical learning can aid a leader’s empathic capacity.

Several scholars have demonstrated the value of lessons leaders draw from history and how these lessons impact their decision-making. As Jack Levy argues, learning can involve an actor “drawing inferences from history...changing their beliefs about strategic situations or developing new beliefs, skills, or procedures as a result of the observation and interpretation of experience”.<sup>92</sup> A unique form of such learning can contribute positively to an actor’s empathic capacity or security dilemma sensibility. Not all history is equally potent in this regard. Saliency is reserved for catastrophic wars and the missteps that precede them. These often serve as sources of learning for policymakers as a means to avoid similar fates. Yuen Foong Khong, for instance, has shown how the wrongful choice of appeasement by British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain before World War II and the decision to repose blind faith in Hitler’s bona fides—memorialised as the “Munich Analogy”—has shaped policymakers in security predicaments

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<sup>89</sup> Joshua Baker, “The Empathic Foundations of security dilemma De-escalation,” pp. 1261.

<sup>90</sup> Marcus Holmes and Keren Yarhi-Milo, “The Psychological Logic of Peace Summits: How Empathy Shapes Outcomes of Diplomatic Negotiations,” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 1 (2017), pp. 1-16.

<sup>91</sup> See Nicholas J. Wheeler. *Trusting Enemies: Interpersonal Relationships in International Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>92</sup> Jack S. Levy, “Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield,” *International Organization*, vol. 48, no. 2 (1994), pp. 279-312.

hence.<sup>93</sup> Such cautionary tales might make actors less likely to develop a reflexive orientation to the security dilemma. Equally however, catastrophic wars are capable of alternative interpretations that can make actors more amenable to trust-building. As I will show in the next section, if actors are able to recognise the security dilemma as a causal factor in previous wars, this can allow them to empathise with rivals in situations where they too seem to be approximating such a spiral and explore possible means of mitigation.

Such historical learning was evident in postcolonial Asian states such as India, Pakistan, and China in the 1950s, whose elites were somewhat detached in their reading of European great power wars as outsiders and simultaneously critical of an imperial global politics as colonised peoples. If a reflexive recognition of fear in security dilemma spirals is a crucial part of a leader's ability to empathise with rivals, it is unsurprising that the social forces of anti-hegemony proved useful in this respect. Actors in these subordinate states, who lacked the capacity to mobilise fear for self-serving interests and agenda-setting in a wider institutional sense (as Great Powers often do), were better positioned to appreciate fear's negative effects and challenge its naturalisation. A specific type of historical learning in these cases highlights ways in which shared experiences of oppression can foster overarching shared interpretations of historical events, which in turn can engender greater capacity for empathy as security dilemma sensibility in leaders.

Two further clarifications: First, historical learning tends to produce a type of "projected" empathy, which may take the shape of a unilateral and quasi-romanticised imposition on the other. Since actors tend to infer historical lessons through the prism of their own biases and worldviews and beliefs, their prior dispositions can lead to a favourable interpretation of rivals' motives and intentions without such interpretations necessarily being accurate or justified. Projected empathy as security dilemma sensibility is still useful however, as

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<sup>93</sup> Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992).

it allows actors to reflexively consider the consequences of the security dilemma spiral and exploit windows of opportunities for trust-building. Actors may not need to have access to an accurate reading of their rivals' intentions and motives at this early stage for successful trust-building. Second, it is impossible to pre-determine what type of lessons leaders will/should take from specific historical events. What is being learnt is not necessarily a "rational" thing and there are contested memories of key historical events. Anti-imperialism made Nehru an empathy entrepreneur but did not have similar influence on other self-professed anti-colonialists, both within and outside India. However, historical learning still advances previous understandings as it demonstrates the value of historical lessons in engendering empathy as security dilemma sensibility, albeit mediated by a wide variety of personal, social, and material factors.

### **Jawaharlal Nehru as an Empathy Entrepreneur**

In this section I use the example of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru to illustrate how empathy as security dilemma sensibility can be contingent on social contexts, such as anti-imperialist readings of history and worldviews. Since the impact of historical learning is always contextually varied, the worldview and experiences of 'historical learners' must be deeply understood prior to seeking an understanding of how historical learning functions in the case studies at hand, as well as to exemplify how it functions on an abstract plane to produce empathy. While succeeding chapters will establish how Nehru projected empathy in specific cases, here I briefly explore his ability to act as an empathy entrepreneur. It was Nehru's thinking as a critic of Realism that proved conducive to the trust building process and made him receptive to the workings of security dilemma in India's relations with Pakistan and China during the 1950s. During India's freedom struggle, he was the preeminent spokesperson for the Indian National Congress on foreign affairs, and later, also helmed the Ministry of External Affairs during his seventeen-year term as Prime Minister. Due to his active participation in public life, he was a keen observer of the two World Wars and the early Cold War period. His writings, speeches, and policy decisions stand as a vantage point from which to develop a

critique of the politics of fear that dominated most of the twentieth century, albeit from a from a distinctive and subordinate position. He was a decrier of political realism, and his critique was rooted in the intellectual history of India's anti-colonial struggle and its challenge to the imperialism(s) of Western modernity.

Rejecting Realism's blurring of the distinction between fear, uncertainty, and rationality, Nehru argued that fear was an "ignoble emotion" that led to "blind strife".<sup>94</sup> In his reading, leading up to World War I, despite a reluctance in Germany, Russia, England and France at the time, it was such an overruling sense of fear that had precipitated war. The major European powers "each feared and hated and envied the other, and this fear and hatred [produced] a feverish competition [between] these engines of destruction".<sup>95</sup> In the aftermath of Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia and in preparation for a German attack, Tsar Nicholas II's Russia hurriedly began troop mobilization on July 30, 1914. Two days later, on August 1, Wilhelmine Germany mobilized and pre-emptively declared war on Russia and France, thereby drawing England into the conflict. In Nehru's view, at the time, all the European powers expected war to come and prepared for it "feverishly", and yet "none of them was keen on it". They all feared it to some extent, for no one could prophesy with certainty what the result of war would be, "and yet fear itself drove them on to war".<sup>96</sup>

Similarly, Nehru argued that before World War II, "there [was] fear of others, and that fear led to aggression and tortuous intrigues". Germany, "nursing dreams of world conquest was obsessed by fears of encirclement". Soviet Russia, "feared a combination of her enemies". England's national policy "[had] long been based on a balance of power in Europe and fears of any dominating power there".<sup>97</sup> Based on this, as the Cold War emerged, Nehru predicted that the "sense of fear [which was] pervading great countries" was once again likely to be followed by

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<sup>94</sup> "An Age of Crises" speech by Jawaharlal Nehru on March 19, 1948. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 5, pp. 508.

<sup>95</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1975), pp. 411.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 638-639.

<sup>97</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, pp. 572.

“evil consequences”.<sup>98</sup> Now, the US was “obsessed by fear and suffering from high nervous tension [due to] a strange combination of pride in their strength and apprehensiveness about the future as represented by Russia and communism”. On the other hand, the Russians, “from long experience, suspect[ed] everybody”.<sup>99</sup> Since both superpowers “live[d] in fear and [kept] preparing for war...preparing to protect themselves. Who [was] likely to be the aggressor and who the victim no one [could] judge. But, it [was] fear which [made] them do this”.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, referring to the prevailing conditions as a “Cold” War was a misnomer, Nehru believed. It misleadingly signalled a degree of diffused hostility and a false sense of security. Instead superpower rivalry denoted a “waiting period” towards some “future shooting war”.<sup>101</sup> In essence, he saw arms racing and military alliances as part of a larger realist discourse of fear that advocated a culture of war through its promotion of power politics. As Vineet Thakur argues, Nehru had a critical appreciation of the “ontological fallacy of *a priori* fear structures”.<sup>102</sup>

What allowed Nehru to access this critique of fear was anti-imperialism and a critical appreciation of the relationship between “the old policy of expansion and Empire and the balance of power, which he believed inevitably [led] to conflict and war”.<sup>103</sup> He saw Empire and global capitalism as legitimising territorial expansionism and imperial exploitation, rendering colonies as playthings of great powers and paving the way for wars over dominion. In this respect, Nehru’s distinct positionality, as an elite in a post-colonial state who had access to and literacy of European visions of the international, provides a unique, and possibly fuller, exposition of the workings of fear in world politics. He was painfully aware that fear was

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<sup>98</sup> “The Role of the United Nations” speech by Jawaharlal Nehru on November 3, 1948. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 8, pp. 292.

<sup>99</sup> “Publicity in the United States” speech by Jawaharlal Nehru on January 27, 1947. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 1 pp. 582.

<sup>100</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, speech at a public meeting in Mumbai on 11 April 1954. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 25, pp. 29-39, at pp. 32.

<sup>101</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, statement in the House of the People on 17 September 1953. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 23, pp. 389-407, at pp. 396.

<sup>102</sup> Vineet Thakur, “Jawaharlal Nehru: Thinking beyond International Relations Theory,” *Indian Journal of Politics*, vol. 45, no. 3-4 (2011), pp. 224-240.

<sup>103</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, pp. 540.

knowingly used to draw smaller states into conformity with great powers and their global ambitions. As Nehru once asked: What are the underlying causes of war in the modern world? One of the basic causes [was] the domination of one country by another or an attempt to dominate”.<sup>104</sup> This was because the “whole structure of industrial capitalism and its offshoot imperialism” was based on “conflict and competition and exploitation. Thus, in the East, nationalism, [the] child of imperialism became its bitter enemy”.<sup>105</sup> In his view, this pattern continued thereafter. As the Cold War emerged, Soviet Russia and the United States began fighting for “the mastery of the world”. They both sought the “allegiance of satellites” who were to remain under their political control and economic domination.<sup>106</sup> Thus, Nehru believed fear and systemic exploitation could not be challenged until great powers had yielded their “imperialist and acquisitive tendencies” and laid the foundations of a new political order “on the peaceful cooperation of free nations and on the maintenance of dignity of man”.<sup>107</sup>

This was the key historical lesson for Nehru in terms of devising a foreign policy agenda for India. He wanted to challenge the ordering function of fear, reform the international (read: imperial) political order, and make it more equitable for post-colonial states and their sovereign aspirations. To achieve this objective however, he would have to contend with the “stickiness” of existing social structures of the post-World War II period. Newly-born states could not endanger their survival, ignore deterrence needs, and rest their national security on the UN’s nascent collective security framework. After all, in the interwar period, the League of Nations had failed to protect Abyssinia, Spain and Manchuria from imperial aggression.<sup>108</sup> Nehru recognised that Wendell Willkie’s proposal for “One World” was not attainable in an international society

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<sup>104</sup> “Ends and Means” speech by Jawaharlal Nehru on October 17, 1949. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 13, pp. 318.

<sup>105</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, pp. 414.

<sup>106</sup> “The Need for a Wider Perspective” speech by Jawaharlal Nehru on October 19, 1948. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 8, pp. 280.

<sup>107</sup> “Resolution on Congress Objectives” speech by Jawaharlal Nehru on November 26, 1946. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 1, pp. 21.

<sup>108</sup> K.M. Panikkar, “Some observations on the twentieth century as a period in World History,” K.M. Panikkar private papers, File no. 1294, Section II, National Archives India, pp. 23-27.

“suffering from an excess of fear and suspicion”.<sup>109</sup> Admitting India’s inability to renounce military recourse in light of the Kashmir War (1947-1948), he stated: “I know that we are not up to the mark—nobody is at the present moment, or few people are—and I do not want the other alternative [war].<sup>110</sup> The Gandhian path of non-violence was simply too “difficult to traverse alone”.<sup>111</sup> He acknowledged that this was a tough problem for a politician, and “he had no magic formula to offer anybody”.<sup>112</sup> As a first step however, Nehru stated the value of empathy and de-centring fear from the security imaginary, arguing that states needed to “understand others just as they expected themselves to be understood by others”.<sup>113</sup> He later remarked that it was essential for leaders to recognise that “one may lack sufficient knowledge about the person’s background, about the motives that have impelled him to act, about the provocation for what has been done that may well have repelled [them]”.<sup>114</sup> This would allow actors to take “risks of *trust* rather than to risk violent language, violent actions, and in the end war”.<sup>115</sup>

While I have not come across archival evidence to suggest Nehru’s counterparts, Liaquat Ali Khan, Mohammed Ali Bogra, or Zhou Enlai, had similar empathetic dispositions due to historical learning (this is not to discount that such evidence may exist) they eventually came to appreciate that India too might be acting out of fear. This is because Nehru succeeded in his efforts to convince his counterparts in Pakistan and China that hostility in their bilateral relations had been produced through an interactive process with an escalatory and self-perpetuating dynamic. For any trust-building to take place successfully, there must be at least one such empathy entrepreneur who has security dilemma sensibility and who is willing and

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<sup>109</sup> “Note on Foreign Policy” by Jawaharlal Nehru on December 2, 1948. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 8, pp. 326.

<sup>110</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, speech at Baa Ground in Rangoon on 22 June 1950. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 14, Part II, pp. 423-426, at pp. 424.

<sup>111</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, speech at public meeting in Bombay on 26 April 1948, *SWJN SS*, vol. 6, pp. 13-24, at pp. 16.

<sup>112</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, address at the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, University of Chicago, 27 October 1949, *SWJN SS*, vol. 13, pp. 347-358, pp. 357-358.

<sup>113</sup> “The Need for a Temper of Peace” speech by Jawaharlal Nehru on January 12, 1951. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 15 (II), pp. 473.

<sup>114</sup> “An Indian Worldview” speech by Jawaharlal Nehru [undated]. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 22, pp. 5.

<sup>115</sup> Emphasis added. “The Role of the United Nations” speech by Jawaharlal Nehru on November 3, 1948. In *SWJN SS*, vol. 8, pp. 293.

capable of communicating this understanding to their rival counterpart to establish empathic conveyance and pave the way for eventual trust-building. For instance, Chiara Cervasio has highlighted the use of “personal envoys” as a mechanism by which empathy is conveyed to the other party, especially when the other party is a distruster.<sup>116</sup> However, in the cases I examine, it is Nehru himself as the empathy entrepreneur, rather than other Indian diplomats or envoys, who is the key interlocutor in guiding the development of security dilemma sensibility. The specific interpersonal exchanges and the shifts from “projected empathy” to “empathic conveyance” are detailed in the empirical chapters. Empathy becomes visible in these cases when actors are able to view the complexity of their rival’s military motivations, especially the role of fear in shaping them. In later chapters, I develop both, an actor’s “inward” empathic capacity or their openness to the “possibility that an adversary is acting out of fear and insecurity, rather than aggressive intent”, and its “outward” dimension or his belief “that the other leader either possesses, or is capable of possessing, security dilemma sensibility”.<sup>117</sup> As we will see, previously failed attempts at cooperation, as well as conciliatory gestures that are costless for the sender but still address vital social needs of the receiver, can indicate their empathic capacity, even if they do not clearly reveal an actor’s preferences. The next section now explains how strategic trust can be built after empathic conveyance has taken place.

### **Building Strategic Trust**

While trusting choices are based on “weak interpretive knowledge” and require a degree of suspension, it is still useful to uncover the “idiosyncratic praxis” and interpretation of subjective reality (context) that helps us grasp fully *how rivals trust*.<sup>118</sup> On this front, as Seanon Wong argues, “beyond what leaders are able to learn about each other in later rounds of face-to-face contact,

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<sup>116</sup> Chiara Cervasio, *The Empathic De-escalation of security dilemma and Status Dilemma Dynamics in India-China relations, 1986-2000*, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2021.

<sup>117</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler and Marcus Holmes, “Overcoming the Four Horsemen of Diplomacy: Explaining Variation in Face-to-Face Engagement,” pp. 1-35. Copy on file with author.

<sup>118</sup> Guido Mollering, “The Nature of Trust: From Georg Simmel to a Theory of Expectation, Interpretation and Suspension,” *Sociology*, vol. 35, no. 2 (2001), pp. 403-20.

there are also other sources of information they consult”.<sup>119</sup> These contain a mix of both, signals and indices. Jervis defines signals as “statements or actions the meanings of which are established by tacit or explicit understandings among the actors”. Indices on the other hand, are “statements or actions that carry some inherent evidence that the image projected is correct because they are believed to be inextricably linked to the actor’s capabilities or intentions”.<sup>120</sup> This is because they are either beyond rational control and manipulation or simply too important to be used for deception. Following Jervis, most psychology-based trust scholars have relied on indices and downplayed the ability of signals to communicate trustworthiness—since they are promissory notes and do not contain any inherent reliability in the absence of enforcement mechanisms. I argue however, that although secondary to indices, they too help convey sincerity under certain circumstances. In fact, along with acquiring an index of trustworthiness, leaders often rely on the conscious performance of their counterparts to discern their consistency of behaviour with expectations. After all, “diplomacy also entails behaviours that are consciously performed, observed and processed, and whose meanings are understood—often implicitly—among those involved”.<sup>121</sup>

The four social factors I elucidate work together to facilitate the trusting choices of rivals, instead of being discrete antecedents. They have only been separated for analytical clarity. I argue that these factors are emergent social dynamics at the elite level necessary for the development of strategic trust. In other words, interactionism and information sharing between actors, both directly through interpersonal diplomacy and indirectly through intelligence agencies or third-parties over a sustained period of time, allow these social factors to emerge. Moreover, the social factors discussed here are not exhaustive. My purpose is less to provide a comprehensive list of social sources that allow rivals to build trust, but rather, to suggest that IR

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<sup>119</sup> Seanon Wong, “You Never Get a Second Chance to Make a First Impression? First Encounters and Face-based Threat Perception,” *ISSF Article Review*, no. 74, (2017).

<sup>120</sup> Robert Jervis, *The logic of Images in International Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 18.

<sup>121</sup> Seanon Wong, “You Never Get a Second Chance to Make a First Impression?”

scholars look for social bases upon which trust is contingent. To reiterate, what makes these factors “social” is the fact that they are produced by relational processes between actors and the meanings and significations thereof. As antecedents, they provide *the* social context that makes the trusting choices of rivals possible, and more importantly, renders it rational to an actor’s subjective reasoning.

One trusting resource is discrepant information. Diplomatic interaction has a large degree of predictability due to reliance on convention, precedent, and custom. But when rivals are exposed to conciliatory gestures, even if symbolic and costless, that are “unexpected” enough to provoke “surprise” as being departures from previous practices, they can unsettle existing beliefs about the nature of the relationship. As Wong’s analysis on emotions as signals in face-to-face diplomacy posits, the strength of any signal crucially depends on “what diplomats are accustomed to receiving at the dyadic level”.<sup>122</sup> This is what makes discrepant information a social factor, as actors cannot convey or interpret the “unexpectedness” of the signal in the absence of the contextually thick milieu that gives meaning to any action. For instance, the use of discrepant information is more powerful when it is directly connected to addressing emotions such as fear. Addressing central fears that drive existential conflicts makes persuasion of this type more effective.<sup>123</sup> However, these fears are socially constituted and derived, and therefore ways to mitigate them through the use of discrepant information requires an actor to be aware of the existing nature of relational ties and consider the range of signals that can prove “unexpected” enough to the opposing party to positively reform existing beliefs and build trust. While it can be difficult to identify such a social marker, there is a critical threshold of “unexpectedness” for discrepant information that a given signal must cross in order to contribute successfully to the trust-building process.

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<sup>122</sup> Seanon Wong, “Emotions and the Communication of Intentions in Face-to-Face Diplomacy,” *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2016), pp. 158.

<sup>123</sup> Jonathan Mercer, “Emotional Beliefs,” *International Organization*, vol. 64, no. 1 (2010), pp. 1-31.

There are three further clarifications. First, the degree of unexpectedness of such gestures cannot be determined in the absence of socio-cultural meanings and the specific expectations of the rivals. Second, as Jervis highlights, “greater change will result when discrepant information arrives in a large batch than when it is considered bit by bit”. Thirdly, since the decision to trust rivals in light of discrepant information is cognitively taxing and difficult to arrive at, there is a “greater tendency to justify that decision (reducing the dissonance) afterward”. In other words, since policies to trust rivals make one vulnerable, “decision-makers are likely to believe they have accomplished something worthy of their sacrifice”.<sup>124</sup> This inverts the confirmation bias often associated with enemy images as actors look to reduce dissonance in response to counter-attitudinal behaviour.<sup>125</sup> A good example of the link between discrepant information and trust-building was A.B. Vajpayee’s visit to the tower at Minar-e-Pakistan in 1999, which memorialises the Muslim League’s first appeal for a separate state for British India’s Muslims in 1940. No Indian Prime Minister had visited this site before. Vajpayee’s decision to do so was a “stunningly symbolic act” and signalled to his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif that “he was sincere in bringing the olive branch to Lahore”. In particular, this relatively costless gesture—since Vajpayee’s nationalist bona fides were beyond reproach—addressed Pakistan’s long-standing fears that India had never accepted the result of Partition and would look to reverse it if given the opportunity.<sup>126</sup>

A second trusting resource is the personal reputation of the leader at variance from the state regime. If two rival states have strong opposing national identities, the moderate reputations of key leaders in relation to such identities can become an important indicator of trustworthiness. Reputation can be defined as “the general opinion of a person or a thing held

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<sup>124</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976).

<sup>125</sup> See Yehudit Auerbach, “Turning-Point Decisions: A Cognitive-Dissonance Analysis of Conflict Reduction in Israel-West German Relations,” *Political Psychology*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1986), pp. 533-50.

<sup>126</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler, “I Had Gone to Lahore With a Message of Goodwill, But in Return We Got Kargil”: The Promise and Perils of “Leaps of Trust” in India-Pakistan Relations,” *India Review*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2010), pp. 319-44.

by others and the public”.<sup>127</sup> Even prior to first meetings, as Wong highlights, “leaders invariably know something about a counterpart, including [their] character traits”.<sup>128</sup> In this respect, moderate reputations can help reduce the expectation of harm that usually attends major differences in national identity (e.g. belief that Communist regimes are likely to be expansionist) and increases the propensity to trust, especially when the area of cooperation is directly linked to such personal identities. Anne Sartori “conjecture[s] that particular leaders’ or diplomats’ reputations are likely to be important only in rare cases”.<sup>129</sup> But Danielle Lupton has shown otherwise. She argues that “individual leaders...can acquire their own reputations...that are separate from both the reputations of their predecessors and the reputations of their states”. Also, these later affect how other’s respond to the leader in diplomatic interactions, negotiations, crises, and disputes.<sup>130</sup> Personal reputations are social factors because they too are contextually derived and interpreted. They only come to exist through the circulation of ideas within social groups and are communicated or transmitted through interaction and knowledge-sharing.

There are two reasons why reputations can become a powerful source of trust. First, personal reputations are built over a prolonged period of time and through a diverse range of information sources such as diplomats (including those at lower levels in the bureaucracy), other leaders, intelligence reports, and previous face-to-face contact. Considering this, “manipulation may be impractical because it would require control of too many disparate pieces of information”.<sup>131</sup> Second, the formation of these reputations is also influenced by “deeds” or the domestic policies of the leader, which are too difficult to manipulate for future gains in foreign affairs. For example, “the most influential leaders in Ronald Reagan’s administration believed that the liberal domestic reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev indicated that the Soviets were

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<sup>127</sup> Shiping Tang, “Reputation, Cult of Reputation, and International Conflict,” *Security Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2005), 34-62.

<sup>128</sup> Seanon Wong, “You Never Get a Second Chance to Make a First Impression?”

<sup>129</sup> Anne E. Sartori, *Deterrence by Diplomacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 126.

<sup>130</sup> Danielle L. Lupton, *Reputation for Resolve: How Leaders Signal Determination in International Politics* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2020).

<sup>131</sup> Robert Jervis, *The logic of Images in International Relations*, pp. 65.

prepared to end the Cold War”.<sup>132</sup> Since Perestroika challenged Soviet national identity, US policymakers considered it a credible signal of Gorbachev’s willingness to overcome the ideological rivalry of the Cold War. Simply put, the costs of such reputation building can be too high for it be part of a deceptive scheme.

A third trusting resource is shared weaknesses. As I argued earlier, mutual care for shared interests is crucial for the development of strategic trust. Both rivals must have, and be able to communicate, a common script that they will prioritise dominating common interests over conflictual ones. Shared weaknesses are one plausible way to achieve this. If both rivals face significant and evident weaknesses (e.g. domestic unrest, economic hardship and social problems, administrative lacunae in border areas), then a mutual recognition of care for the relationship and cooperation in light of these susceptibilities can provide a perceived rational basis for a trusting relationship to develop. A relationship of mutual care based on shared weaknesses establishes a unique link between interests and intentions since it simultaneously indicates “exactly how another state defines security, how much security it wants, and how it weighs the costs and benefits of using or not using force”. As Sebastian Rosato concedes, under such circumstances, actors “would probably be able to infer the second state’s intentions from its interest in self-preservation”.<sup>133</sup> Shared weaknesses do not create cooperation or trust through necessity. It is not materiality that forces actors towards certain actions. Rather, it is the communication of mutual care, wherein both parties believe that their counterpart has pressing material reasons that favour their emotional investment in, and the prioritisation of, a beneficial relationship *despite* their differences. For instance, India and Pakistan as weak states in the 1950s and 1960s had material conditions and rewards of cooperation that could have been used to find justification for a trusting relationship. However, they were unable to do so regularly on a

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<sup>132</sup> Charles L. Glaser, Andrew H. Kydd, Mark L. Haas, John M. Owen IV, Sebastian Rosato, “Correspondence: Can Great Powers Discern Intentions?” *International Security*, vol. 40, no. 3 (2016), pp. 197-215.

<sup>133</sup> Sebastian Rosato, *Intentions in Great Power Politics: Uncertainty and the Roots of Conflict* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021) pp. 27.

wide range of matters as actors remained unable or unwilling to convince each other of their desire to pursue dominating common interests over conflictual ones.

Neither is shared weakness as a basis for trust-building possible if the weakness is perceived to have been created by the rival. Rather, it is an acknowledgement between rivals that they share concern over specific weaknesses—often affecting vital state interests that cannot be easily overcome in the short-term and require joint effort—that overrides their incentive to defect in areas of competing interests. Between rivals, such weaknesses are not communicated openly due to fear of exploitation, and even if they are, may be perceived as acts of deception. Only prior empathy can allow them to be conveyed implicitly through indirect channels. This process can be aided by a “likeness” in the nature of weakness facing both rivals. It is easier for rivals to recognise and empathise with each other’s weaknesses if they too have experienced them. For example, as historian Pallavi Raghavan argues in relation to India-Pakistan cooperation in the 1950s, “the central leadership in both countries were aware of the intense fragility of the nation-state project in South Asia after Partition”.<sup>134</sup> The reason shared weaknesses convey sincerity is because it is difficult for actors to manipulate such large-scale phenomenon that form inherent state characteristics. At best, actors “may be able to prevent others from obtaining information about the index”.<sup>135</sup>

A fourth trusting resource is initial reciprocity. This can include both, actions which are taken in direct response to a conciliatory move and which reward the initiator with an equivalent concession as well as those actions that do not seek to take advantage of the initiator’s conciliatory moves. Although reciprocity is late in the trusting process—since it assumes a certain degree of prior trust as well as mutual agreement on future expectations of behaviour—specified reciprocal exchanges in the initial stages do play a large part in building and building

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<sup>134</sup> Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India-Pakistan Relationship, 1947-1952* (London: Hurst and Co., 2020), pp. 2.

<sup>135</sup> Robert Jervis, *The logic of Images in International Relations*, pp. 64.

the trusting relationship. Following Robert Keohane, I understand “reciprocity” simply as the exchange of specified items between actors, which conform to mutually agreed trusting commitments.<sup>136</sup> To be more effectual the exchange should be based on items of equal value or based on shared commitments which are symmetrical. In the early stages, once an actor takes the decision to trust and rely on another in a manner that makes them dependent or vulnerable, and the trusted party (former rival) chooses to cooperate rather than exploit the actor’s vulnerability, it strengthens the image of trustworthiness, especially if exploiting the vulnerability would have given the defector a decisive advantage. Strategic trust however, cannot be sustained by highly diffused and open-ended reciprocity circles. As Rathbun clarifies, “where trust is relatively more lacking...the cycle keeps its momentum only if cooperation is quickly matched”.<sup>137</sup> Reciprocity of this type is “social” in its nature as it forms the interactive dynamic that helps reframe the rivalry and builds positive relational ties once the trusting process has been initiated.

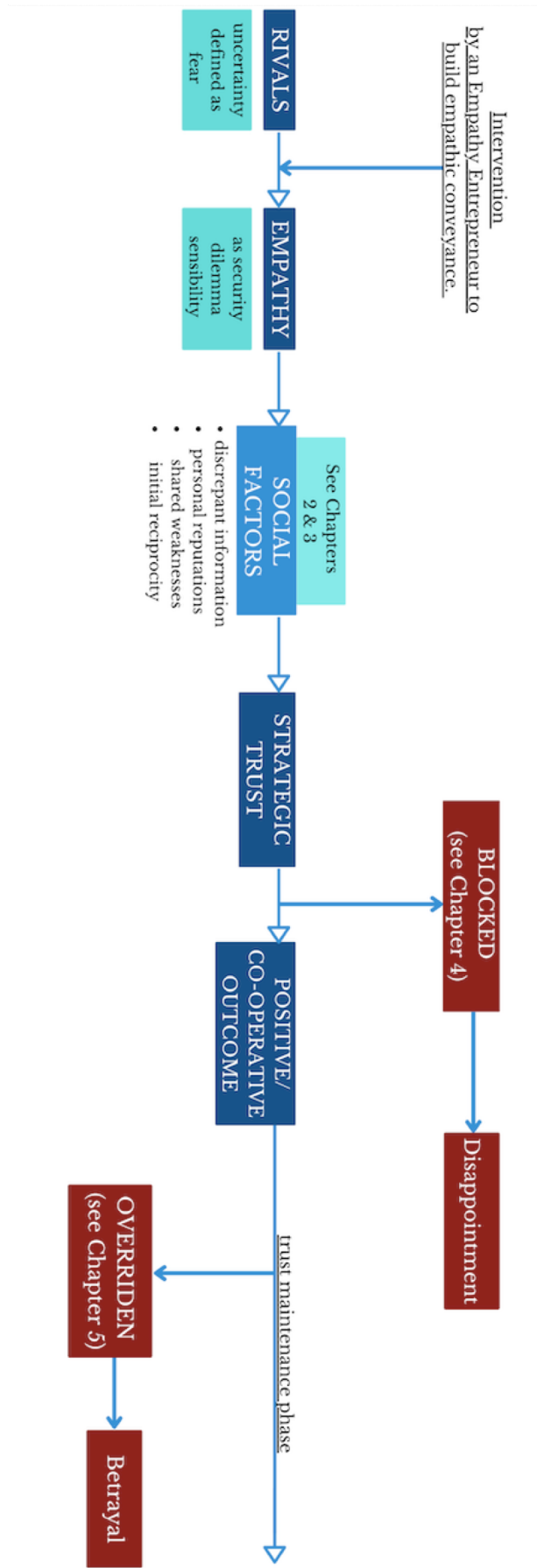
I consider initial reciprocity to be part of the “trust-building phase” rather than the “trust maintenance phase” because I do not conceive of the trusting choice as a single moment but rather as an interactive and dynamic process. Until the decision to accept vulnerability is made and the perceptions of the actors are significantly reformed, a trusting relationship cannot be said to exist. It is in this respect that I argue that initial reciprocity—although late in the trust-building process—plays a vital role as it provides an experiential script of engagement that reinforces the nascent and developing trustworthy image of the former rival and allows it to be projected onto future actions. This is necessary since prior episodes of interaction between rivals are predominantly negative. This does not however imply that strategic trustors cooperate only because the beneficial relationship provides favourable pay-off structures and would cease to exist after the initial exchange.

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<sup>136</sup> Robert Keohane, “Reciprocity in International Relations,” *International Organization*, vol. 40, no. 1 (1986), pp. 1-27.

<sup>137</sup> Brian Rathbun, *Trust in International Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 12.

It is important to clarify why I believe these four factors to be “sources of trust” and not “outcomes of trust”. One could argue that it is trust that makes possible these social factors rather than the other way around. Or perhaps that trust is built through face-to-face contact and these social factors are merely epiphenomenal to this process. A response to this charge will be found in the following empirical chapters as I show that the trusting choices of Nehru, Liaquat, and Zhou in the 1950s could not have been made in the absence of these social factors. However, I will preface my findings here. I assume that there are factors that enable trusting choices and without probing them, it is difficult to substantiate any basis for trust, or even claim that it was trust that led to the decision to cooperate in the first place. Considering this, I establish the causality of social factors in trust-building through intensive process tracing; by providing a robust historical examination and eliminating probable alternative explanations. Nehru, Liaquat, and Zhou did not use costly signals, institutions, or shared identity to build trust. While face-to-face contact was necessary for trust building, I argue that it cannot be considered the sole causal factor or even the most compelling one. This is because face-to-face diplomacy is far more common than trust-building. For instance, Nehru and Zhou did meet face-to-face to build trust between 1954 and 1957 but could do so during summitry in 1960 as the relationship soured. Similarly, Nehru and Liaquat successfully used interpersonal diplomacy to build trust on Minority Rights in 1950 but had been unable to reap its rewards on the Kashmir dispute in 1947. My findings support the assumption that face-to-face diplomacy provides a unique mode of engagement for trusting relationship to develop between rivals. But, more importantly, it demonstrates the value of social factors—as the substance of what actors chose to trust—as being crucial and supplementary to the trust-building process between rivals.



1.1 Process of Trust-Building and Trust Breakdown

## **Trusting Failure**

While trust is not a basic condition for cooperation more generally, it is often necessary to overcome the intractable nature of interstate rivalries, especially in the absence of fool-proof mechanisms for verification, strong institutions to revise pay-off structures, and authoritative third-party mediators. In its absence, rivals can fail to cooperate even if their preferences overlap and favourable balance of incentives are present.<sup>138</sup> As the end of the Cold War showed, building a trusting relationship can allow rivals to transcend exaggerated perceptions of hostility that inhibit mutual cooperation (i.e. ideological differences, historical baggage, and cognitive biases). Social factors that enable trust-building therefore carry the potential to transform adversarial framings into positive expectations of behaviour, and to stabilise cooperation under conditions of anarchy. But it is mistaken to assume a privileged status for social factors as a basis for trust in conflict termination. As this section will argue, not only are there limits to what social factors can facilitate in terms of overcoming rivalries in given circumstances, they may also escalate disputes outside the threat of defection.

One risk is that a number of spoilers can block the formation of strategic trust, leading to disappointment. Even if rival leaders are able to develop strategic trust, they may be vulnerable to contextual factors such as domestic or international spoilers, especially when trusting choices challenge strong popular beliefs. In such cases, weak leaders—understood as those leaders whose control over ruling coalitions and popular credentials amongst domestic publics is tenuous—will be unable to assure domestic constituencies of the merits of concessions made to rivals and may even be exposed to high political costs. Even if leaders are able to build strategic trust, they will remain unable to reap its rewards or sustain the trusting relationship, leading to mutual disappointment. This may frustrate leaders and make them more hesitant to pursue trust-building in the future. In most cases, as Wheeler argues, “sustaining trust depends

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<sup>138</sup> See Deborah Welch Larson, *Anatomy of Mistrust: U.S.-Soviet Relations during the Cold War* (Ithaca [N.Y.]; London: Cornell University Press, 1997).

upon both a united government and strong leadership”. For instance, the trusting relationship between India-Pakistan under A.B. Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif soon “collapsed because the civilian leadership was insufficiently in control of Pakistan’s national security policy”.<sup>139</sup> Wheeler refers to this as “involuntary trust defection” or situations “when an actor cannot live up to the trust another actor has placed in him or her because of a lack of capacity”.<sup>140</sup> Thus, even if social factors conducive to the trust-building process are present and trust is beginning to take shape, there can be a wide range of factors that prevent it from resulting in a positive outcome.

A second risk is that of trust being overridden by an intervening event, leading to feelings of betrayal. Despite a trusted party not intending to defect, it may be faced with expectations of behaviour that are subsequently difficult to live up to in the maintenance phase<sup>141</sup>. This in turn can lead to betrayal, causing a violation of the presumptive contract that had transformed the rivalry. In such cases, there can also be an inherent link between the arc of positive expectation (as well as accompanying emotional investment) and subsequent disappointment. Trust need not always fail due to situational factors. It can also be the way in which the trusting relationship was constructed in the first place that contains the seeds of its demise. Betrayal, as Torsten Michel argues, “as an outcome of misplaced trust is a qualitatively different experience than mere disappointment”.<sup>142</sup> For instance, if a trustor believes their vulnerability has been unduly exploited, the degree of moral outrage and hurt this causes can make actors more intractable and increase perceived stakes in the dispute.<sup>143</sup> Especially between strategic trustors, it can lead to exaggerated cynicism and a reversion to those beliefs, biases, and narratives that had previously characterised the rivalry. If the betrayal is of a public nature, it can also levy costs on the political leadership and leave them with a certain feeling of “we should

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<sup>139</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler, “I Had Gone to Lahore With a Message of Goodwill”, pp. 319-44.

<sup>140</sup> See Nicholas Wheeler, *Trusting Enemies*, p. 69.

<sup>141</sup> The period after the trusting relationship has been established.

<sup>142</sup> Torsten Michel, “Trust, Rationality and Vulnerability in International Relations,” in Amanda Russell Beattie and Kate Schick (eds.), *The Vulnerable Subject: Beyond Rationalism in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 86-112.

<sup>143</sup> On dispute inflation see Todd Hall, “Dispute Inflation,” *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. I, no. 26 (2021), pp. 1-26.

have known better”. For example, after the end of the Cold War, the “false premises of EU-Russia relations led to consequent disappointments and a sense of betrayal between the two”. When shared commitments were violated, neither party took responsibility for their transgressions, leading to “more dangerous forms of mistrust culminating in [a] rupture in relations and deep disagreements on the very root causes of the problem”.<sup>144</sup> One reason behind this feeling of betrayal can be leaders’ inability to consistently empathise with each other as political actors. As Lawrence Freedman argues, even trusting relationships “may be [deliberately] violated to service other relationships” due to “multiple pressures on cross-cutting issues”. Trust can be counterproductive if it prevents leaders from understanding each other “not just as human beings but as political beings”.<sup>145</sup>

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This chapter has highlighted three key features of strategic trust that shed light on its socially contingent nature. First, it has demonstrated that historical learning and anti-imperialism can be conducive to the making of empathy entrepreneurs. The argument here is as much epistemological as it is theoretical, in that it reveals that a special type of historical learning can allow actors to shake loose of what is more commonly understood about conflictual patterns of state behaviour in the realist tradition by adopting a reflexive and empathic orientation to the self-perpetuating effects of fear in building and sustaining rivalries (i.e. security dilemma sensibility). Second, building on such empathy, there are four social factors that can help rivals overcome the security dilemma and build strategic trust; namely, discrepant information, personal reputations of the leaders, shared weaknesses, and initial reciprocity. This is a unique insight into the type of social contexts that can be conducive to trust-building processes. I will

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<sup>144</sup> Hiski Haukkala and Sinikukka Saari, “The cycle of mistrust in EU-Russia relations,” in Hiski Haukkala, Carina van de Wetering, Johanna Vuorelma (eds.), *Trust in International Relations: Rationalist, Constructivist, and Psychological Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 110-128.

<sup>145</sup> Lawrence Freedman, “Review: Trusting enemies,” *International Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 6 (2018), pp. 1440.

demonstrate this in Chapters 2 and 3. Thirdly, the chapter has highlighted the possibility of strategic trust being blocked or overridden. Weak leaders, even if they are able to develop strategic trust with their rivals, may not be able to withstand the pressures of societal beliefs and endure domestic political costs, leading to disappointment. Equally, if strategic trustors develop expectations of behaviour that the other side finds difficult to live up to, it may counter-productively lead to a feeling of betrayal. What we must ask in these cases, to paraphrase Alfred Lord Tennyson, is ‘whether it is better to have trusted and lost than never to have trusted at all’. What about situations in which trust did develop, but could not resolve the conflict, or worse yet, escalated it? As Thomas Schelling cautions, sometimes it can be a mistake “in thinking that the only way to take the danger out of distrust is to replace it with trust”.<sup>146</sup> I will explore these questions and the effects of disappointment and betrayal in Chapters 4 and 5.

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<sup>146</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University press, 2008), pp. 262.

## Chapter 2

### “At the Edge of the Precipice”: Strategic Trust in India-Pakistan

#### Relations

Can anyone point out two nations anywhere [who] after passing through so much bitterness and conflict came to an Agreement, such as the one you have signed along with Liaquat, without the intervention or pressure of any foreign power or mediator?<sup>147</sup>

- C. Rajagopalachari to J. Nehru on April 18, 1950.



2.1 Map of Divided Bengal

<sup>147</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C. Rajagopalachari on April 18, 1950. In Sarvepalli Gopal (General Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series* [Henceforth SWJN-SS], (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1972-2020), vol. 14 (II), pp. 55.

Even a perfunctory glance at the historiography on India-Pakistan relations would discern the features of an enduringly fractious bilateral relationship. However, while certain disputes have indeed remained unresolved, a deeper historical reading brings to light a more complex history of interaction. Pallavi Raghavan has shown that during the 1950s there were several outstanding issues between India and Pakistan where conflict termination was conceivable through amity, cordiality and dialogue. She maintains therefore, that “rather than being viewed as the outcome of a pre-determined equation, spurred on by an instinctive and compulsive sense of rivalry, India-Pakistan relations deserve to be viewed as a more contingent and open-ended set of exchanges”.<sup>148</sup> Strategic trust might seem surprising between Nehru and Liaquat given the long and contentious relationship of India and Pakistan. This is why the success of crisis negotiations and trust-building on a vexing subject like the Refugee Crisis on the Bengal border, even under the shadow of Partition’s gore and trauma (i.e. the bloody division of the subcontinent on a religious basis in 1947), make the Nehru-Liaquat case particularly compelling as an instance of trust-building between rivals.

Marking the peaceful resolution of the Refugee Crisis, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his Pakistani counterpart Liaquat Ali Khan signed the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement (N-LA) on April 8, 1950. At the time, it was heralded as a path-breaking instance of cooperation that successfully deterred a major catastrophe. C. L. Sulzberger reporting for the *New York Times*, argued that “the outbreak of a full-scale war, which conceivably could have led to a world conflict, was averted narrowly...as a result of some skilful behind-the-scenes diplomacy and level-headed statesmanship” by Indian and Pakistani leaders.<sup>149</sup> Origins of the preceding crisis have been traced back to December 1949, when a supposed police crackdown on communist trouble-makers in a village in the Khulna District of East Bengal—which had a predominantly

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<sup>148</sup> Pallavi Raghavan, “The Making of the India-Pakistan Dynamic: Nehru, Liaquat, and the No War Pact correspondence of 1950,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 50, no. 5 (2016), pp. 1645-1678.

<sup>149</sup> C.L. Sulzberger, “Delhi Pact Eases Tension for Asia: India-Pakistan Differences Had Put Them on Edge of War,” *New York Times*, Apr 12, 1950.

Hindu population—began a large-scale movement of Hindu and Muslim refugees across the Bengal border with respect to the Eastern wing of Pakistan.<sup>150</sup> An uncontrollable stream of refugees threatened to de-stabilise India and Pakistan’s administrative control and re-produce the state of lawlessness and emergency that prevailed in the aftermath of Partition (1947). Their respective rehabilitation capacities had already been exhausted due to the exodus on the Punjab border on the Western wing of Pakistan. Now, on both sides of the Bengal border, horrifying stories of rape, slaughter, and massacre that accompanied refugees fleeing persecution became pervasive, inflaming the passions of the religious-kin majority community and intensifying retaliatory exchanges of communal violence. As I will show, the imminent danger of state failure in India and Pakistan, compounded by the territorialisation of the refugee crisis, produced a volatile amalgam of misperception and military escalation, inviting a pre-emptive military recourse on both sides. In the midst of the crisis, Nehru wrote to British Prime Minister, Clement Atlee that “the treatment of minorities” had now taken precedence over the settlement of the Kashmir dispute for the maintenance of peace between both countries.<sup>151</sup> However, not only were Nehru and Liaquat able to overcome this crisis without spiralling into war, the two states—who had been partitioned on grounds of religious incompatibility—had also built a trusting relationship and set up a joint regulatory framework to safeguard minority rights.

### **Historicising the security dilemma**

Leading up to the Refugee Crisis, Indian and Pakistani leaders almost uniformly believed that the other harboured hegemonic ambitions and malevolent designs on their territorial integrity, domestic social cohesion, and political and economic future. Such negative intimacies were generated during the near zero-sum bargaining that took place over the spoils of Partition. This included the division of territory, military and financial assets, interstate trade, as well as the sharing of canal waters. Departing colonial officers had hoped that territorial separation would assuage the worries of British India’s minority and majority community, but acrimonious

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<sup>150</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on February 2, 1950, vol. 14-I, *SWJN SS*, pp. 397.

<sup>151</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Clement Atlee on March 20, 1950, vol. 14-I, *SWJN SS*, pp. 133.

interactions that began with the Indian National Congress' and the Muslim League's quarrels during the Transfer of Power negotiations subsequently affected the relationship between India and Pakistan as nation-states. Pakistan's first Governor General, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, claimed that remarks by Indian leaders that Pakistan was "merely a temporary madness" and would have to come back into the Indian fold as a "penitent, repentant, erring son" were unfortunate, and disclosed the "well-planned, well-organised and well-directed" efforts being made to "paralyse the new-born dominion of Pakistan".<sup>152</sup> Similarly, on the Indian side, Baldev Singh, India's Defence Minister, professed that he could not understand "[h]ow a country, the birth of which [was] based on hatred of Hindus and Sikhs, [could] ever develop friendly relations towards [India]". He was convinced that "Pakistan's intentions were not clean." Since they were "proceeding on the basis that they were going to fight India, a conflict seemed to be in the offing".<sup>153</sup>

After the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, most of the violence and large-scale refugee movements were concentrated on the Punjab border. Bengal, aside from the "great Calcutta killings" and the Noakhali and Tippera riots, had been relatively stable. One reason behind this was the substantial size of the minority populations on both sides, which made them relatively less uncertain about their future and physical security. This short-lived harmony induced within the two governments a false sense of security. With an assumption that normalcy in Bengal could be restored more easily, it was decided that "Bengalis could retain their title to land on both sides of the border" and refugee's evacuee property would be safeguarded for its owners until such time when they could safely come back to claim it.<sup>154</sup> In 1948, when refugee movements on the Bengal border began to pick up pace, two Inter-Dominion Conferences were organised to deal with the exodus. Agreements on minority affairs

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<sup>152</sup> Aparna Pande, *Explaining Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Escaping India* (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), pp. 29.

<sup>153</sup> Baldev Singh to Vallabhbhai Patel on August 19, 1949. In Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence, 1945-50* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1973), vol. VIII, pp. 64.

<sup>154</sup> Joya Chatterji, "The Fashioning of a Frontier: The Radcliffe Line and Bengal's Border Landscape, 1947-52," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 33 (1999), pp. 185-242.

arrived at during these conferences did bring some reprieve in bilateral tensions and relief to refugee rehabilitation efforts.<sup>155</sup> Many provisions that had been agreed to however—related to representation of minorities in government service, inflammatory press propaganda, grievance redressal for sufferers, functioning of Provincial and District Minority Boards and Evacuee Property Management Boards, and the proposed crackdown on non-cooperative local officials—were not sincerely followed.<sup>156</sup>

In December 1949, a police crackdown on Hindus in the Bagerhat Division of Khulna District in East Bengal delivered a shock to India and Pakistan's complacency. When the first group of Hindu refugees reached West Bengal, "narrated stories of their hardship" were quickly popularised by local newspapers. This led to retaliatory cases of communal violence against Muslims in two of West Bengal's cities, Berhampur and Calcutta. The Hindu right-wing organisation, Hindu Mahasabha, held a large gathering on February 6, in which Major General A.C. Chatterjee, formerly of the Indian National Army, proclaimed the need to avenge the loss of Hindu lives in East Bengal.<sup>157</sup> As riots spread, local police officials remained ineffective, while houses were attacked and set on fire in areas such as Murshidabad, Sealdah, Howrah, and Maniktola, Raja Bazar, Narkeldanga, Ultadingi and Entally in Calcutta.<sup>158</sup> A similarly grave situation was then produced in East Bengal as Muslim refugees from these regions in West Bengal, as well as North Goalpara, Gurrang and Barbeta in Assam<sup>159</sup> fled to Dacca and Sylhet.<sup>160</sup> On February 10, a large Muslim crowd in Dacca attacked Hindus and burned down

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<sup>155</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Premiers on January 17, 1949. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no 18 (II), Nehru Memorial Museum and Library [henceforth NMML], New Delhi.

<sup>156</sup> Secretary to the Deputy High Commissioner for India in Pakistan, Dacca, to Subimal Dutt on 14 February 1949. MEA, File no. 12-16/Pak(A)-1949, National Archives of India [henceforth NAI], New Delhi.

<sup>157</sup> Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad to Jawaharlal Nehru on February 20, 1950. In J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), NMML.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> In Assam, Muslim refugee movements were spurred by the passing of the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act 1950.

<sup>160</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on February 19, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), CCB. 1223, NMML.

their houses, forcing them to seek shelter in refugee camps.<sup>161</sup> Violence was also committed against Hindus in Bakarganj, Barisal, Chittagong. In a personal letter to Liaquat, Nehru regretfully acknowledged that these events had showed that relying on agreements agreed upon previously at Inter-Dominion Conferences had proved to be “mistaken” and “delusional”.<sup>162</sup> “Caught in a circle of hatred and violence,” he described prevailing risk of war and communal violence as living “near the top of a volcano” as “any sparks [threatened] to waken it into eruption”.<sup>163</sup>

Mounting communal incidents were ritually pointed out by the Indians to the Pakistanis, and vice versa. Both parties mimicked each other’s attempts to minimise the scale of atrocities on their side, while accusing the other of knowingly consenting to genocidal killings. Then, predictable reassurances concerning their own intent and institutional capacity to deal with the full scale of the problem were followed up by intense bouts of recrimination. Liaquat argued that the “situation in East Bengal [was]...tense because...Muslim refugees [were] pouring in from all sides” (referring to Assam, West Bengal and Tripura). Apart from that the government in East Bengal was “dealing with the situation most energetically” and was “receiving full assistance from the Army”.<sup>164</sup> In fact, after his visit to the region, Liaquat claimed that non-Muslims in East Bengal had “no cause to complain against discourteous treatment by the majority community and relations between the two communities were friendly”.<sup>165</sup> In response, Nehru quoted a private telegram he had received from a Hindu riot victim about incidents at the Kurmitola Aerodrome in Dacca: “Arson, looting, killing started...and continued whole night. Prominent Hindu leaders done to death. Some burnt

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<sup>161</sup> Subimal Dutt, *With Nehru in the Foreign Office* (Calcutta: South Asia Books, 1977), pp. 52.

<sup>162</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on February 17, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), NMML.

<sup>163</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to State Premiers on February 16, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), NMML.

<sup>164</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on February 20, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), CCB. 1390, NMML.

<sup>165</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on February 19, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), CCB. 1223, NMML.

alive...about two thousand Hindus including ladies and infants done to death...stabbing cases limitless".<sup>166</sup> He believed there was enough in this report "to indicate the gravity of what was going on in East Pakistan" and Pakistan's government had, so far, proved itself "incapable of bringing under control this widespread defiance of elementary law and order".<sup>167</sup> Nehru stated that the "quiet" in Calcutta and West Bengal was being maintained and the Indian government was doing all in its power to prevent "communal passions from being roused," but if "news of this kind" spread in India "a situation of most serious proportions would develop".<sup>168</sup>

As the number of refugees moving across the Bengal border grew exponentially, both sides made proposals to arrest the situation. Nehru suggested a joint commission, which would include high-level ministers of both governments who could tour affected areas in Bengal to restore confidence amongst the minorities. This commission could "ascertain facts about the happenings" and "assess the existing situation and the prospects of it improving".<sup>169</sup> A deputation of the International Red Cross was also considered as an impartial neutral party who could concurrently provide relief for the needy.<sup>170</sup> Such measures Nehru assumed would "produce a calming and soothing effect" and put an end to "exaggerated reports".<sup>171</sup> In addition to this, he also suggested that the two Prime Ministers make a joint visit to Bengal, and—to address some necessary concerns—declare punishments for rabble-rousers, compensation for sufferers, the return of looted property, punitive measures against rumour-mongers, and

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<sup>166</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on February 18, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), CCB. 1218, NMML.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on February 17, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), CCB. 1187, NMML.

<sup>170</sup> G.S. Bajpai to V.K. Krishna Menon on 25 February 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (II), CCB. 1371, NMML.

<sup>171</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on February 20, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), CCB. 1229, NMML.

newspapers spreading communal hatred, and the setting-up of committees to enquire into incidents of violence.<sup>172</sup>

However, following joint action on India's "diktats" or showing "weakness" by ceding sovereignty and allowing India to interfere in its internal affairs was anathema to Pakistan's leaders.<sup>173</sup> Liaquat defiantly stated in a speech on 22 February that he would "rather see every [Pakistani] die, than see [them] as slaves of Hindu India".<sup>174</sup> Pakistan's leaders were bogged down with domestic reputational challenges as they "struggled to impose their authority on the provinces" (East Bengal in particular).<sup>175</sup> Liaquat's version of a joint declaration therefore—based on the premise of separateness—limited itself to a preference for halting large-scale refugee movements. Pakistan wanted both parties to disclaim responsibilities for their religious-kin minorities (making each government solely responsible for their minorities) and to seal the Bengal Border in order to stem the exodus.<sup>176</sup> On the appointment of committees for impartial enquiry, Liaquat while conceding to Nehru's demands for a minority representative, wanted these to be independent national bodies.<sup>177</sup> This was unacceptable to the Indians as "public opinion would not allow [them] to acquiesce in continuance of conditions of East Bengal".<sup>178</sup> Pakistan's status as a sovereign nation could not obscure the reality that a vast majority of Indian Hindus experienced "sympathy and anxiety when a large number of [their] people in

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<sup>172</sup> G.S. Bajpai to V.K. Krishna Menon on 25 February 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (II), CCB. 1371, NMML.

<sup>173</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on 22 February, 1950, vol. 14 (I), *SIJNSS*, pp. 63.

<sup>174</sup> Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 158.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on February 20, 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), CCB. 1223, NMML. Also see Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on 23 February 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (II), NMML.

<sup>177</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on March 13, 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 38, CCB. 2080, NMML.

<sup>178</sup> G.S. Bajpai to V.K. Krishna Menon on 25 February 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (II), CCB. 1371, NMML.

Pakistan [had] to undergo suffering and indignity in an extreme form”.<sup>179</sup> Ultimately, the two parties could only agree to letting their opposing High Commissioners visit certain areas under enforced restrictions and strict surveillance.<sup>180</sup> This proved ineffective and reinforced the gravity of the situation. Sita Ram, Indian High Commissioner in Karachi, concluded after his tour of disturbed areas in East Bengal that amongst “widespread arson, loot and murder...the minority community was eager to come away at the earliest”.<sup>181</sup>

As conditions deteriorated further and crisis bargaining over the nature of joint action did not bear fruit, India and Pakistan started to move towards signalling resolve and deterrence. The threat of war, India’s Cabinet recognised, “brought advantages...pressures and sanctions”.<sup>182</sup> Before the Indian Parliament, Nehru, on the insistence of India’s Home Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel’s insistence<sup>183</sup> declared: “if the methods we have suggested are not agreed to, it may be that we shall have to adopt *other* methods”.<sup>184</sup> Within Indian ranks it was assumed that “Pakistan [wanted] to create trouble in India to make some political capital out of it”.<sup>185</sup> As a theocratic state, Pakistan was accused of making a deliberate attempt “to push out the upper layers of the [Hindu] population and to convert many of the others”.<sup>186</sup> They knew, warned J.B. Kripalani, that “if the huge chunk of minority population in East Pakistan was cleared, India

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<sup>179</sup> Statement made by Jawaharlal Nehru before Parliament on events in East and West Bengal on February 23, 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (II), NMML.

<sup>180</sup> MEA to Indian High Commission on February 19, 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), CCB. 1225 and 1226, NMML.

<sup>181</sup> Report of a Conference held in Government House on 27 February, 1950. Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on February 27, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 14 (I), pp. 72.

<sup>182</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note on the Bengal situation on 23 March 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 39, NMML.

<sup>183</sup> Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to Jawaharlal Nehru on 23 February 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (II), NMML.

<sup>184</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s statement before Parliament on events in East and West Bengal on February 23, 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (II), NMML.

<sup>185</sup> Note written by Jawaharlal Nehru for the Prime Minister’s secretariat on 26 February 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (II), NMML.

<sup>186</sup> Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to V.K. Krishna Menon on March 16, 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 39, NMML.

[would] be faced with a problem that [would] bring about its political and economic ruin”.<sup>187</sup> Even as Nehru expressed doubts regarding Pakistan’s appetite for all-out war—as he believed “this would be exceedingly injurious to them”—he worried that the atmosphere created by “aggressive and provocative speeches constantly talking of war” threatened to make their leaders “prisoners of their own words and exhortations”. It would then be difficult for them “to escape the dilemmas of their own creation”.<sup>188</sup> Patel subsequently recommended a formal meeting of the Defence Committee for which “the Chief of Staffs might be asked to compile [a report] on the progress of [India’s] preparations up-to-date and their appreciation of Pakistan’s own preparations”.<sup>189</sup>

Nehru alerted India’s Army Chief, K.M. Cariappa to “Pakistan’s mounting war fever and preparations”.<sup>190</sup> Preliminary discussion on reducing the size of the Armed Forces and the disbandment of battalions in Bengal that had been underway prior to the crisis were shelved.<sup>191</sup> Indian security concerns also included incursions by Ansars, a paramilitary auxiliary force in East Pakistan, in some unsupervised pockets along the disputed East-West Bengal Border.<sup>192</sup> Nehru warned Liaquat that “any infiltration or occupation of Indian territory [would not] be tolerated... [and was] likely to lead to dangerous consequences”.<sup>193</sup> Finally, in response to the overwhelming stream of refugees, threats of border infiltration and potential war, a full-scale

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<sup>187</sup> A.J. Kamra, *The Prolonged Partition and Its Pogroms: Testimonies on Violence against Hindus in East Bengal, 1946-64* (New Delhi: Voice of India Press, 2000), pp. 82.

<sup>188</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to State Premiers on February 16, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), NMML.

<sup>189</sup> Secret Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to Jawaharlal Nehru on February 16, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), NMML.

<sup>190</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to K.M. Cariappa on February 14, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 36, NMML.

<sup>191</sup> Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to Jawaharlal Nehru on 19 February 1950. In Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel’s Correspondence*, vol. X, pp. 129.

<sup>192</sup> See A.J. Kamra, *The Prolonged Partition and Its Pogroms*, pp. 94, 124-5, 141-143.

<sup>193</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on March 10, 1950. In J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 38, CCB. 1647, NMML.

mobilisation of Indian troops took place around March 3.<sup>194</sup> As India's Defence Secretary, H.M. Patel told General Roy Bucher, despite India's intention to avoid the precipitation of military action, "there was a limit beyond which [it] could not allow things to proceed".<sup>195</sup> An Infantry division was moved to Hisar district, Rajasthan, an armoured brigade each to Ferozepur, Punjab and Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, and heavy concentration of warlike stores and supplies were relocated to Ferozepur, Jullundur and Ludhiana. A Central Army Corps operational headquarter was also set up in Ambala.<sup>196</sup> These measures were intended to "meet any counteraction by Pakistan" in the Western sector.<sup>197</sup> On March 10, India's Cabinet Defence Committee discussed a detailed plan of military action against East Pakistan for the protection of Hindu minorities in case crisis bargaining proved abortive (Operation Matador).<sup>198</sup>

In Pakistan as well, the outpouring of Muslim refugees was seen as Hindu India's deliberate intent to "cause riots, create problems and instability and make administration impossible so as to eventually break Pakistan up from within".<sup>199</sup> Liaquat stated that "certain elements in the neighbouring country, [who] had resented the emergence of Pakistan, tried to break Pakistan by throwing upon it...the burden of seven million refugees".<sup>200</sup> Pakistan's military command initially saw India's mobilisation as a "contrivance to provoke Karachi into taking some impetuous step, which could then be used to justify an Indian invasion". Accordingly, they assumed a low-probability of conflict as this would have led to a "massive retaliation against the Hindus" in East Bengal. However, as India scaled up its troop

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<sup>194</sup> Secret Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on March 19, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 39, NMML. Also see Lorne Kavic pp. 84.

<sup>195</sup> H.M. Patel to Roy Bucher on 26 February, 1950. 7901-87-32, Roy Bucher papers, National Archives, U.K.

<sup>196</sup> Note on Indian troop movements from Government of Pakistan. Attached in annexure in G.S. Bajpai to Jawaharlal Nehru on 28 March, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 40, NMML.

<sup>197</sup> K.M. Cariappa to Jawaharlal Nehru on 31 March 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 40, NMML.

<sup>198</sup> Note from Chiefs of Staffs Committee on "The Action of Armed Forces to Protect Minorities in Pakistan on May 10, 1950". J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 45 (II), NMML.

<sup>199</sup> Ian Talbot, *Pakistan; A Modern History* (London: Hurst Publishers, 1998), pp. 112.

<sup>200</sup> Speech delivered by Liaquat Ali Khan at the first session of the Muslim League Council, February 20, 1949 (Karachi, Pakistan Dept. of Advertising, Films and Publications, 1949), pp. 7.

mobilisation, Pakistan's assessment turned "darker" and they began to view it as "extremely serious" situation constituting "a direct threat".<sup>201</sup> Their defences in East Bengal were insufficient (only four battalions) and therefore Pakistan's military officers stressed preparations for a counterattack on the Punjab border.<sup>202</sup>

Pakistan's assessment was also influenced by rumours of private militias such as "armed members of the [Hindu right-wing organisation], the R.S.S... [being] concentrated around East Bengal".<sup>203</sup> Army Chief, General Douglas Gracey said that he "could not rule out the possibility of military action by "Hindu militias supported by the Indian army". When intelligence sources began reporting on India's stockpiling of supplies and ammunition, Pakistan's leadership began to worry that "India had the capability as well as the intention of launching an offensive in the Western sector". Strikingly similar to Nehru's assessment, Liaquat assumed that domestic pressure would force India into war.<sup>204</sup> Nehru had after all, plainly refused to "exclude war from the definition of other methods".<sup>205</sup> Such an assurance, he argued, "would have been unrealistic in the circumstances...as things happening may be said to be worse than war".<sup>206</sup> In response to "whispering campaigns...that India would soon invade East Bengal and that the Hindus should clear out of that place before invasion comes",<sup>207</sup> Liaquat defiantly declared: "if India wants war, she will find us fully prepared".<sup>208</sup> Pakistan's sole armoured brigade and air force were placed on alert to move within twenty-four hours. They also decided to reinforce East Pakistan by despatching two destroyers and supply ships to the port of Chittagong and eight air force

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<sup>201</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on March 26, 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 40, NMML.

<sup>202</sup> Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India*, pp. 169.

<sup>203</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on March 13, 1950. In J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 38, CCB. 2074, NMML.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid*, 176.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>206</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on March 10, 1950. In J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 38, CCB. 1647, NMML.

<sup>207</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on March 6, 1950. In J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 38, CCB. 1828, NMML.

<sup>208</sup> G.W. Choudhury, *The Emergence of Pakistan* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 1973), pp. 192.

planes to military bases in East Pakistan.<sup>209</sup> Spiralling deterrence logics and misperception had produced a most precarious situation.

Fears of an impending war were amplified by the press. Nehru highlighted the discrepancies in the Pakistani newspapers and the national radio, which provided exaggerated accounts of atrocities being committed on Muslims in West Bengal, and highlighted India's alleged conspiracy and master plan to "put an end to Pakistan or to compel it to join India".<sup>210</sup> He accused these outlets of reporting "falsehoods piled on falsehoods" and singled out *Dawn* for its "inventive genius and vitriolic attacks".<sup>211</sup> India, Nehru posited, had to contend with a "national neurosis" in regard to Pakistan. Its "newspapers and speeches of their politicians [were] hysterical and full of threats".<sup>212</sup> Likewise, Liaquat faulted regional newspapers in West Bengal for their mischief-making and "blatant and unchecked advocacy of war".<sup>213</sup> In fact, *ABP* carried out an opinion poll in West Bengal, in which people overwhelmingly (82.7%) voted in favour of war with Pakistan.<sup>214</sup> Newspaper editors personally conveyed this "war sentiment" to Nehru during his visit to Calcutta in the middle of March. "Many people," they asserted "hoped that some kind of military action [would] be taken".<sup>215</sup> The press' war propaganda in India was also complemented by affiliates of communal Hindu organisations like the R.S.S. and Hindu Mahasabha. War they decreed "would lead to consummation of the very objective for which

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<sup>209</sup> Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India*, pp. 169.

<sup>210</sup> *Dawn* reported the death of 10,000 Muslim deaths in Calcutta when the numbers provided by the Indian government stated 31 deaths of which 20 were Muslim and 11 were Hindus. Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on February 27, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (II), NMML.

<sup>211</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on March 13, 1950. In J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 38, NMML.

<sup>212</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on December 1, 1949, vol. 14 (I), *SWJNSS*, pp. 367.

<sup>213</sup> He mentioned the Amrita Bazar Patrika, Jugantar, Hindustan Standard, and Ananda Bazar Patrika. In Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on March 5, 1950. In J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 38, CCB. 1822, NMML. For the quote see, Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on March 26, 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 40, NMML.

<sup>214</sup> G.W. Choudhury, *The Emergence of Pakistan*, pp. 191.

<sup>215</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's notes on visit to Calcutta on 14 March 1950, vol. 14 (I), *SWJNSS*, pp. 115.

[they were] striving”.<sup>216</sup> Since an outright exchange of population was rejected by Nehru, they demanded extra territory from Pakistan to resettle Hindu refugees consisting of adjoining districts along the Bengal border. Territorialisation of the dispute however, was hardly a fringe position. It had powerful advocates within government ranks such as Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, and B.C. Roy, who insisted that the per capita area of 125 square miles at the time of Partition needed to be restored in case of Pakistan’s inability to stop the influx of refugees.<sup>217</sup> Socialist leader Jayprakash Narayan also encouraged a Hyderabad-esque limited military operation against East Pakistan.<sup>218</sup> Dejectedly, Nehru wrote to C. Rajagopalachari: “even I with all my abhorrence of war and my appreciation of its consequences cannot rule it out completely”.<sup>219</sup> The two rivals now stood on the brink. As Ian Stephens, editor of *The Statesman*, pointed out, war preparations were well underway in March, and by the end of the month both countries were “within a hair’s breadth of it”.<sup>220</sup>

However, on March 26, after convincing his Cabinet, Nehru invited Liaquat to come to New Delhi at the earliest as “correspondence [was] a poor substitute for personal discussions” and they needed to meet “face-to-face” to resolve this issue.<sup>221</sup> This crisis could not be solved with patchwork or partial measures. Assurances or declarations were not enough when “little faith [was] put on them”.<sup>222</sup> On the same day, Liaquat wrote to Nehru that “history had placed

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<sup>216</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note on the Bengal situation for the Prime Minister’s Secretariat on 23 March 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 39, NMML.

<sup>217</sup> Note by Dr. B.C. Roy on Inter Dominion relations on 15 March 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 40, NMML, New Delhi; Speech by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 4 November 1948. P.N. Chopra (ed.), *The Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, vol. XIII, pp. 263; Rajendra Prasad’s note “A Suggestion for Securing the Life and Honour of Minorities in India and Pakistan” dated March 18, 1950. In Avtar Singh Bhasin [henceforth ASB], *India-Pakistan Relations*, pp. LX.

<sup>218</sup> Lars Blinkenberg, *India-Pakistan: The History of Unsolved Conflicts* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1972), pp. 163.

<sup>219</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C. Rajagopalachari on March 16, 1950, vol. 14 (I), *SWJN SS*, pp. 126.

<sup>220</sup> Ian Stephens, *Horned Moon: An Account of a Journey through Pakistan, Kashmir, and Afghanistan* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1953), pp. 33.

<sup>221</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on March 26, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 40, CCB. 2086, NMML.

<sup>222</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on March 15, 1950, vol. 14 (I) *SWJN SS*, pp. 121.

a heavy responsibility” on their shoulders and “in [a] world torn by insane dissensions and conflict” it was incumbent upon them as responsible politicians to “get together” and work towards the “eradication of these dissensions and conflicts”.<sup>223</sup> After some back and forth, both Prime Ministers agreed to meet in New Delhi to pursue a diplomatic resolution to the nettlesome problem of religious minorities and refugees. The next section will now explore the role of empathy in framing Nehru and Liaquat’s diplomatic preferences prior to trust-building during crisis talks in New Delhi.

### **Empathic Capacity and Empathic Conveyance**

Post-Partition, while Nehru responded to fears of aggression from Pakistan, he also began to reflexively appreciate the far-reaching consequences of the security dilemma spiral. On April 1, 1948, in a personal letter to his sister and Indian diplomat, V.L. Pandit, he enquired:

“Why are people so full of hatred for each other? We have had a vivid example of this in India, that is between Pakistan and India. It is the same or worse between Russia and America now. Hatred and cruelty, I think, ultimately come from fear. Fear is the most dangerous of companions for it leads to all manner of evil consequences”.<sup>224</sup>

Nehru recognised the role played by fear in the rivalry between India and Pakistan, likening it to early Cold War tensions between the U.S. and Soviet Russia. He was able to see how initial defensive responses by the two states to the security dilemma had spiralled into a wider array of emotional-dispositional responses such as “cruelty” or “hatred”. Nehru acknowledged that India’s Pakistan policy had “not been very wise” and “the public mind in India [had] encouraged intransigence in Pakistan”.<sup>225</sup> He advocated for restraint in elite discourse in India, arguing: “the old traditions of diplomacy have been forgotten... today the new tradition is to

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<sup>223</sup> Pakistan Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Karachi, March 26, 1950. In Avtar Singh Bhasin [henceforth ASB] (ed.), *India-Pakistan Relations 1947-2007: A Documentary Study* (New Delhi: Public Diplomacy Division, Ministry of External Affairs, 2012), pp. 7297.

<sup>224</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to V.L. Pandit on 1 April, 1948. V.L. Pandit papers, I installment, Subject File no. 54, NMML.

<sup>225</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru to the Prime Minister’s Secretariat on 4 December, 1949. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 31 (I), NMML.

carry on this verbal warfare in the strongest language in public...but that leads to fighting or may lead to fighting”.<sup>226</sup> Nehru also held circumstances surrounding Partition or the “terrible killing and huge migrations in Punjab” responsible for the “legacy of passion and hatred” India and Pakistan inherited.<sup>227</sup> Rather than being a mere “political division,” Nehru argued Partition was the “psychological break of an integrated personality” that had upset the “mental equilibrium” between two fraternal states.<sup>228</sup> Prolonging such enmity was not sustainable for India or Pakistan considering their geographical location and historical background. Either they would “wipe each other off or one [would] wipe the other off and suffer the consequences”.<sup>229</sup>

With respect to the Refugee Crisis, Nehru argued that India needed to “remove fear...tread the path of peace, and hope for a reciprocal attitude from the other side”.<sup>230</sup> Rejecting “violence and fear” meant navigating a middle path “between appeasement and belligerence”.<sup>231</sup> In a speech before the Indian parliament, he proposed a policy of “firmness and adequate preparations, but always [with] a friendly approach”. He proceeded to extol the usefulness of a proposal that Indian and Pakistani diplomats had been discussing for the better part of a year, a No-War Declaration.<sup>232</sup> Since war in the modern age was only to be understood in “the context of defence” and not “aggression,” Nehru had proposed to his Pakistani counterpart a general declaration that the two countries would disclaim the recourse to war as an instrument of state policy. This unrealised proposal was not intended to act as a security guarantor, but rather, to check war mongering. It was to create a psychological “atmosphere that was friendlier for the consideration and settlement of disputes”, which could remove or

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<sup>226</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on Indo-Pakistan relations on February 3, 1950, Press Information Bureau, Government of India. J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 31 (I), NMML.

<sup>227</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Clement Atlee on March 20, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 39, NMML.

<sup>228</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Lester B. Pearson on May 19, 1950, vol. 14 (II), *SWJN SS*, pp. 110.

<sup>229</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on Indo-Pakistan relations on February 3, 1950, Press Information Bureau, Government of India. J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 31 (I), NMML.

<sup>230</sup> “Advent of a New Era” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on April 6, 1948, vol. 5, *SWJN SS*, pp. 86.

<sup>231</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C. Rajagopalachari on March 30, 1948, vol. 13, *SWJN SS*, pp. 466.

<sup>232</sup> For text of declaration see Correspondence which has taken place between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan on the subject of the No-War Declaration. MEA, Government of India, 1950. Subimal Dutt papers, Subject File no. 2, NMML.

lessen “the unfortunate tension” that existed between the two states and the “fear of war from the minds of the people”.<sup>233</sup> This Nehru claimed, would “provide relief to hundreds of millions of people who were fearful of an imminent threat of war”.<sup>234</sup> Eventually, as the Refugee Crisis escalated, Nehru was forced to accept the “unreality of talking about these vague declarations”.<sup>235</sup> However, discussions on the No War Declaration exemplify the nature of Nehru’s approach towards Pakistan, which was based on being “prepared for all [military] contingencies” while also preserving the possibility of escaping the security dilemma.<sup>236</sup> With a hint of superiority vis-à-vis Pakistan, he stated that India could not “fight evil by evil” or “barbarism by barbarism”. Instead, it was a “civilized” or “constructive” approach that was necessary.<sup>237</sup>

Whether Liaquat also empathised prior to the commencement of negotiations in New Delhi is difficult to discern considering the lack of archival access but there are some indications of this. In his communications with the Indian side however, Liaquat did state his desire to pursue a peaceful solution, and acknowledged the need for the two countries to “eschew blame and trust each other”.<sup>238</sup> Nehru’s proposal for a No War Declaration was also welcomed by him as a signal that would “[convince] the people of India and Pakistan, and of the whole world, as to the sincerity of both governments in renouncing war as a method of settling their disputes”. He added that this proposal could also “lessen the unfortunate tension that [existed] between the two governments and produce an atmosphere which [was] more favourable to the

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<sup>233</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on 18 January 1950, vol. 14 (I), *SWJNSS*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> “Salient Features of Indian Foreign Policy” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on March 16, 1950, vol. 14 (I), *SWJNSS*, pp. 488.

<sup>236</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on Indo-Pakistan relations on February 3, 1950, PIB, Government of India. J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 31 (I), NMML.

<sup>237</sup> Prime Minister’s reply to the debate on Budget demand under MEA in Parliament on 17 March 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 39, NMML.

<sup>238</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on March 14, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 38, NMML.

consideration and settlement of particular disputes.<sup>239</sup> Despite its non-achievement due to disagreements over procedural matters, the over two hundred letters and telegrams written between India and Pakistan on the No War Declaration became a way for Nehru and Liaquat to realise, as Pallavi Raghavan argues, that “the business of going about disentangling oneself from the other did not in fact necessarily mandate international stances that had to be hostile to one another: they could also be built upon an attempt at dialogue”.<sup>240</sup> On the eve of his departure to New Delhi on April 1, Liaquat firmly declared his intent to work with Nehru in “[devising] proposals, the implementation of which would result in the removal of these difficulties, so that the minorities in both countries may not only be relieved of their present troubles but may live their lives in peace and with honour”.<sup>241</sup> As Pakistani Diplomat G.W. Choudhury recognised, India-Pakistan “disputes were open to solution, but the trouble was that mistrust had become too deep”.<sup>242</sup> The next section will now explain how building on these empathic foundations strategic trust was built between India and Pakistan during crisis talks.

### **Building Strategic Trust**

In New Delhi, “continuous and exhausting” discussions between the two Prime Ministers and their delegates lasted for about a week and eleven drafts were produced before arriving at an agreement on 8 April 1950.<sup>243</sup> Not only were these interpersonal exchanges during crisis talks needed to confirm a shared empathic understanding of the Refugee Crisis in Bengal, they were also sites in which wider social factors became operative as facilitators for trust-building. After the agreement was signed, Nehru argued that the “mere fact of agreement” indicated a

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<sup>239</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on February 14, 1950. Correspondence which has taken place between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan on the subject of the No-War Declaration. MEA, Government of India, 1950. Subimal Dutt papers, Subject File no. 2, NMML.

<sup>240</sup> Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay: An Alternative History of the India-Pakistan Relationship* (Hurst: London, 2020), pp. 99.

<sup>241</sup> Radio Broadcast of Pakistan Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan on the eve of his departure for New Delhi to discuss with the Indian Prime Minister the question of minorities. Karachi, April 1, 1950. In ASB, *India-Pakistan Relations*, pp. 7305.

<sup>242</sup> G.W. Choudhury, *Pakistan's Relations with India*, pp. 87.

<sup>243</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on April 4, 1950, *SWJN* SS, vol. 14 (I), pp. 171.

“determined and sincere effort to turn the tide of events in a more hopeful direction”.<sup>244</sup> He stated before the Indian parliament that by ratifying the N-LA, the governments of India and Pakistan had pledged themselves to the protection of their religious minorities and expressed hope that the house would fully commit itself to the success of this undertaking.<sup>245</sup> Comparably, in Pakistan, Liaquat tabled the agreement before his parliament as a “precursor of a new understanding between India and Pakistan”.<sup>246</sup> Then, before the national press club in Washington, he reiterated his strong determination to “implement the agreement in letter and spirit”.<sup>247</sup> I now explore the four social factors that allowed India and Pakistan to arrive at this agreement and trust each other to resolve the Refugee Crisis peacefully.

### *Discrepant Information*

For Liaquat, one of the factors that inspired trust in Indian intentions was the fact that Home Minister Patel, at Nehru’s insistence, had publicly thrown his weight behind the agreement, despite his private reservations.<sup>248</sup> During his visit to Calcutta, Patel—who was previously hawkish on Pakistan—argued that “human nature” had an infinite capacity for change and “past remissness” need not be used as a basis for “future bad faith”. There was a “different spirit” behind Liaquat’s words, and thus he urged the Bengali peoples to show “belief and trust” in the N-LA.<sup>249</sup> It was perceptible that Patel’s conciliatory tone had left “a deep impression in Calcutta, but perhaps even more so in Pakistan”.<sup>250</sup> This was not because Liaquat believed Patel’s sincerity, but rather, because it surprisingly indicated the primacy of Nehru in the Indian

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<sup>244</sup> Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the Chief Ministers on the Agreement signed with Pakistan on the question of Minorities. New Delhi, April 8, 1950. In ASB, *India-Pakistan Relations*, pp. 7737.

<sup>245</sup> “At the Edge of a Precipice,” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on April 10, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 9.

<sup>246</sup> G.W. Choudhury, *Pakistan’s Relations with India*, pp. 195.

<sup>247</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan, *Pakistan: Heart of Asia* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 15.

<sup>248</sup> P.N. Chopra, *Inside Story of Sardar Patel: The Diary of Maniben Patel, 1936-50* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 2001), pp. 358.

<sup>249</sup> P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, vol. XV, pp. 116.

<sup>250</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to V.K. Krishna Menon on April 24, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 70. Pakistan’s response was also conveyed to Nehru during his trip to Karachi. Jawaharlal Nehru on talks with Liaquat Ali Khan on May 3, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 88.

Cabinet on this contentious issue. Nehru then instructed the Premiers of West Bengal and Assam to issue similar public declarations in support of the N-LA.<sup>251</sup> In other words, Patel's support for the agreement demonstrated a sincere effort on Nehru's part to implement the agreement as well as Nehru's triumph over his detractors. For Nehru, it was Liaquat's ability to mitigate India's central fears of Pakistan as a theocratic state that acted as a source of trust. On April 4, when Nehru apprised B.C. Roy on the progress of talks, he affirmed "the earnest desire of Liaquat to come to some agreement". Both parties recognised that they stood on the "brink of a terrible catastrophe" and the room for "talks or manoeuvring" was no more. Nehru was especially impressed with Liaquat's efforts to directly address the scepticism of Indian elites concerning the ability of a Muslim state to guarantee equal rights to its minorities. Liaquat laboured to clarify his vision of an Islamic state, arguing that Muslims would have their personal laws for social conduct, but "no special privileges". Pakistan would be "an ordinary democratic state like England". Liaquat confessed that he could not renounce the Islamic state marker due to pressure from "reactionary elements in Pakistan," but he was willing to formulate a charter for the rights of religious minorities.<sup>252</sup>

Moreover, to address a prominent source of tension, Nehru and Liaquat worked diligently to "stop propoganda against the territorial integrity of either India or Pakistan and against war".<sup>253</sup> They provisioned in the N-LA that both governments would "take prompt and effective steps to prevent the dissemination of news and mischievous opinion calculated to rouse communal passion by press or radio or by any individual organisation".<sup>254</sup> Their counter-propaganda efforts were synchronised. They mobilised the press and radio and planned to distribute pamphlets and films in four different languages to local inhabitants (in English, Hindi,

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<sup>251</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Gopinath Bordoloi on April 13, 1950. File no. 41 (II), NMML. Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on April 13, 1950. File no. 41 (II), NMML.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on April 4, 1950, *SWJN* SS, vol. 14 (I), pp. 172.

<sup>254</sup> Text of Nehru-Liaquat Agreement, Ministry of External Affairs, 8 April 1950, <https://mea.gov.in/Portal/LegalTreatiesDoc/PA50B1228.pdf>.

Bengali, and Urdu).<sup>255</sup> 1,00,000 copies in Bengali and 50,000 copies each in Urdu and Hindi of a booklet containing the Agreement as well as extracts from Nehru's speeches in Parliament and his broadcast to the Nation, and of Liaquat's speech in Pakistan and his broadcast had been issued for wide distribution. Official talking points were also circulated in an early effort to edify the press corps.<sup>256</sup> As Subimal Dutt, then India's Commonwealth Secretary recounts, "the press in both countries which earlier had added to the tension by highlighting stories of atrocities by members of one community on those of the other, cooperated in restoring confidence in the minds of the people, and for the first time since partition mutual recrimination ceased."<sup>257</sup> For example, *Dawn* was regularly "playing up the spirit of the agreement".<sup>258</sup> The bi-annual report of India's High Commissioner in Lahore for the first half of 1950 noted that Pakistan's press was now acting in "a spirit of accommodation and friendliness. Every paper cried itself hoarse in rallying support for the Nehru-Liaquat peace parleys. The change was phenomenal".<sup>259</sup>

For Nehru, while the response was generally favourable, the press in West Bengal still proved somewhat intractable and opposed what they perceived to be an act of appeasement.<sup>260</sup> Zafrullah Khan lamented the lack of "noticeable improvement in the tone of the West Bengal press," who continued to ridicule the N-LA and carry out virulent anti-Pakistan propaganda every day.<sup>261</sup> The ability of Indian leaders to influence the press was curtailed by constitutional statutes.<sup>262</sup> But Nehru was thoroughly unimpressed with their reporting and angrily asked B.C. Roy, "what exactly is the Calcutta press aiming at, additional sales and some kind of cheap publicity?"<sup>263</sup> He had already made a number of public attempts to persuade them to the

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<sup>255</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on April 14, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (I), pp. 38.

<sup>256</sup> "A Turn in the Right Direction" Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on April 10, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 22; "Difficulties in Implementation" Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on April 10, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 15.

<sup>257</sup> Subimal Dutt, *With Nehru in the Foreign Office*, pp. 59.

<sup>258</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on 13 April 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 28.

<sup>259</sup> Annual and Bi-Annual Report from Pakistan (Lahore). File no. 3(12)-R&I/50 II, NAI.

<sup>260</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Kailas Nath Katju on March 30, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (I), pp.160.

<sup>261</sup> Zafrullah Khan to Jawaharlal Nehru on May 15, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 45 (I), NMML.

<sup>262</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zafrullah Khan on May 20, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 111.

<sup>263</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on May 23, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 45 (I), NMML.

contrary. For example, giving a speech at the joint session of the India-Pakistan Newspapers Editor's Conference on May 4, which was organised to apprise newspaper editors of their "responsibilities in creating mutual faith and trust between India and Pakistan," Nehru highlighted the outsized capacity of the press to influence public opinion in respective countries and the need for them to help create a favourable atmosphere for the N-LA.<sup>264</sup> Patel also met about 50 newspaper editors during his Calcutta trip and pressed them to give the N-LA a fair trial.<sup>265</sup> Eventually, Nehru introduced a "friendly relations with foreign states" exception to the Fundamental Rights to Freedom of Speech and Expression in the Indian Constitution, to quell Hindu right-wing politician S.P. Mookerjee and the Hindu Mahasabha's continuing outrage in the West Bengali press and reassure the Pakistanis. Nehru's wielding of executive power to ensure trusting commitments were honoured did not go unnoticed in Pakistan.

#### *Shared Weaknesses*

A second source of strategic trust was shared weaknesses. Recrudescence of "communal warfare" in Bengal had placed significant stress on the institutional capacity of both governments, as "refugees represented a substantial threat to the political stability of both governments".<sup>266</sup> The threat of state failure however also presented an opportunity for India and Pakistan to form compelling shared interests. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar reported to Nehru that "the grave situation in West Bengal owing to the arrival of large numbers of Hindu refugees [was] daily worsening...[the state was] faced with complete disruption of its economy".<sup>267</sup> Nehru had to plead with other provinces to help West Bengal with rehabilitation efforts as "it was quite impossible to absorb [more refugees] there".<sup>268</sup> The Premier of West Bengal, B.C.

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<sup>264</sup> "The Role of the Press in Settling Differences" Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on May 4, 1950, *SJN* SS, vol. 14 (II), pp. 90.

<sup>265</sup> Vallabhbhai Patel to Jawaharlal Nehru on April 18, 1950. In V. Shankar, *Selected Correspondence of Sardar Patel 1945-50*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Navjivan Trust, 2011), pp. 262.

<sup>266</sup> Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay*, pp. 48.

<sup>267</sup> Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay*, pp. 50.

<sup>268</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to State Premiers on April 16, 1949. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 22 (II), NMML.

Roy, even wrote a strongly worded letter admonishing the Central Government for its lack of financial assistance. He argued that 1.5 million refugees belonging to upper and middle-class Hindu families who were “hungry and starved” and had “lost all including their hope of finding subsistence in the new place” could not be rehabilitated by a paltry sum of 20 rupees per capita.<sup>269</sup> The Refugee Crisis had now assumed significance beyond “the fate of East and West Bengal and the tens of millions who inhabited them,” threatening to “overshadow and overwhelm all of India”.<sup>270</sup> Nehru acknowledged that the problem was of “an appalling magnitude, and in human terms, almost insoluble”.<sup>271</sup> The “whole country [was]...in the grip of the most serious crisis...since the Partition”.<sup>272</sup> Potentially rehabilitating more than 10 million Hindus from East Bengal along with their attendant terrible hunger and starvation was a “terrible nightmare” for the Indian state.<sup>273</sup>

Nehru’s appreciation of India’s deficiencies affected his assessment of the risks of war with Pakistan. India enjoyed a precipitous military advantage over Pakistan—both generally and on the Bengal border. But India’s economic constraints, existing troop commitments in Jammu and Kashmir,<sup>274</sup> and fissiparous communal tendencies,<sup>275</sup> could have exacted significant costs on the newly independent state in case of a war with Pakistan. Nehru, even as tensions escalated, was steadfast in his belief that the costs of war for India would be “extremely high”.<sup>276</sup> He argued that those who were clamouring for “strong action”, simply did not appreciate “what modern war [meant]”.<sup>277</sup> An alternative appraisal was provided by others in the Indian cabinet,

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<sup>269</sup> B.C. Roy to Jawaharlal Nehru on 1 December, 1949. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 32 (I), NMML.

<sup>270</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on February 21, 1950. In J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), NMML.

<sup>271</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on February 21, 1950. In J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 37 (I), NMML.

<sup>272</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to K.M. Cariappa on 1 April 1950, vol. 14 (I), *SWJN SS-SS*, pp. 167.

<sup>273</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech at the plenary session of the Indian National Congress, Jaipur, 19 December, 1948, vol. 8, *SWJN SS*, pp. 157.

<sup>274</sup> These deficiencies were highlighted by K.M. Cariappa in a letter to Nehru on 31 March 1950. See J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 40, NMML.

<sup>275</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C. Rajagopalachari on March 19, 1950, in vol. 14 (I), *SWJN SS*, pp. 128.

<sup>276</sup> Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India*, pp. 163.

<sup>277</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on February 17, 1950, vol. 14 (I), *SWJN SS*, pp. 401.

who chose to focus more squarely on India's superiority and the dividends of military action. The strongest voice in this respect was Patel. Prior to signing of the N-LA, unconvinced of Pakistan's bona fides, he was sceptical of pursuing a conciliatory approach. Even the proposal for joint action during the crisis bargaining phase was seen by Patel as "too mild and lacking effective and credible steps to restore order, security and justice to the minorities in East Bengal".<sup>278</sup> He believed that such gestures would weaken the efficacy of India's deterrence credibility and Nehru "was likely to give [Pakistan the] impression that [they were] merely bluffing".<sup>279</sup> At one point, as B.N. Mullik notes, Patel "was so exorcised over the treatment of minorities in East Pakistan that he wanted Indian troops to move in...to restore order".<sup>280</sup> Likewise, J.B. Kripalani, in an article published in *Vigil* on February 25, pleaded for India to adopt a "firmer attitude towards Pakistan if the communal situation in East Bengal was to be saved from further deterioration". He stressed that "those who [felt] they [had] right on their side, [needed to] be prepared for war or martyrdom, but never cowardly submission".<sup>281</sup> Faced with the pressures of these dissenting voices, Nehru declared: "Cabinet or no Cabinet. So long as I am the Prime Minister, I will carry on my policy".<sup>282</sup> He had to threaten to resign as Prime Minister to subdue opposing voices.<sup>283</sup> Nehru trusted that the Pakistani government was also proceeding on this basis as "the facts and circumstances [compelled] them to do so...and any other course [was] ruin for them and [was] as much ruin for [India]".<sup>284</sup>

Indeed, Pakistan was in "no position to face another refugee problem in East Bengal" as its resources were already strained to the "utmost".<sup>285</sup> Despairingly Liaquat stated: "tens of

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<sup>278</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to G.S. Bajpai on 13 March 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 38, NMML.

<sup>279</sup> G.S. Bajpai to Jawaharlal Nehru on 25 March 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 40, NMML.

<sup>280</sup> B.N. Mullik, *My Years with Nehru 1948-1964* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1971), pp. 14.

<sup>281</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on March 1, 1950, vol. 14 (I), *SWJN SS*, pp. 409.

<sup>282</sup> P.N. Chopra, *Inside Story of Sardar Patel: The Diary of Maniben Patel*, pp. 351.

<sup>283</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Vallabhbhai Patel on February 20, 1950. In Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar's Patel Correspondence*, vol. X, pp. 5-7.

<sup>284</sup> "Overcoming the Crisis" Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on August 9, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 15 (I), pp. 287.

<sup>285</sup> Subimal Dutt, *With Nehru in the Foreign Office*, pp. 54.

millions of men, women and children are spending a life of woe... for them the future holds nothing but perpetual misery and fear”.<sup>286</sup> Liaquat had a firm recognition of Pakistan’s economic troubles and the risk of state failure that was threatened by the Refugee Crisis. Not only was the rehabilitation of Muslim refugees from India who were “poor farmers...weary, harassed, and jobless” a challenging task, the departure of Hindu traders, engineers, and business folk left a huge vacuum in Pakistan’s commercial and industrial life.<sup>287</sup> All of Pakistan’s banking, trade, and economic life in general were controlled by the Hindus.<sup>288</sup> Considering the added burden of raising an administrative apparatus and industrial base for the state from scratch, it can be argued that the risk of state failure in East Pakistan was perhaps even more acute than in the Indian case. Moreover, a likeness in the nature of problems faced by both rivals made shared weaknesses both apparent and compelling. Walter Lippmann at a Town Hall hosted in honour of Liaquat during his US visit shortly after the signing of the N-LA said that both India and Pakistan had to “face from the day of their independence the immemorial misery of Asia and the relentless pressure of the population against the resources and means of life.” But through the N-LA, not only had Nehru and Liaquat ensured the survival of their respective states, they had also come to “grips with an ancient, deep, and dangerous religious and ideological conflict”.<sup>289</sup>

### *Personal Reputations*

Liaquat and Nehru’s reputations as secularists also contributed to the trust-building process, especially since the Refugee Crisis was directly linked to the protection of religious minorities. Like Nehru, Liaquat too held “religious fanatics and extremists” responsible for “fanning the flames of fear and suspicion” between India and Pakistan. Hindu fanatics he worried had not accepted the “fact of Partition” and “would seize the opportunity to unite the whole subcontinent by force”. Similarly, he recognised that Indians feared Muslim fanatics having

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<sup>286</sup> G.W. Choudhury, *The Emergence of Pakistan*, pp. 190.

<sup>287</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan, *Pakistan: Heart of Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), pp. 45.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 64.

<sup>289</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan, *Pakistan: Heart of Asia*, pp. 25.

their way in Pakistan and making life intolerable for the Hindus.<sup>290</sup> In fact, Nehru had squarely blamed “the intense communal policy that led to Pakistan” as the root cause behind bilateral tensions. He argued that it was state policy in Pakistan to nurture “hatred violence and religious bigotry”.<sup>291</sup> When Liaquat resisted Nehru’s characterisation of Pakistan as an Islamic state, claiming equal rights were available to its Hindu minorities under the Objectives Resolution, Nehru remained unconvinced. He believed non-Muslims in Pakistan could not have equality of citizenship and function as is ordinarily the case in a modern democratic state. Pakistan was partitioned as a “religious state” and would therefore inevitably hold non-Muslims to be of inferior status.<sup>292</sup>

However, Nehru’s fears were allayed by Liaquat during crisis talks. When B.C. Roy raised doubts over Liaquat’s sincerity in this respect, Nehru asked him not to be “bothered” anymore as he was convinced that Liaquat “[was] not the type at all, who [thought] in terms of the religious state”. Instead, Nehru compared Liaquat to the fabled Arabs in the middle ages, who were famous for their philosophic outlook, extreme tolerance and broadmindedness.<sup>293</sup> Again, in a letter to the Indian Ambassador to the Soviet Union, S. Radhakrishnan on April 8, Nehru declared that Liaquat was “perfectly sincere in this matter” even though some of his colleagues still seemed unreliable.<sup>294</sup> However, since Liaquat occupied a “commanding position” in Pakistan and “his word [counted],” this was mainly what mattered.<sup>295</sup> When the Indian press confronted Nehru with Pakistan’s previously lacking record of compliance with bilateral agreements, Nehru responded that “a number of agreements [had been] acted upon and even those that were not fully acted upon, were partly acted upon”. He proceeded to remind the press that Liaquat was an old resident of Uttar Pradesh and was known to Indian leaders in a

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid, pp. 25.

<sup>291</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on March 3, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 38, NMML.

<sup>292</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on March 10, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, vol. 38, NMML.

<sup>293</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on April 19, 1950, *SIJN* SS, vol. 14 (II), pp. 60.

<sup>294</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on April 8, 1950, *SIJN* SS, vol. 14 (I), pp. 179.

<sup>295</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on April 8, 1950, *SIJN* SS, vol. 14 (II), pp. 446.

personal capacity. The talks therefore “were very frank” and there was no attempt to “avoid any difficult issue”. Instead they were dealt with it “in a friendly way”.<sup>296</sup>

Nehru’s reputation as a secularist was perhaps even more well-known than Liaquat’s across the Indian subcontinent. Apart from being conspicuous in his public life, Nehru’s antipathy towards religious bigotry was also evident in his pre-Independence published writings, namely *An Autobiography*, *The Discovery of India*, as well as *Glimpses of World History*. The spread of religious rioting during the 1920s in Colonial India had decisively influenced Nehru to commit to the separation of religion from politics. As Sarvepalli Gopal argues, it had become obvious to him that “India, caught in the whirlpool of mutual antagonism would be dragged down into the abyss unless this so-called religion was scotched and the intelligentsia at least was secularised”. In particular, he was acutely aware of the insecurities of India’s Muslims and had long struggled to provide them the “fullest assurance...that their culture and traditions would be safe”.<sup>297</sup> Nehru’s view of the state opposed all types of narrow nationalisms that sought to regulate legitimate membership of the state on religious grounds. It was important for a secular state, Nehru argued, to “honour all faiths equally and give them equal opportunity”.<sup>298</sup> During crisis negotiations prior to the signing of the N-LA, Nehru’s secularist reputation played an influential role in reassuring Pakistan that India would be able to resist the advance of Hindu fundamentalists and honour its commitment to protect special minority rights for its Muslims.

#### *Initial Reciprocity*

As the two states began to follow through on their pledges, trust intensified through reciprocity. The agreement itself, though important and with far-reaching results, was only a part of the “big

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<sup>296</sup> “Difficulties in Implementation” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on April 10, 1950, *SWjNSS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 12.

<sup>297</sup> S. Gopal, “Nehru and Minorities”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 23, no. 45/47 (1988), pp. 2463.

<sup>298</sup> Rajeev Bhargava, “Nehru against Nehruvians: On religion and Secularism”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. LII, no. 8 (2017), pp. 35-36.

psychological changes” that came into evidence immediately afterwards.<sup>299</sup> Nehru believed that if India “functioned rightly”, Pakistan could also be convinced to behave “rightly”.<sup>300</sup> Therefore, he kept a keen eye on the West Bengal government and its compliance with the N-LA. He asked B.C. Roy to reprimand irresponsible officials who were instigating Muslim migrations from Calcutta, and to resolve the problem of food shortages being faced by Muslim factory workers.<sup>301</sup> Similarly, G.B. Pant, the Premier of Uttar Pradesh, was asked to take note of the mistreatment of Muslim farmers and factory workers in Shahjahanpur city and district.<sup>302</sup> Although not mandated as part of the agreement, Nehru also requested G. Bordoloi to halt all action being taken by the Assamese government under the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950 against illegal immigrants.<sup>303</sup> Nehru would later wield India’s international status as a weapon to bring Cabinet colleagues in line. For instance, he cautioned the Governor of West Bengal, Kailash Nath Katju, that if his province did not take adequate efforts to follow the terms of the N-LA, this would be a “fatal blunder and put [India] completely in the wrong”.<sup>304</sup> They could not “sit on the fence” and wait for Pakistan to demonstrate its compliance with the agreement. This would “weaken and discredit” them.<sup>305</sup> Similarly, when K.C. Neogy and S.P. Mookerjee resigned from the Indian Cabinet due to disagreements over Nehru’s handling of the crisis, he attempted to dissuade them by emphasising its damaging effects on India’s credibility. He warned that India would be accused of “playing a double game” and its credit everywhere would suffer.<sup>306</sup> In particular, since India’s standing had been built on the back of its anti-war

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<sup>299</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on May 17, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 44 (I), NMML.

<sup>300</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Prafulla Chandra Ghosh on April 19, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 42 (I), NMML.

<sup>301</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on April 11, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 41 (II), NMML.

<sup>302</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to G.B. Pant on April 11, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 41 (II), NMML.

<sup>303</sup> This act empowered the Assam government to expel from the state undesirable refugees, and allowed only the victims of communal disturbances to come to Assam. Jawaharlal Nehru to Gopinath Bordoloi on April 10, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 18.

<sup>304</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Gopinath Bordoloi on April 8, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 14 (I), pp. 181.

<sup>305</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on May 1, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 83.

<sup>306</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Syama Prasad Mookerjee on April 9, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 3,4.

stance, any effort to “sabotage a constructive effort at peace such as the Indo-Pakistan agreement, [would] discredit her before the eyes of the world”.<sup>307</sup>

India’s efforts to fulfil its obligations were also being matched by their Pakistani counterparts. After the first full week, Nehru noted with satisfaction that although the exodus continued, based on the information he was receiving, Liaquat was trying his fullest to implement the agreement.<sup>308</sup> He even dismissed the Indian Intelligence Bureau’s (IB) findings, which claimed that incidents of oppression against Hindus were still rising in East Bengal, as “prejudiced, false and distorted.” The IB had no independent presence in East Pakistan, and consequently received all its information from refugees crossing over at the border who were prone to exaggerating their plight.<sup>309</sup> Instead Nehru chose to rely on first-hand information from the ground that painted the N-LA in a positive light. For example, a report compiled by an Indian newspaper delegation in Dacca stated: “...the pact was being implemented satisfactorily and conditions were rapidly returning to normal”. The appointment of officials in the Pakistani government—who were in favour of the N-LA and likely to be cooperative—was also considered a “good sign”.<sup>310</sup> Nehru remarked that Pakistani leaders, “as crooked as they may have been in the past” had enough “wisdom and understanding” to mould themselves to changing events.<sup>311</sup> On April 25, in an interview to the *New York Times*, he even expressed hope that the new-found calm in India-Pakistan relations “might resemble that which prevails between the United States and Canada”.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> “Hope of Better Relations” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on April 13, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 35.

<sup>308</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to State Premiers April 15, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 41 (II), NMML.

<sup>309</sup> B.N. Mullik, *My Years with Nehru*, pp. 16.

<sup>310</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on May 7, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 103.

<sup>311</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on May 1, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 83.

<sup>312</sup> “The World Situation” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on April 25, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 377.

Mutual concerns were now being dealt with through non-defensiveness and collaboration. For instance, on April 19, in response to his protest, Nehru apprised Liaquat that “full instructions” had been issued to all state governments and Customs officials regarding Muslim evacuees in North and Central India, and he could rest assured that these were being implemented. “Exodus from these areas [had] practically stopped and some [were] in fact returning”.<sup>313</sup> From about 10,000 Muslim refugees migrating eastwards, the numbers had come down to 1,500 or less.<sup>314</sup> Correspondingly, when Nehru complained to Liaquat that reports of harassment by custom police and Ansars were still emerging from Benapole and Khulna and requested him to issue directions through the East Bengal government for “observance of letter and spirit of agreement in regard to migrants and Customs posts,” these were also followed up speedily. The Pakistani government instructed the Collector of Customs in Chittagong to investigate these complaints and award “exemplary punishment” to officers that were violating the agreement.<sup>315</sup> On this issue, at the Chief Secretaries’ conference in Calcutta (organised on April 21-22 to report on the workings of the N-LA) a decision was also made to appoint liaison officers at important customs stations, and to remove all restrictions on the transfer of personal effects and household goods.<sup>316</sup> Consequently, the number of Hindu refugees also went down from around 20,000 a day to 9,000 to 10,000 (also consisting of those who had already left their homes prior to the N-LA, and were already gathered at railway and river stations).<sup>317</sup> With improvement in transit facilities Hindus also started returning to East Bengal (see table). Some were doing so to get their affairs in order and bring back their belongings. But a high proportion of women and children indicates that a substantial number were in fact returning for

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<sup>313</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on April 19, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 42 (I), CCB. 2577, NMML.

<sup>314</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on April 19, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 42 (I), NMML.

<sup>315</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on April 12, 1950. File no. 41 (II), CCB. 2483, NMML.

<sup>316</sup> “The Follow-up Steps” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on April 19, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 57.

<sup>317</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s answer to a short notice question in parliament on the results of the N-LA. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 42 (I), NMML.

resettlement (about 80 percent).<sup>318</sup> Evidently, through trust-building, India and Pakistan had emerged from the Refugee Crisis without spiralling into conflict and were able to jointly cooperate towards successfully stemming the flow of refugees.

2.2 Weekly arrivals and departures of Hindus and Muslims from and to East Bengal and West Bengal from February 13 to July 23 1950. <sup>319</sup>				
For the week ending	To West Bengal from East Bengal		From West Bengal to East Bengal	
	Hindus	Muslims	Hindus	Muslims
19/2/50	10,565	2,452	6,530	10,630
26/2/50	40,635	2,584	11,986	20,496
5/3/50	35,420	659	5,722	10,705
12/3/50	56,909	582	9,585	42,837
19/3/50	80,267	903	12,659	51,369
26/3/50	1,15,008	1,117	12,929	48,457
2/4/50	1,35,317	915	9,740	45,619
9/4/50	1,20,979	913	11,376	64,796
16/4/50	87,067	972	14,157	26,840
23/4/50	80,729	3,308	22,657	26,331
30/4/50	96,194	5,471	26,598	34,882
7/5/50	85,493	11,417	31,215	35,562
14/5/50	66,959	14,810	35,586	30,265
21/5/50	54,636	18,874	34,632	27,641
28/5/50	54,431	18,836	30,687	25,882
4/6/50	49,355	18,440	34,522	20,615

<sup>318</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on May 17, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 44 (I), NMML.

<sup>319</sup> This table shows the movement by railway via Ranaghat and Boregaon only. It does not include those who travelled by the other means of conveyance for which no statistics are available.

11/6/50	51,966	15,280	30,856	23,900
18/6/50	49,772	15,012	36,061	27,561
25/6/50	58,620	16,219	34,431	27,356
2/7/50	58,504	15,742	36,608	25,409
9/7/50	57,094	17,185	37,844	24,615
16/7/50	55,587	17,422	37,334	23,735
23/7/50	50,313	22,015	46,692	14,003
<b>Total<sup>320</sup></b>	<b>15,51,820</b>	<b>2,21,128</b>	<b>5,70,407</b>	<b>6,89,506</b>

### Measuring Trust

While the changing perceptions of Nehru and Liaquat has been evident in the preceding section, I will now show the range of vulnerabilities both actors willingly accepted after building strategic trust. Approaching crisis talks, President Rajendra Prasad had proposed a third-party mechanism to investigate infringements of a potential agreement, which he claimed needed to be penalised with a loss of territory.<sup>321</sup> Such suggestions for sanctions were revised after Patel raised concerns over the capacity of such an international machinery to cause embarrassment to India.<sup>322</sup> Therefore, the Indian side settled on the need for a monitoring mechanism without which Pakistan could not be trusted. At the time, Pakistani leaders too believed that Indian “pledges were worth nothing”.<sup>323</sup> However, Nehru eventually watered down its demand for an

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<sup>320</sup> While refugee numbers did rise, a part of this increase was deceptive. Not all travellers were refugees: (1) a large portion of the traffic was routine (2) a considerable number of people travelling were smugglers carrying out trade across the border, and (3) refugees also travelled back and forth more than once. Report of the Director of Intelligence. See Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on August 13, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 15 (I), pp. 290.

<sup>321</sup> Rajendra Prasad to Jawaharlal Nehru titled “A suggestion for securing the life and honour of minorities in India and Pakistan” in J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 39, NMML.

<sup>322</sup> Nehru warned that every disgruntled minority member would be able to “complain to this machinery that opportunities of growth and participation in national activity were not forthcoming,” causing India’s reputation to suffer and sovereignty to be compromised. In G.S. Bajpai to Jawaharlal Nehru on talks with Vallabhbhai Patel on March 25, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 40, NMML.

<sup>323</sup> Choudhury Mohammed Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 1973), pp. 192.

enforcement mechanism, while Liaquat relinquished Pakistan's desire to see safeguards for Muslim minorities under the Pact extend to other Indian states such as the United Provinces and Bihar. Both instead trusted each other to follow through with a general declaration. This middle-ground importantly addressed Liaquat's apprehension that domestic audiences in Pakistan would worryingly perceive any joint commission as a step towards the future reunification of East and West Bengal.<sup>324</sup>

Separate Minority Commissions were created for East Bengal and West Bengal along with Assam, replacing the Provincial Minorities Boards set up under the Inter Dominion Agreement (1948) to assist with the implementation of the N-LA. Each Minority Commission was headed by an appointee of the Central or Provincial Government, i.e. a Central Minister, and would also include a representative of the Majority and Minority communities respectively. Modes of bilateral coordination between these Commissions were laid out and powers for punitive action against transgressors were provided. But there were no interstate sanctions put in place for either state. At the most, to facilitate the transparent exchange of information, the two Central Ministers would have the right to attend any of the meetings of the other Commission, and could also call a joint meeting of the two Minority Commissions when necessary. Along with these provisions, Committees of Enquiry were set up to impartially investigate instances of communal violence and a Search Service Bureau was formed to track and rehabilitate abducted women. However, any disagreement between the two Central Ministers would be referred to the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan "who [would] either resolve it themselves or determine the agency and procedure by which it will be resolved".<sup>325</sup> The N-LA provided a robust bureaucratic set-up for its day-to-day regulation. Nonetheless, in the absence of any cross-state monitoring, its realisation still rested on the goodwill, cooperation, and the commitment of both parties.

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<sup>324</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on April 4, 1950, *SWJN* SS, vol. 14 (I), pp. 171.

<sup>325</sup> Text of Nehru-Liaquat Agreement, Website of Ministry of External Affairs, 8 April 1950, <https://mea.gov.in/Portal/LegalTreatiesDoc/PA50B1228.pdf>.

Nehru made a follow-up visit to Karachi on April 26 where discussions took place on the de-requisitioning of homes for returning migrants, trade, refugee situation, evacuee property etc. During these talks, Liaquat implored Nehru to reconsider India's troop deployments on the Punjab border so as to reduce the "constant feeling of apprehension". He expressed his willingness to reciprocally reduce the concentration of Pakistani troops on the other side.<sup>326</sup> Since the departure of these troops had been "expedited a little by recent events," Nehru agreed that although it was difficult to "shift them about suddenly...a part of them may be shifted for the sake of convenience".<sup>327</sup> The general disposition of troops in Bengal though, was still maintained due to "political reasons" to manage the domestic law and order situation.<sup>328</sup> However, considering there had been a "change for the better in the political relationship between the two countries," on May 10, India's Chiefs of Staff Committee restated this recommendation.<sup>329</sup> In fact, they proposed that India and Pakistan now needed to evolve a "combined defence plan" to deal with the foreseeable threat of Soviet and Chinese Communism.<sup>330</sup> India's Finance Minister John Mathai also suggested that India begin to reduce the strength of its Army after the signing of the pact to reduce the burden of India's defence expenditure.<sup>331</sup>

The trusting relationship also influenced decision making on other bilateral issues and these were now "being tackled in a different spirit". On demarcating the East-West Bengal border (Radcliffe Boundary) Nehru wrote to Liaquat that there had earlier been major raids in

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<sup>326</sup> Record of Talks with Liaquat Ali Khan on April 27, 1950, *SIJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 80.

<sup>327</sup> Record of Talks with Liaquat Ali Khan on May 3, 1950, *SIJN SS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 90.

<sup>328</sup> Top Secret Note from Baldev Singh to Jawaharlal Nehru on May 28, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 45 (II), NMML.

<sup>329</sup> Note from Chiefs of Staffs Committee on "The Action of Armed Forces to Protect Minorities in Pakistan on May 10, 1950". J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 45 (II), NMML.

<sup>330</sup> Note prepared by the Chiefs of Staff committee for Baldev Singh on April 11, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 41 (II), NMML.

<sup>331</sup> Note in the Ministry of Finance by John Mathai in May 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, file no. 41 (II), NMML.

Kamalpur in Tripura and other petty skirmishes along that border, which left “ill-will” on both sides.<sup>332</sup> He recommended that the “status-quo” be maintained in these disputed areas and they should be treated as “no-man’s land” until a resolution was reached. Any smaller disputes could be referred to the District Magistrates for speedy resolution and de-escalation.<sup>333</sup> Liaquat accepted these measures and instructions to the provincial governments were then issued. A few days later, Nehru noted with satisfaction that as one of the effects of the agreement, both private and official violence and conflict was expected to cease on the Bengal border. Both sides were “undoubtedly trying to put a stop to this and clear instructions [had] been issued accordingly”.<sup>334</sup> Discussions also took place on the exchange of war prisoners taken in Kashmir. The matter had remained unresolved as Pakistan wanted the exchange to be “man for man,” whereas India—who held 150 prisoners in comparison to Pakistan’s 600—wanted it to be complete. This issue was resolved during Nehru’s trip to Karachi as a full exchange was agreed to, including the Azad forces and tribesmen.<sup>335</sup> Further, on April 21, a temporary Indo-Pak Trade Agreement was signed until July 31, 1950. This revived the supply of essential commodities such as coal, cotton, textiles, steel, and mustard oil from India, in return for four million mounds of raw jute from East Bengal. To circumvent the exchange rate problem (Pakistan had joined the IMF and the issue was now being deliberated by it), the entire transaction was carried out in Indian rupees for which a separate account of the State Bank of Pakistan was maintained by the Reserve Bank of India.<sup>336</sup> Additionally, conferences were held on the issue of evacuee property, resulting in a Movable Property Agreement on June 28, which “laid down the general principles of removal, sale or disposal of movable property by displaced persons without formal permission from the custodian”.

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<sup>332</sup> Shooting down of Calcutta Medical Students who were engaged in giving first-aid near the border to refugees in Jayanagar by Pakistani forces on March 31, 1950.

<sup>333</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on April 13, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 41 (II), NMML.

<sup>334</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Premiers April 15, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 41 (II), NMML.

<sup>335</sup> Record of Talks with Liaquat Ali Khan on April 27, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 75.

<sup>336</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to V.K. Krishna Menon on April 24, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 70.

When the refugee exodus began to flare up again after a few months of progress and the Indian opposition's clamour for "strong action" was renewed,<sup>337</sup> but trust still prevailed. Indian and Pakistani elites blamed insubordinate local officials for the decline. Ghulam Mohammed Ali, during his visit to New Delhi in May 1950 strongly criticized "minor officials in Pakistan who did not carry out the Government's policy and created trouble". He assured Nehru that Liaquat was "anxious to carry through fully the agreement arrived at...and not only that but to follow it up in other ways too".<sup>338</sup> Islamabad deplored the opposition to the N-LA in West Bengal, but "Nehru's sincerity about implementing it was never doubted". His main difficulty, they believed, was lack of co-operation in West Bengal.<sup>339</sup> Similarly, while Nehru praised the efforts of the Central and Provincial governments on both sides, he criticized "lower officials" in East and West Bengal who had "not come up to the mark".<sup>340</sup> He argued that continuing incidents of theft and abduction in East Bengal were due to a "general breakdown of the social and administrative machine".<sup>341</sup> After Partition most of the administrative officers had migrated to West Bengal, leaving "second-rate people" to deal with the law and order crisis in East Bengal. Nehru also added that in both Bengals, the general public was suffering "from a fever, a sickness...which would no doubt take a considerable time to heal". Accordingly, it was predictable that the insecurities of minority communities could not be resolved "quickly and suddenly" via decree.<sup>342</sup> Instead of "force, compulsion, and war" these issues needed to be settled through "friendly discussions, by negotiations, and so forth".<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Proposals ranged from exchange of population, to territorial re-distribution to the annulment of Partition. "The Situation in Bengal" Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on August 7, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 15 (I), pp. 268.

<sup>338</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's note for the Prime Minister's Secretariat on May 24, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 45 (I), NMML.

<sup>339</sup> G.W. Choudhury, *Pakistan's Relations with India 1947-1966*, pp. 197.

<sup>340</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on July 2, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 14 (II), pp. 485.

<sup>341</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on May 30, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, file no. 45 (II), NMML.

<sup>342</sup> "The Situation in Bengal" Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on August 7, 1950, *SWJNSS*, vol. 15 (I), pp. 261.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 270.

India’s Central Minister C.C. Biswas, and his Pakistani counterpart A.M. Malik held meetings in New Delhi between August 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> and then in Karachi between August 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> to strengthen the N-LA. Among other things, they agreed on the expedition of investigations into incidents of communal violence, need for effective action against non-compliant persons including government officials, the imposition of collective fines on riot affected districts, and the return of movable properties, compensation for requisitioning of homes, and reinstatement on private jobs for returning migrants.<sup>344</sup> It was also decided to set up homes for the rehabilitation of abducted women in East and West Bengal under the management of social workers—the majority of whom would be members of the minority community.<sup>345</sup> Liaquat promised to look into complaints of interference with minority educational institutions in East Bengal, while the Indian Cabinet passed a resolution to provide more effectual executive powers to its Central Minister.<sup>346</sup> In their aftermath, while migration figures continued to be significant, “there was a slow and progressive improvement in East Bengal.”<sup>347</sup> The disparity in refugee numbers between the two states lessened and the rates for returning migrants improved significantly (see table below). Erstwhile adversaries now trusted each other to protect minority rights despite the threat of state failure associated with it.

### 2.3 Migration of Hindus and Muslims in Bengal, October 1950

Date <sup>348</sup>	Hindus from East to West Bengal	Hindus from West to East Bengal	Muslims from East to West Bengal	Muslims from West to East Bengal
04-Oct	6,059	7,381	3,305	2,706
05-Oct	5,810	6,896	2,977	2,231

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on August 5, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 15 (I), pp. 254.

<sup>346</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Liaquat Ali Khan on August 12, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 15 (I), pp. 289.

<sup>347</sup> Reported by the Governor of West Bengal to the President of India. See Jawaharlal Nehru to C.C. Biswas on September 12, 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 15 (I), pp. 302.

<sup>348</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 16 October 1950, *SWJN SS*, vol. 15 (II), pp. 555.

06-Oct	5,442	7,217	2,647	2,299
07-Oct	5,091	6,512	2,829	2,341
08-Oct	4,768	6,078	3,231	2,480
09-Oct	5,368	7,398	2,854	2,609
10-Oct	7,171	6,913	2,437	2,468
11-Oct	6,424	6,515	2,822	2,427
12-Oct	4,820	7,665	2,711	2,646
13-Oct	6,600	8,292	2,456	2,525
14-Oct	6,983	9,935	2,186	2,738

### **Alternative Explanations**

Attempting to explain why such cooperation between Nehru and Liaquat was possible on the issue of Minority Rights, Pallavi Raghavan has pursued a rationalist line. She argues that political elites in both countries were aware of the “fragility of the nation-state project” and recognised the need to “finalise Partition” as an administrative solution, to uphold “two mutually exclusive, sovereign, and self-contained states”. For Raghavan therefore, the N-LA was a calculative act of consolidating state power that ensured India’s and Pakistan’s long-term survival.<sup>349</sup> However, her explanation has two shortcomings. First, it does not fully address how material deficiencies bequeathed by Partition innately produced both collaborative and hostile consequences (do divorce settlements for example, as actor-general bargaining processes isolated from the nature of the relationship between the parties uniformly produce cooperation and antagonism?). In fact, a similar starting premise has allowed Mohammed Ayooob to argue that weak institutional structures made post-colonial states more war prone.<sup>350</sup> The challenge for

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<sup>349</sup> Pallavi Raghavan, *Animosity at Bay*.

<sup>350</sup> Ayooob argues that post-colonial states faced daunting state-building undertakings early on, due to factors such as Cold War armament anxieties, democratisation pressures, human rights obligations, colonial perversions, and territorial uncertainty. In Mohammed Ayooob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System* (London: Lynne Rienner Publications, 1995).

such accounts is methodological, because “rump materialism,” as Alexander Wendt’s argues, only has “some intrinsic causal powers”.<sup>351</sup> A large part of the explanatory labour is performed by social ideas, beliefs, and cultures that constitute identities and interests, and in turn generate behavioural and motivational dispositions for actors. Without an examination of these factors the processes that allowed Nehru and Liaquat to overcome their mutual fears and build strategic trust cannot be appreciated.

Second, during the Refugee Crisis, India, despite being a relatively weak state in global terms, still enjoyed a precipitous military advantage over Pakistan, and thus trust-building cannot be explained as a cost-benefit calculation either. Once Nehru had moved India’s armed forces closer to Bengal border, given the weakness of Pakistani forces in the Eastern wing, “there was no realistic way Pakistan could stop them”.<sup>352</sup> Even Army Chief K.M. Cariappa, who was conscious of deficiencies on the Punjab frontier and the limited military supplies at his disposal, informed Nehru that the Indian Army would be able to carry out a limited advance into East Pakistan and meet any Pakistani counteraction. If Nehru chose to relieve the Army from patrolling responsibilities in West Bengal, Cariappa was confident that the “East Pakistan problem could be solved in a short time”.<sup>353</sup> Expectedly, a number of Nehru’s opponents in the Indian Cabinet encouraged an interventionist-militaristic approach to stop the persecution of Hindus in East Bengal. India’s Cabinet was not unanimous in its calculation of the risks of war with Pakistan. Likewise, Liaquat’s trusting choice was not forced by a sharp escalation of the Refugee Crisis in March and India’s troop mobilisation either. While Liaquat was acutely aware of Pakistan’s military shortcomings vis-à-vis India (particularly in the Bengal theatre), he could still have pursued a “limited aims/fait accompli strategy” in the Punjab theatre in light of

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<sup>351</sup> Alexander Wendt, *A Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>352</sup> Stephan Cohen, *Shooting for a century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum* (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2013).  
p. 8.

<sup>353</sup> K.M. Cariappa to Jawaharlal Nehru on 31 March, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, file no. 40, NMML.

Pakistan's "short-term offensive capabilities"<sup>354</sup> and the asymmetric advantages offered by the natural terrain. Peace-time stations of major Pakistani formations were the same as their war locations in border areas such as Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Sialkot, Shakargarh, Lahore and Bahawalpur, providing superior lines of communications relative to the Indian Army.<sup>355</sup> If Liaquat did not believe Nehru could be trusted, he still had available a range of offensive options.

Moreover, Nehru and Liaquat did not use costly signals to indicate the credibility of their commitments. However, trust-building was possible between Nehru and Liaquat in the absence of such unilateral and costly signals. Neither were institutions or shared identities central to the trust-building process, as constructivist or institutionalist scholars would assume. It can although be argued that the face-to-face encounter between Nehru and Liaquat in New Delhi was vital for trust-building. The account provided herein does not necessarily negate this argument and it is evident that face-to-face contact served a unique mechanism through which social sources of trust could become operative. It is incontrovertible that since human beings are involved in the process of bargaining, psychological factors would be part of the explanation for trust-building. For example, Liaquat's written assurances on his ability to reign in Islamic fundamentalist forces in Pakistan failed to convince Nehru. But his efforts during face-to-face meetings in New Delhi succeeded. It was important for Nehru to *feel* Liaquat's sincerity. However, this was only part of the explanation. Without the presence of the four social factors, it would be difficult to sustain that the sheer force of psychological factors allowed a trusting relationship to develop between the two actors. Nehru's perceptible efforts to reign in detractors and Liaquat's similar labours in Pakistan, their mutual reputations as secularists which mattered greatly because they were making commitments about the protection of religious minorities, their ability to communicate a relationship of mutual care based on the shared weaknesses

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<sup>354</sup> T.V. Paul, *Asymmetric conflicts: war initiation by weaker powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 47.

<sup>355</sup> K.M. Cariappa to Jawaharlal Nehru on 31 March, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, file no. 40, NMML.

relating to state failure, and their initial reciprocity on managing refugee migration, were all crucial to the trusting relationship between Nehru and Liaquat.

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As this chapter has argued, Nehru and Liaquat were able to build strategic trust and arrest the security dilemma spiral to resolve the Refugee Crisis on the Bengal border. Nehru recognised the workings of the security dilemma between India and Pakistan and the complexity of Pakistan's military motives after Partition. He was also able to exchange this empathic understanding or security dilemma sensibility with Liaquat during epistolary exchanges over a possible No War Declaration and later during crisis talks in New Delhi. Then, after sharing empathy, Nehru and Liaquat were able to build a trusting relationship during face-to-face diplomacy. This was made possible by social factors such as Nehru and Liaquat's reputation as secularists, India and Pakistan's shared administrative weaknesses in terms of handling the crisis and the accompanying risk of state failure, the efforts of both sides to address each other's central fears through coordination of press propaganda and public speeches, and the reciprocal follow-through on trusting commitments after the signing of the N-LA that led to a noticeable decline in refugee numbers. The presence of a trusting relationship is evidenced by the fact that both India and Pakistan did not provision for any cross-border monitoring or punitive sanctions. Instead even when refugee numbers started to swell after a few months they worked jointly to strengthen and reinforce the N-LA.

While the N-LA served its immediate purpose, the goodwill generated did not last as long as both Prime Ministers would have been hoped for. In 1951, after the failure of the Australian jurist Owen Dixon's mediation mission, Nehru received intelligence reports of Pakistan under Liaquat's leadership wanting to wage a holy war in Jammu and Kashmir to

isolate it from the rest of India.<sup>356</sup> He decided to mobilise Indian troops along the Punjab and Kashmir borders. Predictably, India's troop build-up led to another round of epistolary exchanges between the two parties. At the time, the Central Investigation Agency reported that "almost ninety per cent of India's and seventy per cent of Pakistan's ground forces were deployed against each other".<sup>357</sup> The crisis passed with the assassination of Liaquat in October 1951, but the headway made on the refugee issue had been irreparably reversed. The Annual Report of the Indian High Commissioner in Karachi stated that "what little sincerity marked the conclusion of the pact [had] disappeared with the developments in the Kashmir dispute." Upper class Hindus were now refusing to return to their homes in East Bengal and the future was ominous for Hindus of the lower classes who had already returned.<sup>358</sup> The "sober and dignified attitude" that succeeded the N-LA proved much too temporary and vile press propaganda had made a forceful reappearance.<sup>359</sup> However, if trust could help India and Pakistan overcome the security dilemma during the Refugee Crisis, why were they unable to transfer its success to the Kashmir dispute? I will consider this question in Chapter 4.

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<sup>356</sup> B.N. Mullik, *My Years with Nehru*, pp. 62.

<sup>357</sup> Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *Pakistan's Defence Policy 1947-58* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 116.

<sup>358</sup> Annual Reports from Pakistan (Karachi), file no. 3(9)-R&I/51 I-III, NAI.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 21.

## Chapter 3

### Cold War's First Détente: Strategic Trust in India-China

#### Relations

After Communist China's occupation of Tibet in October 1950, India and China came to share a border for the first time. This event transformed the security landscape in South Asia and would animate the workings of the security dilemma between these two regional powers over the next decade and more. Their vulnerabilities in terms of administering border areas, divergent regime types in the backdrop of an emerging Cold War, and a 2100-mile-long undemarcated border made them both fearful of each other's intentions. However, in this chapter, I will show how Nehru and Zhou entered a process of trust-building between 1954-1957 to overcome these mutual fears and transcend the overhang of security competition. Contrary to expectations in existing trust scholarship, this was possible despite the non-use of costly signals, opposing national identities, as well as the absence of strong institutions or external mediation. A key role was instead played by the leaders and diplomats on both sides as agents of trust-building, their respective empathic capacities, and crucially, social factors that facilitated the formation of strategic trust.

#### Historicising the security dilemma

The emergence of the security dilemma between India and China after the latter's occupation of Tibet in 1950 has not been examined in any great detail heretofore. Accounts of India's foreign policy erroneously believe that Nehru's threat perceptions of China were non-existent due to his overriding ideological considerations of Pan-Asianism.<sup>360</sup> Analyses of China's foreign policy in the early Cold War period on the other hand, as Jonathan Ward argues, have failed to

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<sup>360</sup> See Jivanta Schöttli, *Vision and Strategy in Indian Politics: Jawaharlal Nehru's Policy Choices and the Designing of Political Institutions* (London: Routledge Advances in South Asian Studies, 2012). Notable exception is Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

recognize that “CCP [Chinese Communist Party] leaders and officials saw India as a comprehensive threat to the PRC [People’s Republic of China], and that India loomed much larger in the early PRC worldview than is generally understood”.<sup>361</sup> I provide in this section a novel and comprehensive study of the fears that animated the workings of the security dilemma between India and China between 1949 and 1953, leading up to the trust-building phase.

### *How India Saw China*

Tibet’s ambiguous and quasi-autonomous status had served British India’s security calculus well, as the buffer state ensured a weak and friendly presence on the border and lowered defence outlays needed to protect the Raj’s prized colony from Russian intervention. Initially, Nehru’s India too sought to maintain this arrangement. Despite the Kuomintang’s remonstrations, the Tibetan delegation was invited to attend the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi (1947) and was accorded treatment comparable to other national participants.<sup>362</sup> Later, when General Liu Po-Cheng, head of PLA’s Southern Command, vocalised China’s intention to takeover Tibet,<sup>363</sup> India—albeit unsuccessfully—tried to dissuade the PRC from the use of military force.<sup>364</sup> Although Nehru believed the Communists would inevitably integrate Tibet into a unified China (Kuomintang [KMT] too had said so before<sup>365</sup>), he hoped to leverage the Communists’ war weariness and the desire to consolidate power domestically to preserve Tibetan autonomy under some kind of vague suzerainty of China.<sup>366</sup> Even after the commencement of military operations in Chamdo, Nehru kept pressing for Chinese restraint—

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<sup>361</sup> Jonathan Ward, *China-India Rivalry and the Border War of 1962: PRC Perspectives on the Collapse of China-India Relations, 1958-62* (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2016), pp. 171.

<sup>362</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to K.P.P.S. Menon on 14 March 1947. In *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series* [henceforth *SWJN-SS*], ed. S. Gopal (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1993), vol. II, pp. 502.

<sup>363</sup> General Liu Po-Cheng’s Proclamation on Tibet. Cited in MEA [Henceforth MEA] to Indian Embassy in Washington on 6 August 1950. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, Sub. File no. 736, National Archives in India [Henceforth NAI], New Delhi.

<sup>364</sup> Aide memoire handed to the Foreign Minister of China on 24 August 1950. In *Treaties Signed, and Letter, Notes and Memoranda Exchanged between the Governments of India and China (1949-1959)*, V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, Subject File no. 929, NAI.

<sup>365</sup> Chiang, Kai-shek, and Philip J. Jaffe, *China’s Destiny and Chinese Economic Theory* (Leiden: Global Oriental, 2013).

<sup>366</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru, Letter’s for Chief Ministers*, vol. I (1947-49) (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1995), pp. 480.

citing India's own military inaction in Goa and Pondicherry (which only lasted until 1960) as exemplary against French and Portuguese colonisers. He hoped the Tibetan delegation's planned visit to Beijing would help resolve the issue.<sup>367</sup>

Once Chinese forces marched into Tibet in October 1950, the strategic implications of a strong, centralised, and communist government in China occupying Tibet became inescapable for India. The main concern was related to the defence of its North-East frontier. Nehru had beseeched Tibetan negotiators to reject the permanent stationing of Chinese troops in Tibet. But these were explicitly provisioned for under the 17-point Sino-Tibetan Agreement in 1951.<sup>368</sup> On a border that had previously demanded little attention, India now needed to be fully prepared as defensive shortcomings could "offer an invitation to aggression or internal trouble".<sup>369</sup> Nehru was receptive to these adverse changes. He argued that China "tended to expand" and so "there was always a possibility of aggression".<sup>370</sup> China was dangerous not just because it was "Communist" but because it was "a great power [which] had grown and spread out to [India's] frontiers".<sup>371</sup> In response, India needed "to become more frontier-conscious" and "take all reasonable steps to guard mountain passes" on the Indo-Tibetan border.<sup>372</sup> Or else, there was a risk of China taking control of disputed territories and presenting India with *faits accomplis*.<sup>373</sup> Although Nehru still believed the "inhospitable terrain and climate of Tibet" would deter any immediate Chinese plans for an invasion, he worried that "the Himalayan barrier was not quite so effective as it used to be."<sup>374</sup> He began to signal India's resoluteness to preserve the McMahon Line, a boundary that had had been agreed between British India and Tibet at the Simla Conference in 1914. In response to questions in the Indian parliament

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<sup>367</sup> Ibid, vol. II, pp. 187 and 237.

<sup>368</sup> Jonathan Ward, *China-India Rivalry and the Border War of 1962*, pp. 400.

<sup>369</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Maharaja Mohan Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana on November 23, 1949. *Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.)*, vol. no. 31, NMML.

<sup>370</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru to the Prime Minister's Secretariat on 15 September 1951. C. Rajagopalachari Papers, Sub. File no. 64, NAI.

<sup>371</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 2 August 1952. *SWjN-SS*, vol. 19, pp. 694.

<sup>372</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru, Letter's for Chief Ministers*, vol. II, pp. 267.

<sup>373</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on 18 November 1950. *SWjN-SS*, vol. 15-II, pp. 343.

<sup>374</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru, Letter's for Chief Ministers*, vol. III, pp. 264.

regarding Chinese maps that showed its southern boundary extending up to the Brahmaputra River in Assam, Nehru maintained that the McMahon Line clearly defined India's North-East frontier and "map or no map... [India would] not allow anyone to cross it".<sup>375</sup>

Indian elites feared that the PRC's commitment to China's previous international agreements, especially those it termed as "unequal treaties," was unreliable.<sup>376</sup> India's Ambassador to China, K.M. Panikkar observed that the Chinese had not ratified the Simla Convention, and its occupation of Tibet could mean an "immediate revival of claims against Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, and also the denunciation of the McMahon line".<sup>377</sup> The Common Programme of the PRC in 1950 had explicitly stated that "all treaties concluded between the Kuomintang and foreign governments [would] be examined by the Central People's Government, who [would] recognise or abrogate, refuse or renew them according to their contents".<sup>378</sup> Understandably, these declarations—while not an outright repudiation—generated misgivings in New Delhi with respect to China's acceptance of the McMahon Line. Even after the 17-point Sino-Tibetan Agreement was reached, reports from the Indian Trade Mission in Lhasa continued to relay China's "vicious frontier revisionist propaganda" amongst local populations in Tibet, which included an avowal to liberate Tibetan speaking peoples on India's side of the border in Ladakh and Tawang.<sup>379</sup> Meanwhile, Nehru was growing suspicious of Zhou's "silence about [the border]"<sup>380</sup> as alarming reports of PLA troops concentrating in Tibet kept trickling in.<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Background Material on China from S. Sen to V.L. Pandit on July 19, 1952. V.L. Pandit Papers (II instalment), Sub. File no. 19, NAI.

<sup>376</sup> Dong Wang, "The Discourse of Unequal Treaties in Modern China," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 3 (2003), pp. 399-425.

<sup>377</sup> Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India*, pp. 230.

<sup>378</sup> A Copy of The Summary Programme of The Chinese Communist Government on April 18, 1950. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.), vol. no. 42 (I), NMML.

<sup>379</sup> India's Mission in Lhasa to MEA on 28 November 1951. Avtar Singh Bhasin [henceforth ASB] (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 621.

<sup>380</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to K.M. Panikkar on 16 June 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 724.

<sup>381</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's to Chief Ministers on 1 November 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 426.

To defend India's North-East frontier several policy changes were put into motion. Most prominently, India persevered with the belated British policy of physically occupying areas south of the McMahon Line and redispersed the Assam Rifles near important mountain passes. India wanted to offer *faits accomplis* of its own. It was believed that once these disputed areas had been occupied a foreign power could only dislodge them at the risk of war breaking out.<sup>382</sup> The clearest indication of India's changing policy on the border came with the decision to occupy Tawang in 1951. This was considered vital from a national security viewpoint, not merely because this reinforced India's territorial claim, but also since "one of the easiest routes into Bhutan from Tibet [ran] through Tawang".<sup>383</sup> When the Tibetans protested against India's move, the Indian Mission in Lhasa informed them that "if [India] allowed the position to remain fluid, as in the past, the area would be lost to the Chinese". After reassuring the Kashag that local Buddhist practices would not be interfered with, the Indian Agent reiterated that the occupation of Tawang was "imperative...in sheer self-defence to ensure the immunity of [India's] international frontiers".<sup>384</sup> India refused to play the waiting game anymore.

A second source of fear were the ambiguities produced by decolonisation in relation to its Himalayan border states, which New Delhi considered to be part of its sphere of influence. India's constitutional ties *vis-à-vis* Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan and the retention of colonial treaty rights and obligations were placed under reconsideration near the end of the Raj. Based on an understanding that suzerain privileges over frontier protectorates would not "automatically" devolve on to India after the collapse of British Paramountcy, fresh treaties with these border states were signed that could secure their legal transference.<sup>385</sup> In this moment of transition, Indian leaders were wary of the PRC's intentions and ability to exploit India's waning control in

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<sup>382</sup> Note on North-East Frontier prepared by N.K. Rustomji in December 1950. N.K. Rustomji papers, Sub. File no. 2, NMML.

<sup>383</sup> Indian Political Officer in Sikkim to the Indian Trade Agent in Yatung, Tibet on March 17, 1951. Ministry of External Affairs, File no. MEA 18(c)51/1951, NAI.

<sup>384</sup> Indian Mission in Lhasa to MEA on March 16, 1951. Ministry of External Affairs, File no. MEA 18(c)51/1951, NAI.

<sup>385</sup> Note of the Political Department no. 4558-CA/46 on June 6, 1946. External Affairs Department, File no. 202(2)-CA/46, NAI.

these border states. China, they believed, had long assumed that “Mongolian peoples that border[ed] on her own and the Tibetan frontiers, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and even Burma [were] within her natural sphere”.<sup>386</sup> Evidence for “shadowy claims” to these areas were found in reproductions of old KMT maps that showed Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Assam Tribal Territory, as well as the plains in Assam approaching river Brahmaputra as Chinese territory.<sup>387</sup> The Tibetans consistently relayed messages to the Indian mission in Lhasa of “Chinese plans [to occupy] Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan”.<sup>388</sup> After the signing of the 1950 friendship treaty with Nepal, Nehru defiantly stated in parliament: “apart from our sympathetic interest in Nepal, we are also interested in the security of our own country...we cannot allow that barrier to be penetrated because it is also the principal barrier to India”.<sup>389</sup> Nepal would later receive a small Indian military mission, headed by Major General Y.S. Paranjpe, to help it reorganise and train its defence forces.<sup>390</sup>

A third source of fear was the prospect of International Communism subverting the “reactionary” Indian National Congress’ (INC) regime through insurrection and revolution. This included both, the possibility of “guerrilla bands, irregulars or fifth columnists” infiltrating India’s highly porous North-East frontier along with the possibility of China and Soviet Union providing direct material support to the Communist Party of India (CPI), which could stir trouble and provoke local discontent. Such Communist tactics had already been deployed in Central, East, and South-East Asia at the time.<sup>391</sup> In 1952, after the CPI emerged as the principal opposition party in India, the Indian government found that communist propaganda

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<sup>386</sup> Olaf Caroe, “The Mongolian Fringe”. Note written on January 18, 1940. External Affairs Department, File No. 25(3)-NEF/46, NAI.

<sup>387</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Thakin Nu on 30 December 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 15-II, pp. 546.

<sup>388</sup> India’s mission in Lhasa to MEA on 5 September 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 763.

<sup>389</sup> John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (London: University of Washington Press, 2001), pp. 141.

<sup>390</sup> Four to Five battalions of the Nepal Army were trained. See Jawaharlal Nehru to M.P.P. Koirala on 15 August 1953. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 462.

<sup>391</sup> Proceedings of the meeting of the standing committee of the legislature for the MEA held on December 17, 1949. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.), vol. no. 33, NMML.

was primarily being funded “from the sale of pro-communist books sent in gratis from Moscow”.<sup>392</sup> Nehru consequently indicted International Communism for being expansionist, opposed to nationalism, and violent and immoral.<sup>393</sup> Ironically, his decision to provide early recognition to the Communist government in China was also motivated by such considerations. In a letter to India’s ambassador to the US at the time, V.L. Pandit, Nehru explained: “I am quite convinced that if we stood up for the bankrupt [KMT] Government in China now, we would be condemned and this would give a fillip to communism in India”.<sup>394</sup> Considering the difficulties of patrolling a long border with its mountainous topography and hostile weather, “there [was] always a possibility of trouble-makers coming through or infiltrating into India”.<sup>395</sup> In fact, in most areas up to the Karakoram Pass, even patrol parties looking for signs of infiltration could only be sent in the summer months. As US Ambassador to India, Loy Henderson informed Washington, these difficulties made it “impossible for the Government of India, even if it had the best intentions in the world, to prevent the entry of Communist agents from Tibet into India”.<sup>396</sup>

The Communist revolution was being exported to India. Panikkar flagged an article in the Russian state newspaper *Pravda* on October 24, 1951, which attacked India’s “semi-colonial” character and expressed hope that the CPI would be able correct this by building a “democratic anti-imperialist united front”. The article argued that the “thought of Mao” was suitable for application of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism to the non-Communist countries of Asia.<sup>397</sup> It was widely reported that “Indian Communists [had] been told, by numerous Communist publications, as well as the Cominform, in clear unambiguous words, to follow the China way to

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<sup>392</sup> US Secretary of State, Memorandum of Conversation, [Washington] June 9, 1952.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v11p2/d1011>.

<sup>393</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s press conference in New Delhi on 7 July 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 14-II, pp. 324.

<sup>394</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to V.L. Pandit on July 1, 1949. V.L. Pandit Papers (I instalment), Correspondence with Jawaharlal Nehru, NMML.

<sup>395</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru, Letter’s for Chief Ministers*, vol. II pp. 281.

<sup>396</sup> Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the US Secretary of State New Delhi, on April 12, 1949. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1949v09/d1026>.

<sup>397</sup> K.M. Panikkar to V.L. Pandit on January 24, 1952. V.L. Pandit Papers (II instalment), Sub. File no. 24, NMML.

victory...The occupation of Tibet by the Chinese Communists [now opened] up vast possibilities for creating internal disorders and disruptions within India”.<sup>398</sup> In 1952, Nehru candidly told the Director of Intelligence Bureau (IB), B.N. Mullik, that one of the main “enemies whom India would have to confront would be...China, which would utilise international Communism for its own ends”.<sup>399</sup> For the first time therefore, bureaucratic procedure and rigid boundaries began to disrupt the fluidity of the Indo-Tibetan region. Formal registration processes, travel permits, and special certificates were introduced in areas such as Sikkim and Kalimpong to distinguish Tibetan traders from potential Communist infiltrators.<sup>400</sup> A joint IB-Army check-post was also opened on the Leh-Sinkiang route for intelligence gathering.<sup>401</sup> On the domestic front, West Bengal was considered the most vulnerable Indian state as “more than three-fourths of the Chinese nationals in India lived [there] and because the routes from Burma and Sikkim passed through [it]”. Consequently, the IB strengthened Security Control Organisations in Calcutta and Bombay and opened up offices in the Darjeeling-Kalimpong-Gangtok area to prevent international espionage and subversive Communist activities.<sup>402</sup> New Delhi’s resolve to address the security challenges arising out of PRC occupation of Tibet was unmistakable.

#### *How China Saw India*

On the Chinese side too, fears followed from the initial encounter with India in Tibet. The first were provoked by what was seen as India’s obstruction of China’s plans to occupy Tibet. Mao’s decision to expedite Tibet’s liberation in 1950 was influenced by such considerations. He informed Stalin on December 9, 1949, that “since both India and the United States were making plans about Tibet, determination on liberation of Tibet [needed to] be made. An early

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<sup>398</sup> States Ministry’s note on New Problems of Internal Security caused by Chinese Occupation of Tibet. Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel Correspondence*, vol. X, pp. 341.

<sup>399</sup> B.N. Mullik, *The Chinese Betrayal*, pp. 102.

<sup>400</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on the registration of Tibetans entering India on 29 April 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 685.

<sup>401</sup> B.N. Mullik, *The Chinese Betrayal*, pp. 105.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 141.

military advance into Tibet [was] better than a late one lest a long night bring about many dreams”.<sup>403</sup> Later, when India protested China’s military advance into Tibet, fears relating to India’s “bourgeois” regime wanting to compromise Chinese security interests deepened. China complained that India had all along accepted Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. But as “the Chinese Government actually exercised its sovereignty rights...the Indian Government attempted to influence and obstruct the exercise of its sovereignty rights in Tibet”.<sup>404</sup> This was not mere bluster. An internal report of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CMFA) confirmed that negotiations with India over Tibet in 1950 disclosed “the Indian government’s intention to interfere with [China’s] internal affairs, prevent [the] liberation of Tibet, and maintain Indian and capitalist privileges in Tibet”. At first, the report claimed, India pretended to have no ambitions in Tibet, then it attempted to prevent Chinese liberation under the guise of peaceful settlement, and finally “publicly expressed its intention to interfere with [China’s] internal affairs”.<sup>405</sup> Despite repeated reassurances to the contrary, the PRC rebuked India for interfering in China’s domestic matters and accused it of being “affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet”.<sup>406</sup>

As Mao explained to the Dalai Lama in 1954, if any anti-China imperialist forces established themselves in Tibet, it could endanger China’s hold over interior regions such as Sichuan and Yunnan, while also making Xinjiang’s position tenuous.<sup>407</sup> But these fears could not be justified in the absence of reservations related to India’s role in the region. When Indian Ambassador Panikkar brought up the unwarranted nature of China’s military action in Tibet, considering

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<sup>403</sup> Xiaoyuan Liu, *To the End of Revolution: The Chinese Communist Party and Tibet, 1949-1959* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

<sup>404</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on India’s policy regarding China and Tibet on 18 November 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 15-II, pp. 342.

<sup>405</sup> Cable from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, “Report on Negotiations regarding the Tibet issue between China and India,” November 24, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 105-00011-02, 42-44. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114749>.

<sup>406</sup> Note of the Government of China on 30 October 1950. *Treaties Signed, and Letter, Notes and Memoranda Exchanged between the Governments of India and China (1949-1959)*. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, Sub. File no. 929, NMML.

<sup>407</sup> John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest*, pp. 36.

India was the only state represented in Lhasa and bordering Tibet, Chinese officials maintained a telling silence.<sup>408</sup> However, China's state-controlled media was more direct. On 9 September 1949, *Radio Beijing* called on Tibetans to rise up against the plot of the British and American imperialists as well as their "lackey Nehru of India" to hinder the long-awaited liberation of Tibet and to keep it under foreign domination. It unequivocally declared that "British, American and Indian aggressors would receive their due punishment if they dared to start any provocation" in Tibet.<sup>409</sup> Subsequently, a *People's Daily* editorial on 13 September 1949 queried whether India was about to declare suzerainty over Tibet as it had over Bhutan.<sup>410</sup> Chinese sources at the time accused India's representative in Lhasa of encouraging Tibetans to undertake military deployments to block the PLA's advance in Qinghai and Gansu.<sup>411</sup>

Four events formed the basis for the PRC's adverse view of India. First was the Tibetan delegation's unintended and prolonged sojourn in New Delhi. The delegation was supposed to travel to Beijing to re-negotiate Tibet's status under Communist China, but their plans were hindered due to Tibetan concerns over facing coercion if negotiations took place on Chinese soil instead of more neutral ground.<sup>412</sup> The PRC however, suspected "outside instigations". Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Hanfu claimed that the Chinese Government had "proofs that outside influences hostile to China were exercising influence in Tibet...and the delays of the local authorities of Tibet were due to these foreign influences".<sup>413</sup> Second, after the fall of the Kuomintang government in Nanking, the Tibetans expelled China's representatives from Lhasa and evacuated the Chinese mission (known as the "Han expulsion incident"). This affront was also partly attributed to India's backing, which was seen as part of a larger Anglo-American plot

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<sup>408</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to K.M. Panikkar on 25 October 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 15-I, pp. 444.

<sup>409</sup> India's embassy in China to MEA on 5 September 1949. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 132.

<sup>410</sup> ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. XXXI.

<sup>411</sup> John. W. Garver, *Protracted Conflict*, pp. 62.

<sup>412</sup> Shakabpa, leader of the Tibetan delegation, informed Nehru. India's Mission in Lhasa to MEA on 16 October 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 365.

<sup>413</sup> India's Embassy in China to MEA on 30 October 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 413.

to deny the PRC control over Tibet and Taiwan.<sup>414</sup> Third, Tibet decided to send goodwill missions to the US, Britain, India and Nepal to gain supporters and recognition for its independent status and to request aid. The Chinese Foreign Ministry described these missions as “illegal, traitorous” and a “puppet show directed by American imperialism and its accomplices who [want to invade] Tibet”. It believed any country who received these missions harboured hostile intentions towards it.<sup>415</sup> Finally, public and parliamentary sympathy in India for Tibet also became an annoyance for the PRC. The Chinese counsellor in India protested the celebration of Tibet Day in 1953, organised by parliamentarians such as N.G. Ranga. The Chinese held such instances as further evidence of India’s undercutting of its sovereignty in Tibet.<sup>416</sup>

Second, in addition to interference in Tibet, PRC officials believed India wanted to exploit China’s inadequate knowledge of imperialist privileges in Tibet and the Indo-Tibetan boundary to enforce unequal treaties. PRC fears related to India’s role in Tibet intersected with its resolve to end the period of “national humiliation”. India, they believed, strived to ensure a weak Tibet susceptible to Indian influence, as the British imperialists had done before. Zhou Enlai wrote to Zhang Jingwu, Committee Secretary of Tibet Autonomous Region, on 7 October 1953, to confirm his fears that India would use bilateral negotiations on commercial and trade relations to “have some benefit in Tibet”. Zhang responded that India was capitalising on China’s “temporary difficulties in Tibet”, particularly its inadequate understanding of the border problem to “gain benefits by offering a general solution to the Tibet issue”. Zhang highlighted that Nehru’s repeated public assertions of the McMahon Line as well as his dismissal of any territorial issues between India and China were a deceitful ploy to “force [China] into implicitly

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<sup>414</sup> MEA to Political Officer in Sikkim on 4 September 1949. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 131.

<sup>415</sup> Statement by the spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry regarding goodwill missions of Lhasa authorities on 20 January 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 244.

<sup>416</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Balvantray Mehta on 24 August 1953. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 482-483.

acknowledging and legitimizing [India's] occupation" of areas such as Tawang, and by consequence the Simla Agreement and the McMahon Line.<sup>417</sup>

Before Zhou accepted India's request to renegotiate India's commercial interests in Tibet, as per Zhang's advice, he conveyed China's refusal to accept any "special rights arising from the unequal treaties of the past". Zhou was only "prepared to negotiate a new and permanent relationship safeguarding [India's] legitimate interests". In Tibet, the Sino-Indian relationship "was a scar left by Britain...[and] its past aggression against China." Prior to the beginning of any negotiations on Tibet, Zhou demanded the conversion of India's trade mission in Lhasa into a Consul General and conferral of similar status on China's mission in Bombay, while also withdrawing India's troops stationed in Gyantse and Yatung and discontinuing garrison relief practices.<sup>418</sup> The PRC also waited for the PLA to reach the southern borders of Tibet and the establishment of a Military-Political Committee as well as a new Tibetan Foreign Affairs office before countenancing negotiations in 1954.<sup>419</sup> Similar to India's moves, China upgraded its road infrastructure and airfields in border areas and pushed troops to the farthest reaches of the Indo-Tibetan border such as the Chumbi valley as well as towards important border passes such as Nathu La.<sup>420</sup> In response to the challenges of patrolling the Indo-Tibetan boundary, China's border outposts were thinly manned and its troops were scattered in small detachments that were frequently on the move. This allowed them to concentrate in any place if confronted with a security threat from the Indian side.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Cable from Zhang Jingwu, 'On Issues of Relations between China and India in Tibet', October 21, 1953, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 105-00032-23, 76-81. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114754>.

<sup>418</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru, Letter's for Chief Ministers*, vol. III, pp. 74.

<sup>419</sup> Anton Harder, *Defining Independence in Cold War Asia: Sino-Indian relations, 1949-1962*. PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2015, pp. 90.

<sup>420</sup> Political Officer in Sikkim to MEA on 14 July 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, 738.

<sup>421</sup> India's mission in Lhasa to MEA on 13 February 1953., ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, 891.

Third, Beijing was unconvinced of India's non-aligned bona fides and perceived it to be a façade that concealed its Anglo-American leanings. India's non-alignment threatened the PRC's worldview by providing an alternative model for post-imperial statehood. For example, in 1949, Chinese media framed Nehru's visit to the US as an anti-Communist meeting and he was frequently referred to as the "American running dog" or a "thoroughly loyal servant of US imperialists".<sup>422</sup> The *Beijing Radio* broadcasted a misleading claim that as per an Indo-US deal on imperialist expansion into territories under the PRC's authority, rifles, machine guns, and other war materials were being transported to Tibet from the port of Calcutta.<sup>423</sup> Chinese media outlets also exaggerated the US "economic stranglehold" on India. A despatch of the *Xinhua News Agency* claimed that a "Truman Four Point Plan Office" was being opened in India, which would allow the US to increase their investments, and monopolise the latter's "oil resources and smelting factories".<sup>424</sup>

These fears led the PRC to establish closer ties with the CPI, so that Communist India could also play a role "in the final destruction of international imperialism". Liu Shaoqi, Vice Chairman of the Central People's Government, once told Soviet diplomat P.F. Yudin that the CPI needed to be rescued from its deteriorating condition as this benefited "British and American imperialists." After World War II, there were 200,000 Communist members in India, but their numbers had dropped to 40,000 in 1950. He requested the Soviets to help China strengthen the CPI; they were to invite CPI representatives to Beijing or Moscow and "direct it onto the right path". Zhou in his subsequent meeting with Yudin also stressed the importance of the CPI in India.<sup>425</sup> Mao, in his letter to Communist B. T. Ranadive, similarly expressed his

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<sup>422</sup> India's embassy in China to MEA on 4 November 1949. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 163.

<sup>423</sup> Beijing Radio Broadcast on 13 May 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 277.

<sup>424</sup> Also cited report of US loans to Tata Steel and Iron Co. Ambassador Raghavan to foreign secretary R.K. Nehru on 20 February 1953. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 900.

<sup>425</sup> Report from PP. F. Yudin to I. V. Stalin on Meetings with the Leaders of the Communist Party of China, including Mao Zedong on 31 December 1950, January 20, 1951, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Published in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv N4* (2006): 15-19.  
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/122032>

commitment to the “unity and heroic struggle of the courageous” CPI. India, Mao forcefully claimed, would not “remain long under the yoke of the imperialists and their collaborators” and would soon “appear in the world as a member of the great family of socialism and Peoples’ Democracies just as free China”.<sup>426</sup> In the early years, under Soviet influence, proletarian internationalism strongly drove decision-makers in Beijing. The PRC sought to support revolutionary movements in China’s periphery (Vietnam, Korea, Burma etc.), as a means to enhance its security and influence.<sup>427</sup> On India in particular, Mao wrote that “under the long-standing influence of British imperialism, the bourgeoisie of India, of whom Nehru [was] the representative, [had] learned the ways of the imperialists...and he shamelessly [held] himself as the pillar of the anti-communist movement in Asia”.<sup>428</sup> Much like Chiang Kai-Shek, Nehru had become the bulwark of imperial interests in Asia for Mao.

In the early 1950s, both India and China were fearful of each other’s capacity to compromise their vital security interests. On the Indian side, fears were related to security challenges on India’s North-Eastern frontier, a compromise of India’s legitimate sphere of influence in Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan, and Communist subversion of the Indian state. On the other hand, Chinese leaders were fearful of Indian activities and intrigues in Tibet, which—in collusion with the Anglo-American bloc—could have potentially jeopardised the PRC’s plans to integrate Tibet into New China; India’s potential exploitation of the PRC’s inchoate understanding of the historical basis of the Indo-Tibetan boundaries to unilaterally impose unequal treaties; and non-alignment being a ruse that masked the Anglo-American allegiances of India’s bourgeois reactionary regime. However, as the next three sections will show, India and China did not straightforwardly exhibit balancing behaviour (i.e. alliances, containment, or arms racing), nor did they seek to manage their rivalry exclusively through coercion and deterrence. Instead, in

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<sup>426</sup> Mao, Zedong, *Selected Works of Tse-Tung*, vol. VII (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1961). <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-7/index.htm>.

<sup>427</sup> See Yang Kuisong, “The theory and implementation of the People’s Republic of China’s revolutionary diplomacy,” *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2009), pp. 127-45.

<sup>428</sup> Anton Harder, *Defining Independence in Cold War Asia*, pp. 55.

1954, Nehru and Zhou began a trusting phase, gradually transcending these framings. I now turn to the role of empathy in laying the foundation for this trust-building.

### **Empathic Capacity and Empathic Conveyance**

Despite their threat perceptions, Nehru and Indian diplomats such as V.K. Krishna Menon, V.L. Pandit, T.N. Kaul and K.M. Panikkar—who also exercised outsized influence on India’s China policy—frequently provided empathetic readings of the PRC’s military motives. The PRC was not seen as an expansionist power nor an existential foe. Instead, it was believed that its “aggressive tendencies” were driven by fears derivative of the social meanings and threats produced by the emerging Cold War and US intervention in the Far East. Indian elites did not have blind faith in New China, but they were also unwilling to yield to fatalist interpretations of security competition. Ambassador Panikkar, writing to India’s Home Minister C.

Rajagopalachari (shortly after the death of the former incumbent, Patel) recognised that Tibet was the “most sensitive” issue on Communist China’s domestic agenda akin to India’s anxieties over the integration of Hyderabad.<sup>429</sup> The PRC’s decision to disclaim a peaceful settlement in favour of military invasion in Tibet was, he believed, due to fears related to “American and Allied troops in Korea and the war coming nearer to the Manchurian frontier”. In case of an extended war, China could ill-afford to have an “unfriendly government” in Tibet allowing hostile foreign powers to use it as a base for “political intrigue and [military] operations” against it.<sup>430</sup> Panikkar argued that US support to Nationalists in Taiwan, the existence of an American air base in Bangkok, a refusal to accept PRC’s legitimacy at the UN, and finally, the extension of the Korean War, had convinced the PRC of US determination to invade China.<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> Panikkar pointed out that Hyderabad also used to have an independent Agent-General in London.

<sup>430</sup> K.M. Panikkar to C. Rajagopalachari on 14 November 1950. C. Rajagopalachari Papers, VI-XII Instalments, File no. 17, NMML.

<sup>431</sup> K.M. Panikkar to Jawaharlal Nehru on 1 November 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 418.

Secretary General of India's MEA, G.S. Bajpai, contested Panikkar's views. He claimed that China's justification for liberating Tibet was "utterly devoid of foundation". Since India was China's only neighbour on the Tibetan border its military moves signalled an underlying "mistrust" of India.<sup>432</sup> Bajpai went as far as to compare Panikkar to British Diplomat Neville Henderson who had once refused to see the dangers of Hitler's designs on Czechoslovakia.<sup>433</sup> S. Sinha, India's former Trade Agent in Lhasa, similarly referred to China's fear of Anglo-American influence as a "mental fiction and a convenient excuse" for its "lust for conquest".<sup>434</sup> China's purpose, he proceeded, was to "bring weaker nations on her periphery within her active domination".<sup>435</sup> The annual report from Lhasa in 1952 ominously concluded: "the irredentist spirit shown by the Chinese in Tibet can only indicate that they would not hesitate to take advantage [of India], militarily".<sup>436</sup> The most scathing indictment had come from Patel. He branded China a "thoroughly determined unscrupulous, and unreliable power" that henceforth needed to be treated with the "greatest suspicion" and "a certain amount of hostility". India could not be friendly with China as they had "hideous designs of ideological and even political conquest". The "perfidious" Chinese, in his opinion, had attempted to deceive the Indians by instilling in Panikkar a "false sense of confidence" in their desire to resolve the Tibetan issue peacefully. Any conciliatory efforts with China would therefore be "mistaken for weakness or exploited". India could go no further, Patel warned, in reassuring the PRC of its "good intentions".<sup>437</sup>

Although both these viewpoints influenced Nehru's decision-making to some extent, empathy held prominent sway. Like Bajpai, Nehru found Panikkar's representations in Beijing to be

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<sup>432</sup> Note by G.S. Bajpai on 24 October 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 384.

<sup>433</sup> Note by G.S. Bajpai on 27 October 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 387.

<sup>434</sup> India's mission in Lhasa to MEA on October 27, 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 400.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 401.

<sup>436</sup> Annual report for 1952, Consulate General of India, Lhasa. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 808.

<sup>437</sup> Vallabhbhai Patel to G.S. Bajpai on 4 November 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, 439-442.

“weak and apologetic”.<sup>438</sup> India had deliberately sent a “leftist Ambassador” to curry favour with the PRC and Nehru was familiar with Panikkar’s tendency to “dangerously idealize the Chinese scene”.<sup>439</sup> China’s military invasion of Tibet was an “act of discourtesy” that had dealt a blow to India’s “new-born attempts at friendship” and had left Nehru with a “feeling of resentment” as well as a “certain apprehension”.<sup>440</sup> The use of “coercion and armed force” was derisory when a peaceful settlement was attainable and the Tibetans offered little to no resistance. Nehru wondered if PRC cared so little for India’s friendship. “Was [China] really in a mood for aggressive tactics as not to care for any consequences?” It was difficult, he acknowledged, to “peep into the minds” of decision-makers during moments of crisis when “they feared their own security threatened”. Similar to Panikkar, Nehru believed that the general war situation in the Far East, UN forces in Korea crossing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and accounts of repeated bombings of Manchurian towns had made the Chinese “full of fear, apprehension, and resentment against those real or fancied enemies”, forcing them on the warpath in Tibet.<sup>441</sup> Trying to persuade Rajagopalachari of the merits of his China policy, he argued:

If we can put ourselves in China’s [place] and see Chiang-Kai-shek with the powerful army sitting nearby to attack China, supported by the US, and war coming nearer [with] territories being bombed, then we can perhaps appreciate the temper and apprehension of the Chinese government... [such considerations] have to be borne in mind to understand why the Chinese government may have developed a state of mind bordering on fear, and fear leads to wrong action.<sup>442</sup>

Nehru did not believe China’s fears justified military actions in Tibet but they were nonetheless “real” and had influenced Mao’s decision making.<sup>443</sup> While the PRC’s policy was not dictated

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<sup>438</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to KM Panikkar on 27 October 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, 407.

<sup>439</sup> The Ambassador in India (Bowles) to the Secretary of State, New Delhi, November 7, 1951. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v06p2/d488>.

<sup>440</sup> Nehru to Chief Ministers, in G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru letters to Chief Ministers*, vol. II, pp. 395.

<sup>441</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru letters to Chief Ministers*, vol. II, pp. 238.

<sup>442</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C Rajagopalachari on 1 November 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. 1, 415.

<sup>443</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C. Rajagopalachari on 1 November 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 15-II, pp. 339.

by Moscow, much of its information came through Soviet sources. So, it was unsurprising to see their agreement with Moscow's view that Anglo-American intrigues conspired "to move Tibet into an anti-communist bloc or sphere of influence".<sup>444</sup> The accusation that India was part of this conspiracy and under British influence was understandable too. Until 1949, H. Richardson, India's representative in Lhasa had been a British Agent who was "violently anti-Chinese" and had "tried his best to incite Tibetans against China". Nehru also rejected charges of Chinese deception as "at no point did they modify their basic attitude towards Tibet and the desire to incorporate it more fully into China".<sup>445</sup> As he acknowledged to Rajagopalachari: "[India] may have deceived [herself]".<sup>446</sup>

Nehru was uncertain whether there would be peace between the two states or tension and conflict.<sup>447</sup> Only time could reveal "hidden corners of the Chinese mind" and India needed to prepare for an unpleasant future. But surrendering to inevitable Chinese expansionism he believed was "rather naïve". Especially in the long-run, the costs of enmity and defence of the Himalayan frontier would be unbearable for India. If a situation arose where India and China were "inveterately hostile" to each other, like France and Germany before the end of WWII then "there would be repeated wars bringing destruction to both".<sup>448</sup> He argued that it was only by "[giving] up this attitude of fear and apprehension in dealings with China" that India could pursue its national interest.<sup>449</sup> It is interesting to note that both Nehru and Bajpai drew on European parallels to justify their claims but drew very different historical lessons. For Bajpai, the Munich Analogy warned against appeasement. For Nehru, the World Wars were a cautionary tale demonstrating the excesses of power politics. Following on, Nehru tried to

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<sup>444</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's interview with Reuters diplomatic correspondent on 29 October 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 15, Part II, pp. 333-335, at pp. 334.

<sup>445</sup> Extract from Jawaharlal Nehru's note on India's policy towards East and South Asia on 8 November 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 452.

<sup>446</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C Rajagopalachari on 1 November 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. 1, 415.

<sup>447</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru letters to Chief Ministers*, vol. II, pp. 264.

<sup>448</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on India's policy regarding China and Tibet on 18 November 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. 1, pp. 461.

<sup>449</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's note to Secretary General on 19 March 1953. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 21, pp. 559.

understand how India and China could achieve “friendly relations without any threat to each other across their common border”.<sup>450</sup> In this respect, he placed the highest importance on developing mutual understanding with Beijing and moderating the ideological fundamentalism of the early Cold War period. India and China needed to move beyond narrow nationalist grooves that regarded their “doxy [as] orthodoxy; [and] other doxies heterodoxy”.<sup>451</sup> While Indian forces were instructed to be prepared for all contingencies, “the real protection [Nehru sought], was some kind of understanding of China”.<sup>452</sup>

Despite an awareness that any sign of “weakness or surrender” to China would “obviously be fatal”<sup>453</sup> and that a “friendly approach” could not mask the “inner conflicts, frictions, and suspicions of each other”<sup>454</sup>, the projection of empathy encouraged Nehru to consider assurances as a vital part of any long-term strategy to safeguard India’s security. Nehru wanted to offer India’s “cautious friendship” to China. This meant strictly maintaining “India’s dignity and not submitting to any affront, while generally being cooperative”.<sup>455</sup> He wanted to be “friendly” as well as “firm” on vital interests such as the McMahon Line. Consequently, as India undertook significant measures to strengthen its border security, it simultaneously sought to reassure the Chinese. For example, Nehru opposed the build-up of any anti-China military alliance in Asia as this could be considered a “hostile act” and make China “distrust” India.<sup>456</sup> In 1950, he also refused India’s participation in the Philippines-led South-East Asia Conference and turned down a proposal for a defence pact between India, Ceylon, Pakistan and Burma. China, Nehru fretted, might “think it [was] aimed against her” and consequently these pacts could instigate “trouble at the frontiers” and surrender a “common understanding and common

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<sup>450</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru, Letters to his Chief Ministers*, vol. II, pp. 282.

<sup>451</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru, Letters to his Chief Ministers*, vol. II, pp. 523.

<sup>452</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on India’s policy regarding China and Tibet on 18 November 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. 1, pp. 462.

<sup>453</sup> Note prepared for Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech at the Commonwealth Conference in January 1950, J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 34, NMML.

<sup>454</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Thakin Nu, January 7, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, file no. 34, NMML.

<sup>455</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to President Sukarno of Indonesia on December 22, 1949. J.N. (S.G.) papers, File no. 33, NMML.

<sup>456</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to M.A. Rauf on 30 December 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 15-II, pp. 547.

purpose” with China that could “induce [the PRC] to keep within their [territorial] limits”.<sup>457</sup> India would likewise reject the US offer to aid Tibetan resistance against PRC occupation.<sup>458</sup>

China reciprocated India’s conciliatory signals with counter-reassurances. After occupying Tibet, Mao did not ask for the immediate withdrawal of India’s trade agents or military escorts as was anticipated in New Delhi.<sup>459</sup> He assured Panikkar that China did not have “aggressive intentions towards anybody...least of all towards India”.<sup>460</sup> In fact, to address Nehru’s fears, Mao left only 3,000 PLA troops in Chamdo during the winter of 1951, postponed the takeover of Lhasa, and re-stationed PLA’s main force back in Ganzi.<sup>461</sup> Later that year, when T.N. Kaul confronted China’s Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Hanfu with reports of Chinese military redeployments on the Tibetan frontier,<sup>462</sup> Zhang stressed that “all issues between both countries [could] be settled through normal diplomatic approaches” and these were rumours fabricated by capitalist forces “to undermine the friendly relationships between China and India”. Similar to India’s reinforcements, China had deployed the troops merely to “safeguard [the] frontier”.<sup>463</sup> Kaul was also told that Chinese maps showing territorial claims on Indian territories were reproductions of old Kuomintang maps and the PRC had not had enough time to revise them.<sup>464</sup> P.N. Haksar would later inform US Ambassador to India Chester Bowles that India had received Chinese assurances of respect for present boundary and the PRC was observing them scrupulously thus far.<sup>465</sup> In fact, after the initial bitterness surrounding the China’s

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<sup>457</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Thakin Nu, January 7, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, file no. 34, NMML.

<sup>458</sup> V.L. Pandit to Jawaharlal Nehru on November 1, 1950. V.L. Pandit papers, I instalment, Correspondence with Nehru, NMML.

<sup>459</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Thakin Nu on 30 December 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 15-II, pp. 546.

<sup>460</sup> India’s embassy in Beijing to MEE on 20 May 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 280.

<sup>461</sup> Anton Harder, *Defining Independence in Cold War Asia*, pp. 78.

<sup>462</sup> December 1950 Dispatches from Delhi, Gangtok and Lhasa (Source: JN Collection, NMML). <https://www.claudearpi.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/5012-December-Dispatches.pdf>

<sup>463</sup> Meeting Minutes between Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Hanfu and Indian Commissioner T.N. Kaul, November 27, 1951, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114750>.

<sup>464</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s Press Conference in New Delhi on 3 November 1951. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 608.

<sup>465</sup> Ambassador in India (Bowles) to the US Secretary of State New Delhi, December 3, 1951. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v07p2/d233>.

occupation of Tibet had dissipated, Panikkar—based on private interviews with PLA’s Commander-in-Chief Zhu De and Marshal Li Jishen—regularly reported China’s desire to establish friendship and closer ties with India.<sup>466</sup> During this period, China also became a major source of aid during India’s food grain crisis. An agreement to purchase rice from China against the supply of jute was signed on 3 January 1951.<sup>467</sup> Later, on 26 April, China announced it would supply 50,000 tons of rice by the end of June, and on 22 May she agreed to a further supply of 50,000 tons of millet within six months as a gesture of friendship.<sup>468</sup>

However, China’s conciliatory moves appeared not to be motivated by empathy and there were two instrumental logics at play. First, PRC leaders knew they needed India’s goodwill to achieve their foreign policy objectives on several international issues; admission to the UN, repatriation of PoWs in the Korea, negotiations on Indochina, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, stability in Tibet, as well as the desire to build a security perimeter of friendly states. Zhou did not follow all of Zhang’s suggestions mentioned earlier because China was “actively seeking friendship along the Himalayas” and wanted to “put India at ease”.<sup>469</sup> As Ward argues, at this time, the PRC saw India as an essential partner in building “an international atmosphere congenial to the progress of the Chinese revolution and the construction of the New China”.<sup>470</sup> In this effort, reassurances were vital to overcome the feeling of suspicion and fear that pervaded Asia and to defeat the West’s economic and political isolation of China. After all, as Panikkar once informed Zhou, the PRC’s propaganda machine, which closely followed a Soviet-inspired chauvinistic and exceptionalist tone, had made even favourably-disposed states apprehensive about Chinese motives.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on May 30, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, file no. 45-II, NMML.

<sup>467</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru letters to Chief Ministers*, vol. II, pp. 210.

<sup>468</sup> India had asked for 50,000 tons of food grains, the shipping of which had been arranged, but that not being enough, a contract between the Indian and the Chinese Governments for the supply by China of 100,000 metric tons of rice to India was signed on 26 May 1951. Ibid, pp. 378.

<sup>469</sup> Xiaoyuan Liu, “Friend or Foe: India as Perceived by Beijing’s Foreign Policy Analysts in the 1950s,” *China Review*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2015), pp. 117-43.

<sup>470</sup> Jonathan Ward, *China-India Rivalry and the Border War of 1962*, pp. 5.

<sup>471</sup> India’s Embassy in Beijing to Jawaharlal Nehru on 3 September 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 335.

Second, China wanted to use the force of nationalism and decolonisation to counter US hegemony in Asia. If the PRC built friendly relations with former colonies “in [China’s] interest”, it could work towards sharpening their contradictions ... [with] imperialist metropolises.<sup>472</sup> Zhou writing to the PRC after the Geneva Conference in 1954 expressed his desire to visit India “to conduct preparation work for signing some form of Asian peace treaty [which could] strike a blow at the United States’ conspiracy to organize a Southeast Asia invasive bloc”.<sup>473</sup> On his part, Nehru—in light of US military aid to Pakistan in 1954—assiduously worked with Zhou to de-legitimise SEATO and supported the trusteeship of Laos and Cambodia as “neutral” countries rather than “military bases for any foreign countries”.<sup>474</sup> Mao also knew that maintaining India, Burma, and Indonesia’s “independent position” was a priority for China as this significantly undermined the legitimacy of American interventions in the Far East. For this end, he was even willing to concede “leadership” of the Bandung Conference to Nehru and U Nu instead of vying for status.<sup>475</sup> This was a noteworthy concession considering China’s strategy was not driven merely by shrewd calculations of realpolitik, but also reflected an urge to establish China’s identity and central position as an Asian nation.<sup>476</sup>

Indian diplomats saw the transactional nature of Chinese reassurances. Panikkar disclosed that the PRC had finally realised the importance of cultivating friendship with India due to the urgency of securing its South and South-East Asian frontiers (mainly Nepal, Indonesia, and

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<sup>472</sup> From the Diary of N. V. Roshchin: Memorandum of Conversation with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai on 24 July 1951, July 27, 1951, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118735>.

<sup>473</sup> Cable from Zhou Enlai, ‘Premier’s Intentions and Plans to Visit India’, June 22, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112437>.

<sup>474</sup> Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Anthony Eden, July 13, 1954, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111069>.

<sup>475</sup> From the Journal of Ambassador Pavel Yudin: Record of Conversation with Mao Zedong on 8 January 1955, January 17, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111366>.

<sup>476</sup> See Chen Jian, *China’s Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

Burma) from “American designs”.<sup>477</sup> Similarly, in the midst of India-China bilateral negotiations on Tibet in 1954, N. Raghavan, who succeeded Panikkar as India’s Ambassador in China in 1952, wrote a detailed report highlighting “China’s attitude towards India...without the usual diplomatic window-dressing”. He contended that China’s policy was to: (1) remain friendly without being warm and cordial, (2) cultivate positive relations with the peoples of India as separate from Indian Government, (3) wait for the emergence of a People’s Government of India, (4) belittle India’s international and domestic achievements and project it as a capitalist country, and (5) make use of India and her independent role in international affairs. In contrast to the portrayal of fraternal relations with the Soviets, Raghavan observed, India was at best understood as a “half-way house” between capitalism and people’s democracy. Even Zhou’s fleeting reference to India’s constructive role in the Korean War armistice negotiations during a public event was “blacked-out” in the official press release. He then cited a speech by a leading PRC official before a secret session of the Government Council in February 1953:

Indian Government...is a capitalist Government and to that extent, not reliable; India as she is today, cannot be considered as a friend, but is useful, as she is more or less certain to remain neutral in any conflict. As such, friendly relations are to be carefully maintained.<sup>478</sup>

Indian elites understood that the Chinese did not consider them reliable due to their non-communist regime type. But, India still remained a vital partner in world affairs due to its ability to act as a mediator, negotiator, and regional power. In fact, for most Western states like the US, Canada, France, or Britain, India was the only line of diplomatic communication for Beijing, which helped it discern external outlooks of Chinese actions and follow currents of world politics outside of Soviet sources. But, despite recognising China’s strategic imperatives, Indian elites used such dependencies and the transition in the PRC’s foreign policy towards “peaceful coexistence” as an opportunity to reform the bilateral relationship and to build trust.

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<sup>477</sup> India’s Embassy in Beijing to MEA on 7 February 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 644.

<sup>478</sup> Top Secret Note by N. Raghavan on Chinese attitudes towards India on March 18, 1954. J.N. (S.G.) papers, file no. 241-I, NMML.

In particular, Zhou shared Nehru's beliefs and was uniquely placed to reciprocate the latter's projection of empathy. He too believed that "as long as both sides [had] good will and [understood] each other...there [would always] be a path toward [a] solution". Diplomacy, Zhou told his aides before the Geneva Conference, required "mutual understanding, accommodating each other's needs, yielding to the other's reasonable demands, and showing consideration for each other's interests".<sup>479</sup>

Empathic conveyance first took place between India and China during Nehru's visit to Beijing in 1954, where he encouraged Zhou and Mao to view the coming of US military alliances to Asia through the lens of fear. While Nehru did not directly convey India's fears to China—as this could be seen as an expression of weakness—he raised them vicariously through the standpoint of smaller Asian countries. Nehru told Mao that "there was a certain amount of fear in the minds of smaller nations in Asia, fear of these two big and great countries, China in India". This fear could be "baseless", but nonetheless it did exist and undermined their regional security. Mao asked Nehru in response if this was a fear of "communist parties". Nehru clarified that the fear of smaller Asian states was a response to India and China's material power and size as well as "the activities of the communist parties". One way to reduce this fear, he suggested, was to apply the "Five Principles". Mao concurred.<sup>480</sup> He finally conceded to Nehru the possibility of Asian nations being driven by fear as this was becoming apparent in their alliance choices. Earlier the PRC had refused to take such a "tolerant attitude" towards China's Asian neighbours who had allowed "imperialism to make use of that country as a base that is unfriendly to China and from which to blockade China".<sup>481</sup> However, after this exchange with Nehru, fears of Asian states were taken seriously.<sup>482</sup> The PRC faulted the US for fabricating

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<sup>479</sup> Shu Guang-Zhang, "Constructing 'Peaceful Coexistence': China's Diplomacy toward the Geneva and Bandung Conferences, 1954-55," *Cold War History*, vol. 7, no. 4 (2007), pp. 509-28.

<sup>480</sup> Summary of Jawaharlal Nehru's talks with Mao Zedong on 19 October 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1276-1280.

<sup>481</sup> India's Embassy in Beijing to MEA on 7 February 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 640.

<sup>482</sup> See Chen Jian, "Bridging Revolution and Decolonization: The Bandung Discourse in China's Early Cold War Experience," *The Chinese Historical Review*, vol. 15, no. 2 (2008), pp. 207-241.

fears of Chinese aggression to legitimise its imperialist ambitions. As Zhou stated, “America had used threats, fear, and false accusations to create dread, to cause some countries, under fear, to be unable to not go along with it”.<sup>483</sup> But Mao and Zhou both agreed that these fears were real and needed to be addressed. Nehru had convinced them that the major difficulty in world politics was the “prevalence of fear and reactions to that all-pervading fear”.<sup>484</sup>

Shared empathy as security dilemma sensibility between Nehru and Zhou led to the inception of a joint political project in Asia, which sought to reassure these two rivals of each other’s intentions and smaller Asian countries more generally of their collective bona fides. At the heart of this project to construct an “Area of Peace” were Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence that were enshrined in a bilateral trade agreement in 1954. Not only was Nehru perceptive to the potential consequences of security competition and empathised with China’s military motives, he was also able to communicate his understanding to Mao and Zhou. The next section will now explain how the Five Principles, building on empathic conveyance, facilitated the process of building strategic trust between Nehru and Zhou.

### **Building Strategic Trust**

On December 31, 1953, an Indian delegation landed in Beijing to negotiate a new treaty that would modify India’s trade and commercial rights in Tibet. British India’s imperial privileges had become untenable once China had occupied Tibet in 1950. Before negotiations began, India had agreed to convert its mission in Lhasa into a Consul General, establish a Chinese mission in Bombay, and the withdrawal of troops stationed in Gyantse and Yatung. China had also rescinded its recognition of India’s Consulate in Kashgar on the grounds that Xinjiang was a territory closed to foreign missions.<sup>485</sup> But to regulate Indo-Tibetan trade, migration, and

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<sup>483</sup> Sulmaan Wasif Khan, “Cold War Co-operation: New Chinese Evidence on Jawaharlal Nehru’s 1954 Visit to Beijing,” *Cold War History*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2011), pp. 197-222.

<sup>484</sup> Statement by Jawaharlal Nehru in the Indian Parliament on his visit to China on 22 November 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1378.

<sup>485</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha on Sinkiang on 8 December 1953. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 986.

rights of pilgrims in light of these new realities, a more comprehensive treaty was still needed. Finally, on 29 April, 1954, an Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India was reached. Peculiarly however, the preamble to the agreement contained Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence that were to govern India and China's bilateral relations moving forward:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
2. Mutual non-aggression,
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs,
4. Equality and mutual benefit,
5. Peaceful co-existence.

Why were these principles incorporated into an unrelated treaty regulating Indo-Tibetan trade? Zhou first proposed these principles to the Indian delegation as the basis for talks on Tibet. He argued that there were bound to be problems between countries like India and China with a long common frontier, but based on these principles "all questions could be solved smoothly and speedily".<sup>486</sup> The Indian delegation welcomed these principles as Nehru had espoused them before, albeit not in the "itemized" fashion in which Zhou had.<sup>487</sup> The Five Principles were a way to formalise the assurances already in circulation leading up to the negotiations on Tibet. They addressed the mutual fears of India and China related to territorial sovereignty and interference in domestic affairs. Some of these had come to the fore during these negotiations too. India's delegation noted their Chinese counterpart's careful avoidance of any reference to Ladakh.<sup>488</sup> The latter declined any discussion of Ladakh on grounds of a settlement on Kashmir

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<sup>486</sup> N. Raghavan to MEA on 31 December 1953. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.), file no. 226-I, NMML.

<sup>487</sup> N. Raghavan to Jawaharlal Nehru on 8 January 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1000.

<sup>488</sup> N. Raghavan to MEA on 12 January 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.), file no. 228, NMML.

pending between India and Pakistan.<sup>489</sup> The Indian delegation's reference to "the Ladakh region of India" was simply left unopposed.<sup>490</sup> Also, the Chinese delegation did not demand a trade agency in Gangtok, Sikkim to avoid recognising it as a part of India.<sup>491</sup> The Indian delegation was also reluctant to concede a Chinese trade agency in Almora due to risk of communist infiltration<sup>492</sup> and deliberately eluded mentions of mountain passes such as Qara Tagh, Lanak La, and Domjar La and lakes such as Spanggur Tso in the disputed Aksai Chin region to avoid raising territorial questions.<sup>493</sup> Demchok was omitted altogether as both Indian and Chinese delegates claimed to be in actual possession of this territory. This was left to be verified later through an on-ground inspection.<sup>494</sup>

Still however, discussions over India's commercial rights in Tibet become a gateway for both sides to assess the other's motives without conceding or committing their interests. In fact, as Panikkar put it, India's commercial interests in Tibet were "not considerable".<sup>495</sup> Instead, it was the Five Principles that were vital from the standpoint of producing a shared understanding, framing expectations of future behaviour and initiating a process of trust-building that could sustain the relationship in the long-term. As T.N. Kaul argued, the agreement showed "how two great countries, left to themselves, [could] settle problems left as the legacy of imperialism in a friendly way to their mutual benefit".<sup>496</sup> This is why the Indian delegation insisted on including the Five Principles in the text of the agreement, instead of merely referencing them in the Joint

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<sup>489</sup> N. Raghavan to Jawaharlal Nehru on 20 January 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1024.

<sup>490</sup> N. Raghavan to R.K. Nehru on 11 February 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.), file no. 235-I, NMML.

<sup>491</sup> N. Raghavan to MEA on 11 January 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.), file no. 228, NMML.

<sup>492</sup> MEA to N. Raghavan on 16 January 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.), file no. 229-II, NMML.

<sup>493</sup> MEA to N. Raghavan on 25 January 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.), file no. 231, NMML.

<sup>494</sup> From N. Raghavan to R.K. Nehru on 23 February 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.), file no. 237-I, NMML.

<sup>495</sup> K.M. Panikkar to R.K. Nehru on 31 October 1953. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 968.

<sup>496</sup> Note on China prepared by T.N. Kaul on 28 March 1955. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1461.

Communique as was general practice for the Chinese.<sup>497</sup> I now explore in greater detail how the four sources of trust allowed the Five Principles to become the basis for building strategic trust between India and China.

### *Discrepant Information*

For Nehru, the first source of trust as discrepant information was the PRC's shifting signals in state media and willingness to embrace the Five Principles as part of its national identity. Indian diplomats had relayed to New Delhi that the Chinese media was a direct and effective mouthpiece of the PRC. Earlier, even when official messages were conciliatory, India had been treated with indifference or contempt. But now, much to New Delhi's surprise, things began to change. Ambassador Raghavan's report after Nehru's visit to Beijing in 1954 is indicative. There had, he argued, been a major revision in Chinese leaders' perceptions of India that "constituted a diplomatic triumph of the greatest possible significance" with far reaching consequences for India-China relations. Only time could tell how long-lasting these changes would be, but the general attitude of the PRC was "one of anxiety to cultivate not only correct and friendly but warm and cordial relations with India". The "sincerity" of the Indian Government had finally been recognised, making it unnecessary to await the "uncertain eventuality of the emergence of a People's government of India". In the Chinese press, India's achievements were no longer belittled and it was cast in a "sympathetic and helpful" light. The PRC did not try "to hold up to public gaze the evils of Indian ways of life" and instead considered it "useful and practicable to cultivate friendship and understanding despite differences in ideology". Raghavan also noticed that the *People's Daily* had previously tied every celebration and message from the PRC to Communism or anti-imperialism. Nehru's visit was "the first event of general interest devoid of party politics". Asia, Raghavan concluded, "had at last had come into her own".<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> Note from Jawaharlal Nehru to Prime Minister's Secretariat on 4 March 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (S.G.), file no. 238-II, NMML.

<sup>498</sup> Report by N. Raghavan on Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to China on 26 November 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1385.

Zhou reinforced China's commitment to the Five Principles at the Bandung Conference in 1955. He argued that if nations gave assurances not to commit aggression against each other and to interfere in each other's internal affairs, conditions would be created in international relations for peaceful coexistence. The people of these countries could then choose their own political system and way of life in accordance with their own will. This is why "China [had] affirmed the five principles as the guiding principles in [its] mutual relations".<sup>499</sup> Peaceful coexistence shifted the tenor of global politics during the Cold War. Instead of seeking to expound Communism, Zhou had claimed that different ideologies and social systems between states were an "objective reality" and did not imply inherent hostility or an incompatibility of interests.<sup>500</sup> The peoples of Asia had the right to determine their political beliefs and social systems free from foreign interference.<sup>501</sup> This was a noticeable shift from PRC's previous jarring propaganda in favour of international communism and proletariat revolutions in China's neighbourhood. For the first time, effusive praise was reserved for non-Communist Prime Ministers Ali Sastroamidjojo, Nehru and U Nu for helping promote the Five Principles in Asia with the status-enhancing implication that they had accepted Chinese norms of state conduct.<sup>502</sup>

PRC messaging—both at the elite and popular level—directly addressed Nehru's fears. For Nehru, the India-China Agreement on Tibet (1954) had two important aspects. One, indirectly the question of India's long frontier with China was somewhat settled, at least in the central sector; and two, the principles of non-aggression, non-interference and peaceful coexistence had been laid down.<sup>503</sup> The six mountain passes mentioned in the treaty for trade, namely Shipki La

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<sup>499</sup> Speech by Zhou Enlai at the plenary session of the Asian-African Conference on 19 April 1955. V.K. Krishna Menon papers, subject file no. 869, NMML.

<sup>500</sup> Supplementary speech by Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Conference on April 19 1955. V.K. Krishna Menon papers, subject file no. 869, NMML.

<sup>501</sup> Zhou Enlai's official report on the Asian African Conference published in PRC's Daily News Release on May 17 1955. V.K. Krishna Menon papers, subject file no. 870, NMML.

<sup>502</sup> Monthly report of the Embassy of India in China, Beijing, on April 30, 1955. MEA Papers, file no. MEA 19-R&I/55/1955, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

<sup>503</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 1 July 1954. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 26, pp. 558.

pass, Mana pass, Niti pass, Kungri Bingri pass, Darma pass and Lipu Lekh pass, matched India's view of the Sino-Indian border in the central sector. Because of this, in Nehru's opinion, India had gained "a friendly frontier and an implicit acceptance of that frontier".<sup>504</sup> Secondly, non-interference and non-aggression addressed India's two key concerns in the aftermath of China's occupation of Tibet. In particular, through a formal acceptance of the Five Principles, India had weakened the domestic threat of Communism. Nehru believed India had been successful in meeting the threat of domestic communism largely because of its policy towards China, which had "disconcerted and perplexed" the CPI. By recognising the PRC and "agreeing with them certain principles on which they could live together, the Communist will to create trouble in India had been undermined".<sup>505</sup>

During their talks in 1954, Nehru also raised concerns related to Chinese maps. China had accepted the Five Principles, but its maps still showed large portions of India and Burma's territories within Chinese boundaries. Nehru curtly asked Zhou: "what would China have felt if Tibet had been shown as forming part of India in certain maps?" All these issues continued to give rise to fear and misapprehensions. The maps, Zhou assured Nehru for a second time, were old KMT ones and the PRC had not been able to conduct necessary surveys to revise them. The KMT tampered with boundaries but the PRC had no such intentions. China had inherited similar boundary disputes with Mongolia and the Soviet Union where no precise territorial demarcations were accessible. With Burma, there were no settled boundaries even during the Manchu Regime. Zhou would also address Nehru's fears of communist subversion in Nepal. He agreed to India's special status and appointed its Ambassador in New Delhi as concurrent Ambassador to Kathmandu.<sup>506</sup> Nehru, after the talks ended, referred to Zhou's assurances as evidence that China "did not want war" and "did not wish to interfere in any way with local

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<sup>504</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to G.L. Mehta on 29 June 1954. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 26, pp. 356.

<sup>505</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Edwina Mountbatten on 2 November 1954. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 27, pp. 70.

<sup>506</sup> Minutes of Jawaharlal Nehru's talks with Zhou Enlai on 21 October 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) papers, file no. 36, NMML.

affairs”.<sup>507</sup> Nehru now believed there was no danger of communist infiltration in Nepal as long as relations between India and China were good.<sup>508</sup>

India’s publicity to the Five Principles was also unexpected for Zhou and addressed his fears of continuing Indian equities in Tibet. From the PRC’s perspective, the agreement provided *de jure* recognition of Chinese sovereignty in Tibet. While drafting the Agreement, the Chinese delegation was anxious to emphasize that the treaty related to India’s trade and commercial ties with the “Tibet region of China”. This meant the PRC could quash lingering Tibetan hopes of Indian aid against China and claim legality for its occupation. Also, ending India’s extra-territorial rights enhanced Beijing’s legitimacy amongst Tibetan elites. An additional source of confidence in India’s motives was that the two parties had arrived at the agreement without referring to any previous treaties or trade relations between British India, Tibet, and China that the PRC considered to be “one-sided and unequal”. The Indian delegation had renounced British India’s extra-territorial rights in Tibet that could be viewed as offenses against Chinese sovereignty. This meant giving up ownership of postal and telegraph services, public telephone installations, wireless communications equipment, and twelve rest houses. The trading rights secured by India and China across the Indo-Tibetan border were also strictly on the basis of equality and reciprocity.<sup>509</sup> As John W. Garver argues, “the symbols associated with the Five Principles were linked to extremely powerful emotions”. They formed the diplomatic and conceptual foundations on which the project of New China was based, signifying a historical break from the century of national humiliation suffered at the hands of European and Asian imperialists and the resurgence of China as a great power.<sup>510</sup>

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<sup>507</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s secret note on visit to China and Indochina on 14 November 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) papers, file no. 36, NMML.

<sup>508</sup> Exchange in the MEA between Jawaharlal Nehru and R.K. Nehru on 11 March 1955. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) papers, file no. 325-I, NMML.

<sup>509</sup> Report by T.N. Kaul on Tibet Talks on 12 May 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1113.

<sup>510</sup> Emphasis added. John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest*.

### *Personal Reputations*

A second source of trust was Nehru's reputation as a socialist relative to India's bourgeoisie and Zhou's reputation as a moderate with respect to Chinese Communism, which contributed to the credibility of their commitments towards peaceful coexistence of different regime types.

Panikkar had underscored to the MEA private information from reliable sources that indicated Zhou was working hard to build friendship with India and was "India's best friend in the Chinese Government". He claimed Zhou was not "dogmatic or wedded to theories" as other communists.<sup>511</sup> While his power in the CCP did not rival his fellow comrades, he did have a strong rapport with Mao and was considered the most "pragmatic" of the PRC leaders, someone India could work with.<sup>512</sup> As opposed to Mao, Zhou was seen as someone "who wanted to build up international contacts and cooperation in trade".<sup>513</sup> V.L. Pandit, leader of India's Cultural Delegation to China in 1952, similarly described Zhou as "a man who genuinely desired an honourable settlement" and conveyed an impression of "utter frankness". He also had a strong "Asian feeling", which was anti-colonial in a non-Marxist sense. Moreover, he valued India's goodwill and friendship, which could be used to forge a shared regional identity.<sup>514</sup> After meeting Zhou in Geneva, V.K. Krishna Menon even told Nehru that he was utterly convinced "the Chinese [had no] expansionist ideas".<sup>515</sup>

Nehru's view of Zhou seconded these impressions. In 1954, Nehru described his discussions with Zhou as "frank and friendly" and marked by an absence of "theories and ideologies underlying [their] respective political and economic structures". They had both agreed to "respect each other's viewpoints...without interference".<sup>516</sup> Nehru later told Krishna Menon that he left

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<sup>511</sup> K.M. Panikkar to Jawaharlal Nehru on 20 May 1950. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, 278.

<sup>512</sup> Note by K.M. Panikkar on personal equations in the People's Government of China on 2 October 1951. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 591.

<sup>513</sup> Joseph S. Sparks' record of conversation between Jawaharlal Nehru and US delegation to UNO. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 13, pp. 307.

<sup>514</sup> K.M. Panikkar to MEA on May 26, 1950. J.N. (S.G.) papers, file no. 45-II, NMML.

<sup>515</sup> Message of Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 21 June 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1168.

<sup>516</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on the implications of his China visit on 14 November 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1372.

Beijing “convinced of the correctness of the policy [India] had been pursuing”.<sup>517</sup> Earlier that year, he had described Zhou as having a “very Asian consciousness” and as someone who was “anxious to remove the apprehensions of smaller countries of Asia”.<sup>518</sup> There was “a lack of rigidity” in their talks and “the atmosphere was friendly”. “No one [could be a] judge of inner motives” Nehru acknowledged, but Zhou seemed “quite honest about what he said”. Just like him, Nehru believed Zhou too wanted peace to be able to develop his country economically. Zhou, in Nehru’s opinion, diverged from the “normal approach of the average Communist, which [was] full of certain slogans and clichés”. When Nehru raised the spectre of international communism and functioning of Communist parties in other countries, including in India, Zhou agreed that these fears needed to be allayed and derided “local Communist parties” as “foolish and [lacking] understanding”. The talks became so “friendly and uninhibited” that Nehru and Zhou covered a far wider variety of issues than was initially envisioned, including the prospect of joint cooperation on issues such as Korea, Indochina, Laos and Cambodia.<sup>519</sup> Of all the Chinese leaders, Nehru concluded, Zhou was “by far the easiest to get on with”.<sup>520</sup>

On the Chinese side, it was Nehru—as separate from the Government of India—who was seen as “a sincere friend” and “a reliable Asian statesman”.<sup>521</sup> Nehru’s autobiography and other written works in the pre-Independence period had publicly revealed his socialist leanings and Marxist view of history. This impression was further confirmed through interpersonal diplomacy. After his visit to Beijing in 1954, Zhou confessed that his relations with Nehru had “ceased to be purely formal” and the two leaders were now friends.<sup>522</sup> Mao would later inform

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<sup>517</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to V.K. Krishna Menon on 6 November 1954. V.K. Krishna Menon papers, Subject File no. 886, NMML.

<sup>518</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to V.K. Krishna Menon on June 28 1954. V.K. Krishna Menon papers, Subject File no. 914, NMML.

<sup>519</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru letters to Chief Ministers*, vol. III, pp. 590.

<sup>520</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Edwina Mountbatten on 2 November 1954. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 27, pp. 69.

<sup>521</sup> Chinese media reports cited in N. Raghavan’s note on China for Jawaharlal Nehru on 18 March 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1134.

<sup>522</sup> Minutes of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai on 21 October 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1355.

the Soviets that “Nehru [had become] a better ally for [China] than the British Labourites”.<sup>523</sup> The PRC believed he could be co-opted into its socialist revolution and would ultimately prove friendly to the Chinese agenda. As a report by the CMFA indicated, countries like India and Burma were now being seen as “neutral and peaceful” rather than imperialist puppets.<sup>524</sup> Chinese foreign policy had progressed towards a united front policy “of seeking common ground while reserving differences and friendly consultation”. This was only possible however, if the bona fides of neutral countries had been accepted. The PRC previously thought that most neutral states were “concealing [their] true position with regard to China” and were “actually maintaining an anti-China policy, orienting [themselves] with America and Britain”.<sup>525</sup> For instance, it instinctively assumed on issues such as the Korean War that India “[would] speak in agreement with England”.<sup>526</sup> All digressions were written off as India’s bourgeois leaders conceding to CPI-led domestic pressure. In 1955, Mao still claimed that the bourgeoisie in the colonies and semi-colonies were lined up against the Soviet bloc. Except, this view no longer applied to countries such as India who were “neither imperialist countries nor socialist countries, [but were] nationalist countries”.<sup>527</sup> Indeed, cooperation was now possible between the Communists and Nationalists in the struggle towards peaceful co-existence.<sup>528</sup> Leaders such as Nehru and peoples of “colonial and dependent countries” had become an important ally for China in the Cold War.

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<sup>523</sup> From the Journal of Pavel F. Yudin: Record of Conversation with Mao Zedong on 21 December 1955, December 21, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117834>.

<sup>524</sup> Report by the Chinese Foreign Ministry, ‘Some Existing Issues in and Suggestions for the Asia-Africa Conference’, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113179>.

<sup>525</sup> Minutes of Conversation between I.V. Stalin and Zhou Enlai, September 03, 1952, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111242>.

<sup>526</sup> Minutes of Conversation between I.V. Stalin and Zhou Enlai, September 19, 1952, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111247>.

<sup>527</sup> Mao Zedong, ‘Fight for National Independence and Do Away with Blind Worship of the West’, September 02, 1958, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China and the Party Literature Research Center, eds., Mao Zedong on Diplomacy (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1998), 260-263. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121205>.

<sup>528</sup> Report from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, ‘The Asian-African Conference’, April 01, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112893>.

The Asian Department of CMFA in its forty-page report on India in 1956 was for the first time “willing to highlight the progressive side of the Indian government and gave rather high marks to [Nehru’s] domestic policies”. While it continued to use Marxist class analysis to characterise the Indian regime, Nehru was now also seen as embodying a “bourgeois reformism”. His domestic policies and decision to nationalise large banks, pursue land reforms, and reduce foreign capital were seen as credible signals and drew the PRC’s praise as attempts to end feudal influence in India. In foreign affairs, India had outgrown its “illusions” about the US and was now in the “anti-imperialist” camp with China. Rather than a façade, the CMFA now saw non-alignment as a product of India’s “anticolonial tradition and powerful liberation movement” and Nehru’s “longing for a peaceful international environment”. India was “cooperating closely” with and beginning to lean towards the socialist camp due to its leadership of the “third region of peace”. Its cosponsoring of the Five Principles with China at Bandung was deemed a “landmark event” that marked “the maturity of Indian foreign policy”. Zhou-Nehru mutual visits and the formalisation of the Five Principles were also hailed as “great contributions to peace in Asia and the world” as the two states had “established a model of peaceful coexistence between states of different social systems”. Echoing Nikita Khrushchev, India was regarded as a great power and its “peace-neutrality” policy viewed as a positive force in Asian affairs. Moving forward, to overcome the “wavering character of the Indian bourgeoisie” and end the fears of Indian leaders with respect to China, the CMFA report recommended that China “solidify unity” with India through “reasonable, beneficial, and restrained struggles”.<sup>529</sup>

#### *Shared Weaknesses*

India and China faced three weaknesses in the 1950s that provided a perceived rational basis for the trusting relationship to develop that strengthened the credibility of Nehru and Zhou’s commitments. These were weak domestic economic conditions, rivals on other fronts, and

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<sup>529</sup> Xiaoyuan Liu, “Friend or Foe,” pp. 117-43.

difficulties in consolidation of rule in border areas such as Tibet and the North-East Frontier region. T.N. Kaul agreed that “mere declarations of principles” that had “been honoured more in their breach than in their observance in the past” could not be considered an effective guarantee for peace. But, above all, the “Chinese were realists”. They “could not afford to take risks on their borders where their predecessors were never able to exercise effective control”. Second, in light of on-going conflicts in the Far East, China would want to “strengthen her borders elsewhere, where she may apprehend threats from outside”. Third, the only safeguard for both countries “was peace and friendship”, which would afford them the opportunity to develop their border areas “socially and economically, rather than militarily”. India and China both needed peace to “rebuild their economies, to modernise their agriculture and to develop their industries”. In Kaul’s eyes, trust reposed by India in China was not based on sentiment but on “self-interest”.<sup>530</sup> After all, it was “physically impossible” to guard a 2100-mile long border. Only the Five Principles therefore, could lay to rest “various suspicions” aroused in both states by preceding events in Tibet as it had become self-evident that neither state had the “means or the necessity to launch an attack on the other’s territory”.<sup>531</sup> The overbearing task of domestic consolidation and risks of external aggression on other fronts were compelling enough to generate shared interests.

Director Chen Jiakang had earlier told Kaul of China’s desire to have “friendly Asian neighbours”, unlike the Soviet Union who was surrounded by hostile countries is on all sides”.<sup>532</sup> When determining India’s policy towards anti-Chinese forces in Tibet, Kaul confidently asserted that China “would think twice” before engaging in any expansionist plans southwards as it had “plenty of problems on hand” and was still trying to consolidate its strength

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<sup>530</sup> T.N. Kaul’s note on China for MEA on 28 March 1955. V.K. Krishna Menon papers, subject file no. 869, NMML.

<sup>531</sup> T.N. Kaul (writing under the pseudonym Kautilya), “Sino-Indian Relations with Special Reference to Tibet”, *Foreign Affairs Reports, Indian Council of World Affairs*, Vol. III, no. 10, pp. 122. T.N. Kaul Papers (I-III instalment), Printed Material no. 1, NMML.

<sup>532</sup> Report by T.N. Kaul on Tibet Talks on 12 May 1954. In ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1117.

domestically.<sup>533</sup> Earlier, Panikkar had cautioned that there may be a strain of expansionism in Communist China towards South-East Asia, but this was unlikely to manifest in a policy sense because “Mao [was] a complete realist” and was unlikely to jeopardise the success of the Chinese revolution through overextension. After 30 years of civil war, China had “extreme war weariness” and the PRC would seek recoupment and consolidation before embarking on “adventurism”. Moreover, it would take at least a decade for the PLA to modernise and effectively project power across the Himalayas.<sup>534</sup> Like Kaul, he too believed that the CCP would mainly be occupied by consolidating domestic spoils rather than getting entangled in “any foreign adventure or aggression till it had adequately stabilised itself and gained economic strength”.<sup>535</sup>

Nehru came to share this view. Apart from Taiwan and Tibet, he did not believe China had any aggressive designs on other states. All the information coming from Beijing indicated that the Chinese were “too engrossed in their own problems” and had “[showed] they were realists”.<sup>536</sup> After his talks with Mao and Zhou in Beijing, Nehru was left utterly convinced of their desire for peace in order to “concentrate on building up their country in the next decade or so”.<sup>537</sup> If China attacked India—considering the latter’s size, strategic value, and human resource potential—this “would undoubtedly lead to World War. The US could ill-afford Communist domination of India. Also, China was a great power but was “amorphous and easily capable of being attacked on its sea coasts and by air”. In the event of a war, “China would have its main front in the south and east [where] it would be fighting for its very existence against powerful enemies. If the PRC diverted its forces and strength across the inhospitable terrain of Tibet and

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<sup>533</sup> Note by T.N. Kaul on 17 April 1955. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1479.

<sup>534</sup> K.M. Panikkar’s report on six months of Communist China on 25 November 1949. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) papers, file no. 31-II, NMML.

<sup>535</sup> Note on China prepared for Prime Minister’s speech at the Commonwealth Foreign Minister’s Conference in Colombo in January 1950. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) papers, file no. 34, NMML.

<sup>536</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s interview with Robert Turnbull on 11 August 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 15-II, pp. 365.

<sup>537</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note on visit to China and Indochina on 14 November 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) papers, file no. 36, NMML.

undertook a “wild adventure across the Himalayas”, it would greatly weaken China’s capacity to meet its real enemies on other fronts. For India as well, the “major possible enemy” was Pakistan. Hostility with China and the “spreading out of [India’s] army to distant frontiers” would “cast an intolerable burden...and weaken [its] defence position”. India, Nehru argued, could get caught in a “pincer movement” with adversaries on both northern frontiers and lacking the military capacity to effectively deal with either one. Through its diplomatic overtures to the Chinese, Pakistan had already shown a readiness to exploit a fallout in India-China relations over Tibet to exact concessions on Kashmir. India could increase its defence forces or choose to be armed by foreign powers, but this dual danger on the border would still persist. Ultimately Nehru conceded that “the measure of safety [India got] by increasing the defence apparatus [was] limited” to meet the threat of a two-front war.<sup>538</sup>

Mao had stressed China’s economic needs prior to the Korean War. The PRC “could not afford to have war [as they] had too many important problems to think about”.<sup>539</sup> India and China had suffered colonialism and now, upon independence, needed peace to “carry out peaceful reconstruction of their [industrially backward] economies”<sup>540</sup> and to “raise the livelihood” of their peoples.<sup>541</sup> The problems plaguing both states, while not identical, were similar. As socialist economies, they both used Soviet-styled five-year plans to improve the standard of living and to provide daily necessities of life like food, clothes, shelter, medical facilities, education, training and employment for huge populations (mostly rural and agrarian). The Chinese in particular were “very anxious to establish their economy on a firm footing”.<sup>542</sup> If a war broke out, economic progress would “come to a grinding halt” and China’s plans would

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<sup>538</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note on China and Tibet. In ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 461.

<sup>539</sup> K.M. Panikkar to MEA on 20 May 1950. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) papers, file no. 45-II, NMML.

<sup>540</sup> Summary of talks following formal call by Jawaharlal Nehru on Mao Zedong on 19 October 1954. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) papers, file no. 36, NMML.

<sup>541</sup> Minutes of Jawaharlal Nehru’s meeting with Mao Zedong on 23 October 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1282.

<sup>542</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s statement to Radio France in Saigon on 31 October 1954. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 27, pp. 97.

be thrown into “chaos” and the goal of industrialisation, and poverty alleviation delayed.<sup>543</sup> Mao told Nehru that China’s industrial development was even lower than that of India and it would take “another ten or twenty years effort to achieve some tangible results” due to the trade embargoes placed on it.<sup>544</sup> He repeatedly asserted that China was “truly in need of friend” as it was “still weak, though called a big country”. Based on talks with Nehru, Mao believed that “India [was] also in need of friends”.<sup>545</sup> While Mao’s emphasis on economic development was soon thereafter deprioritised in light of China’s military intervention in the Korean War, Nehru and Panikkar saw this as Mao’s hand being forced by the crossing of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel in Korea by the U.N. forces rather than a disillusionment with his pretensions.

Much like Nehru’s interpretation of China’s preoccupation with threats on the South-West frontier, Zhou and the PRC also took note of India’s rivalry with Pakistan on the North-Western frontier. The Asian Department of CMFA’s report in 1956 claimed that India could no longer rely on the US to help with economic growth as military aid to Pakistan in 1954 had enlivened Indians to its “expansionist power politics”. The decision to form a Middle East military bloc, bringing Pakistan into such a formal alliance, and plotting Kashmir’s independence had “exacerbated Indo-American discords”. Since New Delhi now regarded a US-Pakistan alliance as the primary threat to its security, it could be trusted to act in concert with the socialist bloc. For example, a report by the Central Investigation Department for the year 1957 worryingly highlighted growing bonhomie in Indo-US ties and the flow of increasing economic aid. But the report argued that Indo-US “partnership” was still “unlikely” as nothing could cure the “vital wound” in the relationship, which was the US’ military alliance with Pakistan. Even if the US continued to court India, Nehru was expected to “[continue] to harbour a high hope in strengthening economic ties with the Socialist camp” and would thus refuse close cooperation

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<sup>543</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in Calcutta on 2 November 1954. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 27, pp. 62.

<sup>544</sup> Chinese version of talks between Mao Zedong and Jawaharlal Nehru on 19 October 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, 1292.

<sup>545</sup> Minutes from Mao Zedong’s third meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru on 26 October 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1320.

with Chinese adversaries in the Cold War. Beijing was utterly convinced of India's commitment to non-alignment. A CMFA memorandum argued that the US government had attempted to use "economic and financial aid to alleviate anti-American emotions in India" but these measures had entirely failed. India "occasionally made limited concessions under American pressure" but generally "insisted on a policy of promoting world peace and protecting national interests".<sup>546</sup>

### *Initial Reciprocity*

The fourth source of trust was reciprocity. In Nehru's opinion, the Five Principles marked a "new starting point for [India's] relations with China and Tibet". Previous agreements only had "historical importance" and they had "full intention of giving effect" to the Five Principles. Nehru saw to it that all officers, diplomats, and trade agents who dealt with matters related to Tibet "understood [India's] basic policy and realise that they had to function in accordance with [the] agreement".<sup>547</sup> Nehru rejected B.K. Kapur's, India's political officer in Sikkim, suggestion that India should encourage the "Tibetans to oppose Chinese over-lordship over Tibet" on the grounds that these would be opposed to the "principles laid down in [India's] recent agreement with China".<sup>548</sup> Whatever happened in Tibet was "beyond India's reach" and it could neither "help nor hinder" these developments. Even for pro-Tibetan forces operating on Indian soil, official instructions were to discourage and tolerate them provided they did not become "too obvious or aggressive". Especially in Kalimpong, which Nehru described as a "nest of spies", any Tibetan emigres who indulged in "aggressive activities which might lead to violence" could not be tolerated. India would provide asylum to them but could not "permit [its] territory to be used as a base of operations against the Chinese". Simply put, India's policy was based on the

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<sup>546</sup> Quoted in Xiaoyuan Liu, "Friend or Foe," pp. 117-43.

<sup>547</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on the report of Dr. Gopalachari on 1 July 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1122.

<sup>548</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru to Secretary General on 18 June 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1162.

“observance, in letter and spirit, of [its] agreement with China in regard to Tibet”. Nehru could not permit India’s territory to be used as a base of operations against the Chinese.<sup>549</sup>

On the Chinese side, the Five Principles revised the PRC’s relationship with the CPI. The PRC continued to use Marxist Socialism in its domestic affairs but distanced itself from Communist parties in neighbouring countries—regardless of the class character of the ruling party—as long as they opposed US imperialism. In large part, this is why the CPI had to give up its armed struggle in the South Indian state of Telangana and join the democratic process to gain access to power. At its Third Congress in Madurai in 1953, it was also forced to compliment the “role played by the Indian Government on a number of important international issues”.<sup>550</sup> As Zhou acknowledged in the context of China’s policy towards overseas Chinese peoples, the PRC’s neighbourhood included “brother and sister states, nationalist states, enemy states— additionally, nationalistic states [had varying degrees of friendship toward [it].” Chinese Communist subversives were now required to “follow the different policies [the PRC had] towards different states”.<sup>551</sup>

China’s reciprocation of the Five Principles was also visible in its actions towards smaller Asian states. The PRC maintained adherence to the Five Principles in its dealings with Burma despite a similarly disputed frontier. Nehru feared that Communist China could at any time invade Burma under the pretext of disarming the 26th Nationalist Chinese Army which had taken refuge there.<sup>552</sup> Rapid expansion of KMT troops in eastern Myanmar took place in early 1952 and this rebel force received a steady supply of military supply through Siam. Burma did not have the natural protection of the Himalayas either and was much more vulnerable from the North than India. In addition, the Sino-Burmese border was in large parts undefined. This

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<sup>549</sup> Ibid, pp. 1164.

<sup>550</sup> Sumanta Banerjee, “Mao and the Indian Communist Movement,” *China Report*, vol. 31, no. 1 (1995), pp. 37–66.

<sup>551</sup> Policy for the China Expatriate Committee’s Expatriate Strategy, 1958, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118257>.

<sup>552</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s talks with Loy Henderson on 28 June 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 14-II, pp. 308.

provided almost a legitimate pretext for Chinese expansionism. Nehru had asked Panikkar to privately impress upon the Chinese that any aggression or invasion of Burma “would be deeply resented in India and might bring about further complications for China”. To meet Burmese requests for aid, a friendship treaty was subsequently signed between the two states.<sup>553</sup> But what proved Chinese credentials to India was that despite these enticements Beijing had not been belligerent. Nehru argued before the Commonwealth that they had a sufficient excuse with the KMT troops there. Still, they had not taken advantage of it. This showed “they would avoid any such invasion or aggression unless there was some general war”. He claimed to be “fairly certain that the [PRC] had no intention to invade the South East Asian countries”. If they were expansionists, the Chinese would have already invaded Burma since they had adequate reason to do so.<sup>554</sup>

However, on 31 July 1956, *The Nation* reported that 1,500 Chinese soldiers had penetrated up to 60 miles within Burma and occupied 1,000 sq. miles of territory in Wa state. A few days later, the newspaper claimed that Chinese troops “had made their presence felt” during the previous few weeks at several points along a 50-mile stretch of the Burma-Yunan-Tibet border. There were also reports of the Chinese troops having entered Kachin state at two points. U Ba Swe, then Prime Minister of Burma, confirmed at a press conference that the Chinese troops had occupied about 750 square miles of Burmese territory. He requested India to intercede on behalf of Burma to help find a solution for the border problem with China. U Nu argued that although the Chinese “held aloft the noble Five Principles...they [had] definite imperialist designs on Burma.<sup>555</sup> Nehru appealed to Zhou that any aggressive measures by China would “disturb the confidence” built through the Five Principles as a “practical basis for friendly international relations and a rational alternative to [power politics]”. There was “a feeling there that the Chinese Government [was] playing some kind of a game with them about their frontier

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<sup>553</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to M.A. Rauf on 30 December 1950. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 15-II, pp. 547.

<sup>554</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s talks with John Foster Dulles on 22 May 1955. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 511.

<sup>555</sup> U Nu to Jawaharlal Nehru on 26 August 1956. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 35, pp. 509.

and not acting up to their word”.<sup>556</sup> In basing their mutual ties on the Five Principles, India-China-Burma “accepted and relied on faith in one another” despite scepticism and ridicule from certain quarters. He therefore pressed Zhou for a sympathetic consideration of the issue so the situation could be arrested.<sup>557</sup>

Zhou invited U Nu to visit Beijing for crisis talks on the border in November 1956. He had informed India’s ambassador R.K. Nehru that there were differences in China and Burma’s perception of the boundary but they would resolve this issue in line with the Five Principles.<sup>558</sup> Zhou and U Nu also visited the disputed areas in Mohnyin for field investigation along with Kachin leaders. They decided on certain principles for a settlement and a formal proposal was approved by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress. Zhou told Nehru that after U Nu’s visit he had “been able to understand the Burmese leaders” and they would begin the process of frontier demarcation soon.<sup>559</sup> Liu Shaoqi speaking before the Eighth National Congress of the CCP said that there were “certain questions left over from the past” between China and its neighbouring countries. But there was “no dispute...that [could not] be settled [by peaceful negotiation]”. He accused the “imperialists” of taking “advantage of this situation to undermine and disrupt [China’s] efforts to develop or establish friendly relations with neighbouring countries”. But these accusations did not represent China’s motives or policy objectives.<sup>560</sup>

It would be tempting to interpret these clashes across the disputed border as intended to coerce Burma. But there is little evidence for this. First, pending a final settlement through historical

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<sup>556</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to R.K. Nehru on 15 July 1957. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 38, pp. 693.

<sup>557</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note to the foreign secretary on 26 August 1956. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 34, pp. 385-386.

<sup>558</sup> See footnote in Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 12 September 1956. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 35, pp. 512.

<sup>559</sup> Second meeting between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai on 1 January 1957. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 36, pp. 604.

<sup>560</sup> Liu Shaoqi, The Political Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Delivered on September 15, 1956. [https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/cpc/8th\\_congress.htm](https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/documents/cpc/8th_congress.htm).

study and survey, China offered an equal withdrawal of military forces from disputed areas and did not demand unilateral concessions. Albeit indirectly, this also indicated to the Indians the PRC's willingness to offer a fair compromise and apply the Five Principles to its border disputes. Second, to a certain extent, minor border clashes were unavoidable as long as there was no clear understanding of the boundary. This is why clashes also occurred in disputed areas along the Indo-Burmese border near Lungwa Tingva village. Burmese newspapers had similarly reported that the troops from the Assam Rifles had removed Aung San's picture as well as the Burmese Flag from the village and forcefully established India's presence in the village. Nehru swiftly asked his foreign secretary to order the Assam Rifles to desist from any step which raised controversy or conflict with the Burmese Government. Subsequently, he also suggested settling the issue of border demarcation "in a friendly way by joint local inspection". In the interim, similar to the Chinese case, the Indian Army was asked to withdraw immediately from the disputed area atop the ridge of Lungwa Tingva village to the western slope pending a final settlement.<sup>561</sup> In both India's and China's actions, the application of the Five Principles to border disputes was manifest and both states sought to present their outstanding issues with other neighbouring states as a model for how border disputes could be resolved.

These four social factors were crucial to the formation of strategic trust between India and China. The Five Principles emerged as a common framework for both rivals to navigate the complexities of a post-imperial relationship and overcome mutual fears. Discrepant information relating to India's mitigation of China's anxieties in Tibet and dramatic shifts in PRC propaganda on India signalled shifting perceptions to both sides. The moderate reputations of Nehru as a Socialist and Zhou as a Communist, were crucial to bring confidence in their respective claims that different regime types could coexist in the Cold War era. The shared weaknesses of both states in their border areas and the presence of other more pressing rivalries offered a rational basis for the trusting relationship to develop. Finally, the two states also

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<sup>561</sup> Message from Jawaharlal Nehru to U Nu on 14 September 1947. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 39, pp. 696.

followed-through with their promises. India doubled-down on its approach to the Tibetans in light of the Five Principles whilst China demonstrated its application with respect to the boundary dispute with Burma and by cooling off its support for the CPI. The next section will now evidence the presence of the trusting relationship by showing the acceptance of mutual vulnerability.

### **Measuring Trust**

So far, this chapter has uncovered the social factors that allowed Nehru and Zhou to build strategic trust. In doing so, it has illuminated ways in which Nehru came to share empathy with his Chinese counterpart Zhou, and how four interlinked sources of trust subsequently facilitated trust-building through interpersonal diplomacy. Evidence cited in the course of making these arguments has addressed one measure of trust, namely the changing beliefs and perceptions of intentions on both sides. But a second crucial measure still remains: the acceptance of vulnerability. India first accepted vulnerability in its relation with China with the signing of another Trade Agreement with China in 1954. To provide context, on 10 April 1952, China had requested a transit facility via India for 10,000 tons of rice and wheat to Tibet and for 3,000 tons of wool from Tibet to China.<sup>562</sup> K.P.S. Menon, then India's foreign secretary, however, described Chinese requests for food grains in Tibet as "cunning". While China was unwilling to discuss matters of Indian interest in Tibet, it still wanted India's help in providing food grains and other supplies to its troops stationed in Tibet. China had 8000 troops in Lhasa and another 2000 each in Gyantse, Shigatse, Taklakot, and half a dozen other places at the time. PRC's plans to stabilise and legitimise its rule in Tibet via military decree though had been severely disturbed by supply issues, leading to a sharp downward revision of troop estimates. Attempts to buy food grains locally caused inflation due to limited crop yield and air dropping food supplies was eventually discontinued due to financial costs and inefficiencies. India's traditional trade

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<sup>562</sup> K.M. Panikkar to Jawaharlal Nehru on 10 April 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. I, pp. 675.

links were the only solution for the PRC if it was to maintain large bodies of troops in Central and Southern Tibet.

Menon advised that India reject China's aid request. Even if the Indians could not support Tibetans in their hour of need, there was no reason for them to "[aid] their complete destruction".<sup>563</sup> Also, supply of goods and grains from India could "result in the springing up of a large network of Chinese commercial and transport organisations in India". The IB had cautioned the Indian Government that the PRC intended to use these to "supply Chinese troops in Tibet through Chinese firms under the control of the Chinese Counsel-General in Calcutta—a sinister figure—and financed by Chinese banks". This was certain to create security problems of some magnitude.<sup>564</sup> Nehru too was "not particularly anxious to facilitate movement and retention of large numbers of Chinese troops in Tibet" who were in "great need" of them. He believed that "problems of security would arise if Chinese personnel [were] employed in moving supplies" through sensitive areas regions as Kalimpong or Sikkim.<sup>565</sup> Therefore, India's denial of facility was vital to "retard" if not "prevent the consolidation" of China's position in Tibet, at least until the PRC "had shown a willingness to come to terms and clarified its attitude on all outstanding issues".<sup>566</sup> Eventually, India did relent and allowed the transit of a "relatively small quantity as an exceptional case"<sup>567</sup> since the Chinese had offered large quantities of aid (1,00,000 tons of rice and millets) to succour India's food shortage and Nehru did not want to "imperil this transaction"<sup>568</sup>. But this was also agreed only the conditions that the entire transit process would be handled by Indian officials, all transportation costs would be borne by the

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<sup>563</sup> India's mission in Lhasa to MEA on 17 April 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 870.

<sup>564</sup> The Chinese could transport their goods to the port of Calcutta and then move them northwards via rail to Siliguri and then through road transport to Tibet.

<sup>565</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to K.M. Panikkar on 12 April 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 866.

<sup>566</sup> Political Officer in Sikkim to MEA on 18 April 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 872.

<sup>567</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's press conference in New Delhi on 21 June 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 728.

<sup>568</sup> MEA to India's mission in Lhasa on 5 May 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 878

Chinese Government, and it would not set a precedent for the future.<sup>569</sup> Any permanent agreement with China for the transit of goods to Tibet via India could only be part of a “general settlement of [India’s] interests in Tibet”, which included trade relations and an affirmation of the frontier.<sup>570</sup>

But Nehru’s assessment of Chinese intentions changed after the trust-building process began with Zhou. After signing the agreement on Tibet in 1954, the Chinese had indicated their desire to send a delegation to New Delhi for trade talks. This was swiftly accepted. Kaul pointed out that the Chinese were still anxious to get supplies for the maintenance of their troops in Tibet.<sup>571</sup> Since China’s desire for Indian friendship was “unquestionable,” trade with China (even in Tibet) was now seen as providing positive-sum gains.<sup>572</sup> Nehru argued that India’s previous approach of banning certain items from trade with Tibet (outside of arms and ammunition) was “the wrong way” to proceed. India could “allow as much trade as possible”. India, he argued, would agree to “free and unrestricted transit of goods to Tibet” as long as its own requirements in those regions were being met. In particular, he said that there should be no reluctance to supply increased amounts of petrol to Tibet on the grounds that this would be used by the Chinese Army. He was now prepared to “develop normal and healthy trade with Tibet” to benefit India’s border peoples.<sup>573</sup>

A Trade Agreement between India and China was signed on 11 October 1954 in New Delhi.<sup>574</sup>

The Indian press note said that the agreement intended to strengthen “the friendship that

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<sup>569</sup> India’s Embassy in Beijing to Jawaharlal Nehru on 14 April 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 867.

<sup>570</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to K.M. Panikkar on 24 May 1952. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 881.

<sup>571</sup> Report by T.N. Kaul on Tibet Talks on 12 May 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1116.

<sup>572</sup> Note by T.N. Kaul on 21 May 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1148-1149.

<sup>573</sup> Note by Jawaharlal Nehru on the report of Dr. Gopalachari on 1 July 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1124-1125.

<sup>574</sup> Trade Agreement between the Republic of India and the People’s Republic of China, New Delhi. On 14 October 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1258-1271.

already [existed] between the governments and the peoples of India and China and [aid] the development of the trade between the two countries on the principle of equality and mutual benefit”.<sup>575</sup> India had also committed to providing “reasonable facilities” for Chinese commercial goods, unavailable in India, at the port of Calcutta and arranged for subsequent transportation to Tibet.<sup>576</sup> The Indian and Chinese governments were constructing roads from their respective sides to the Nathu La pass to facilitate this trade.<sup>577</sup> Admittedly, the quantum of trade of essential items moving from India to Tibet was not large in comparison to overall trade volumes for both states. But it was also indubitable that India was aiding—to a fairly large extent—the sustenance of Chinese troops. As then Indian Foreign Secretary R.K. Nehru noted, the agreement was working “satisfactorily” and imports from India had “increased enormously” with rice being the main item for trade. It may be said, he continued, that “[India] was sustaining the Chinese army in Tibet”.<sup>578</sup> This was a clear acceptance of vulnerability on India’s part.

Second, despite border intrusions and the publication of Chinese maps with claims to large tracts of India’s territory, Nehru continued to trust Zhou’s commitment to the Five Principles, showing stable positive expectations. As Apa B. Pant informed the Maharaja of Bhutan, in light of the progress made in India-China relations and the Five Principles, there was “no cause of apprehension of China overstepping her frontiers”.<sup>579</sup> This did not imply that no defensive measures would be taken for deterrence to strengthen India’s position in border areas. But, Indian leaders, especially Nehru, did not diverge from their view of Chinese intentions as benign and nor did they seek to militarise the border with any immediacy to protect against the

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<sup>575</sup> H.V.R. Iyengar to M.O. Mathai on 11 October 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1258.

<sup>576</sup> A.S. Gill’s summary for the Indian cabinet on Trade Agreement between India and China on 27 November 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1401.

<sup>577</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 31 December 1957. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 40, pp. 732.

<sup>578</sup> Report of R.K. Nehru on his visit to Yatung on his way to Bhutan on 5 July 1955. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1527.

<sup>579</sup> Apa B. Pant to Maharaja of Bhutan on May 17 1956. MEA Papers, file no. MEA 7(11) P/55/1955, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

immanent possibility of Chinese ingress across the border. Such de-securitisation is also why “not all central ministries were fully convinced of the importance of India’s north-eastern frontier” and Army engineers were often diverted away from road-building activities in the frontier regions.<sup>580</sup>

The presence of Indian troops in Bara Hoti (Wu Je) was first challenged by the Chinese as early as 17 July 1954. The Chinese Counsellor raised this issue again on 13 August, objecting to a team of 33 persons, comprising of soldiers, radio operators, and doctors attached to the local garrison in U.P. setting up tents there. The Counsellor requested India to swiftly withdraw them.<sup>581</sup> On 27 August, the MEA responded that upon enquiry it had been discovered that the Indian troops were encamped in the Hoti Plains, which was Indian territory south-east of the Niti Pass. In fact, a few Tibetan officials had tried to transgress without proper documentation and had to be refuted.<sup>582</sup> The next summer, on 28 June 1955, it was the MEA complaining to the Chinese Counsellor that a party of Chinese troops were seen camping at Bara Hoti.<sup>583</sup> On 11 July, the Chinese Counsellor responded that their troops were encamped in Chinese territory had not crossed Wu Je.<sup>584</sup> The MEA reiterated that the Chinese had occupied the Hoti Plains south of Tunjun La after Indian withdrawal in the winter months. They had no knowledge of where Wu Je was situated.<sup>585</sup> On 18 August, the MEA also raised the issue of Tibetan officials collecting taxes from Indian herdsmen.<sup>586</sup> Similar territorial claims and accusations of

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<sup>580</sup> Bérénice Guyot-Réchar, *Shadow States: India, China and the Himalayas, 1910–1962* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

<sup>581</sup> Note given by Chinese Councillor in India to the MEA on 13 August 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1236

<sup>582</sup> Note given to the Chinese Councillor in India by MEA on 27 August 1954. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1238.

<sup>583</sup> Note given to the Chinese Councillor in India by the MEA on 28 June 1955. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1509.

<sup>584</sup> Note given by the Chinese Councillor in India to the MEA on 11 July 1955. V.K. Krishna Menon papers, Sub. File no. 929, NMML.

<sup>585</sup> Informal note given to the Chinese Councillor in India by the MEA on 18 July 1955. V.K. Krishna Menon papers, Sub. File no. 929, NMML.

<sup>586</sup> Note given to the Chinese Councillor in India by the MEA on 18 August 1955. V.K. Krishna Menon papers, Sub. File no. 929, NMML.

transgressions continued to be exchanged for the rest of the year.<sup>587</sup> Eventually, protests became a regular feature and there were seasonal contests for troops on either side to reach these disputed areas with the arrival of summer; to deny physical occupation to the other side.

Despite these intrusions, Indian leaders remained steadfast in their view of PRC's intentions. In 1955, R.K. Nehru averred that India "need not be alarmed" by China's improving military position in Tibet. China's measures in Tibet were aimed at securing their South-Western flank "by developing the country and bringing about a closer integration of this area with China". India too might have undertaken these in similar circumstances. He did not "jump to the conclusion...that all this [was] a prelude to aggression or some form of penetration of [India's] border area". But since China's territorial boundaries had not been delineated there was some potential for a revival of its claims to the "Mongoloid Fringe". India needed to work towards strengthening its administrative control and reach in border areas "as rapidly as possible". These efforts were lagging in Ladakh and Northern U.P. and the situation continued to be precarious in Bhutan and Nepal.<sup>588</sup> Later that year R.K. Nehru visited Yatung and raised fresh concerns over Chinese claims on Bhutan. While he did not want to "exaggerate the risks"—having spoken to many Tibetan emigres—he was worried about the potential danger of a "united, military and expansive" China reviving its claims on India's border areas. The Five Principles were "not enough" if some weakness developed on the Indian side. He reiterated the need to safeguard India's position by exploiting cultural links with "people of Tibetan stock" on the Indian side of the border, pursuing an active development policy, and completing the effective occupation of the territory up to the border.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> India's Embassy in Beijing to T.N. Kaul on 22 May 1956. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1701

<sup>588</sup> Note on Tibet by R.K. Nehru on 24 April 1955. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) papers, file no. 337, NMML.

<sup>589</sup> Report of R.K. Nehru on his visit to Yatung on his way to Bhutan on 5 July 1955. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1526-27.

Rejecting R.K. Nehru's concerns, Panikkar argued that Chinese leaders did not "claim to have inherited the pretensions of the Manchus in respect of the tributary states". The tributary status of Nepal was only pro forma and "did not involve any kind of political claims". Bhutan on the other hand, "had no direct relationship [with China] at all". Despite numerous opportunities, at no point since coming to power had the PRC cast any aspersions on Bhutan's independence or India's special status with it.<sup>590</sup> In response, R.K. Nehru argued that even if Panikkar was to be believed, the risk of diversionary war was ever present. If Tibetan nationalism became a threat to Beijing, a possible option could be to encourage an irredentist movement against India's borders. This risk could only be eliminated if India's position on the border was unassailable.<sup>591</sup> Nehru weighed on Panikkar's side. On Tibetan emigres, he was wary of anti-China information from Kalimpong as it was often "utterly unreliable".<sup>592</sup> India did not need to worry about Chinese or Tibetan claims to Bhutan or Nepal. Whatever territorial claims may have been raised in the past, he could not "imagine such claims being advanced now".<sup>593</sup> If anything, Nehru and Panikkar agreed with R.K. Nehru's policy recommendations<sup>594</sup> because they were more insecure of the loyalties of India's border populations than Chinese intentions. For instance, rejecting India's fashioning of a "Maginot Line", Nehru said it was more important to "have peace, quiet and contentment" in India's border areas and deal with the "Naga trouble" than worry about "anything China would do".<sup>595</sup>

Nehru's fears surfaced when the PRC republished old KMT maps in 1956. The Chinese had previously claimed these were reproductions. But their continued usage in conjunction with petty intrusions occurring on the border were now beginning to worry Nehru. While he

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<sup>590</sup> K.M. Panikkar to R.K. Nehru on 16 July 1955. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1528.

<sup>591</sup> Note by R.K. Nehru on Panikkar's letter for Jawaharlal Nehru on 17 July 1955. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1531.

<sup>592</sup> G. Parthasarathi (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru letters to Chief Ministers*, vol. III, pp. 586.

<sup>593</sup> Remarks by Jawaharlal Nehru on R.K. Nehru's note on 17 July 1955. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1532.

<sup>594</sup> K.M. Panikkar to Jawaharlal Nehru on 8 October 1955. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1565.

<sup>595</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to K.N. Katju on 28 July 1956. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 34, pp. 203.

accepted that these incidences produced a “sense of disquiet”, he was still unwilling to question China’s bona fides. Such border incursions he argued, had occurred long before the Chinese occupied Tibet in the British Era when Tibetan officials would collect taxes in villages across the un-demarcated border. In addition, he did not believe the infrastructure upgrades being made in Tibet (roads and airports) “necessarily [meant] any hostile or aggressive intention against India”. In fact, these were “natural” as China wanted to improve lines of communication and consolidate its control over Tibet.<sup>596</sup> Even on the Indian side, Nehru argued, the only way to access the North-Eastern frontier in many places was by air. Of course, airfields could be used for offensive as well as for defensive purposes. Nehru was “no prophet” and could not predict how China would use its airfields, but he believed fears of a future attack on India or invasion were “completely mistaken and there [was] no basis for it” since India’s relations with China were friendly.<sup>597</sup> When Apa Pant raised the issue of Chinese pressures on India’s frontiers in the future, Nehru rejected his views as “static and out-of-date”.<sup>598</sup> Despite being in the “revolutionary stage”, for him, China was “one of the most civilised and cool-headed countries in the world”.<sup>599</sup> In a note on “countering Chinese moves on the frontier,” he argued that the building of roads and air strips by the Chinese in Tibet “[was] a natural development”. He ruled out “any kind of physical or aerial attack on India” whilst countenancing the building of more check posts, roads and other infrastructure along with sufficient training to Indian troops in mountain warfare.<sup>600</sup>

These latent anxieties were also addressed during Nehru and Zhou’s meetings in New Delhi in December 1956. Zhou claimed that until China had begun studying its border problem he “knew nothing of the McMahon Line”. This concerned Nehru who retorted that the McMahon

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<sup>596</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s remarks on Foreign Secretary’s note on 6 May 1956. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1607-1608.

<sup>597</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s reply to a question in the Council of States on 24 December 1953. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 24, pp. 583.

<sup>598</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note to foreign secretary on 26 December 1957. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 40, pp. 619.

<sup>599</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to G.D. Birla on 6 February 1956. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 32, pp. 482.

<sup>600</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note on countering China’s moves on the frontier on 12 May 1956. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1618.

Line had been established by British, Tibetan, and Chinese plenipotentiaries at the Simla Conference in 1914 and “surely the Chinese government always knew about it”. Zhou clarified that the KMT did know of the McMahon Line but not the PRC leadership since it was a “secret pact” between Britain and Tibet. But despite China never having recognised the legitimacy of the Simla Conference, Zhou for the first time said that he was ready to accept the McMahon Line established by the British imperialists as an “accomplished fact”. Some further consultations would be required with Tibetan officials to ratify this, but he would “persuade and convince the Tibetans to accept it”. Although the border was still “undecided” and the McMahon Line “unfair” to China, Zhou and the PRC believed there was “no better way than to recognise this Line” in light of friendly relations with India.<sup>601</sup>

In addition, Nehru also put forth the guiding principle of colonial cartography in the Himalayas—established practice and custom as well as the watershed—as the basis for resolving minor disputes that had come up in the central sector such as Bara Hoti.<sup>602</sup> For India, Bara Hoti was “a small, uninhabited, and having no strategic or other importance”.<sup>603</sup> What was at stake was the principle of watershed, which could set the precedent for the rest of the frontier. Zhou agreed to this principle for settlement.<sup>604</sup> Furthermore, Zhou also yielded any territorial claims on Sikkim or Bhutan, claiming they were qualitatively different from Sino-Tibetan relations, which for all practical purposes was an acknowledgement that they were part of India’s sphere of influence.<sup>605</sup> This also applied to China’s relations on Nepal. Despite Nepal’s invitation, the PRC turned down the opportunity to set up a Chinese embassy in Kathmandu until the US did so. He also proposed to provide financial aid to Nepal only on the condition that the “amount of

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<sup>601</sup> Talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai between 31 December 1956 and 1 January 1957. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1770.

<sup>602</sup> Kyle Gardner, “Moving Watersheds, Borderless Maps and Imperial Geography in India’s North-Western Himalaya,” *The Historical Journal*, vol. 62, no. 1 (2019), pp. 149-70.

<sup>603</sup> MEA to India’s High Commission in London on 9 November 1955. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1712.

<sup>604</sup> Talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai between 31 December 1956 and 1 January 1957. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1770.

<sup>605</sup> Talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai between 31 December 1956 and 1 January 1957. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1769.

aid [would] be less than [that] given by India”. Zhou told Nehru that China’s relations with Nepal would be based on the Five Principles and “on the basis of friendship between India and Nepal”.<sup>606</sup> These assurances reaffirmed Indian leaders’ trust in the Chinese. Zhou’s was “an important statement and admission from [India’s] point of view”. Nehru even asked Zhou to repeat it for clarity. He now believed the major border issue had been settled for all practical purposes and minor intrusions in border areas could be written off as the “misbehaviour of local people”. India did not need to “adopt any aggressive attitude in these places”.<sup>607</sup> In 1957, Dutt reassuring G.L. Mehta, India’s Ambassador in Washington, stated that India was “not at all concerned about the Sino-Indian border” despite Chinese maps and border intrusions. Minor disputes would be settled “amicably by joint survey and inspection on the spot”. There was also no evidence of Chinese subversion amongst “Mongoloid population of Buddhist faith” in India’s border areas that would indicate the PRC’s intent to annex territory on ethnic grounds.<sup>608</sup>

Similar expression of trust and the acceptance of vulnerability was also evident on the Chinese side. Similar to India, China constructed check posts, mobilised troops and upgraded infrastructure to consolidate its control in Tibet and to strengthen its defences in border areas. It also sought to divert trade away from India to China to hedge against the possible weaponization of its dependence on Indian imports. But the Chinese boundary commission simultaneously recognised that “if historically undecided border issues were left unresolved it would jeopardize the revolution and cause neighbours to doubt China; such issues could be exploited by the imperialist bloc to create friction in China’s relations with other countries”. As Sulmaan Wasif Khan argues, this commission fully believed “[China] could negotiate a border peacefully, especially with as friendly a country as India”.<sup>609</sup>

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<sup>606</sup> Summary of talks between Zhou Enlai and Jawaharlal Nehru on 24 January 1957. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 36, pp. 626.

<sup>607</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Sampurnanand on 14 May 1957. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 38, pp. 690.

<sup>608</sup> Subimal Dutt to G.L. Mehta on 21 September 1957. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1825.

<sup>609</sup> Sulmaan Wasif Khan, *Muslim, Trader, Nomad, Spy: China’s Cold War and the People of the Tibetan Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), pp. 66.

Evidencing trust, despite the Tibetan revolution beginning to take shape in Kham in late 1956, the PRC allowed the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama to visit India for the celebration of the 2,500<sup>th</sup> Buddha Jayanti. As Apa Pant in his official report on the visit remarks: “no Tibetan could ever hope that the Chinese would allow the two Lamas and especially the Dalai Lama to visit India. They were certain that permission for them to visit India would be refused.<sup>610</sup> In April, the CMFA had informally declined the invitation from the Indian Government on grounds that the two Lamas were “heavily preoccupied: This was a smokescreen to avoid admitting Tibet was in ferment. The PRC claimed that “the two Tibetan leaders could not leave their hectic work and [the six other monks] were too old to travel”.<sup>611</sup> Mao feared that the Dalai Lama would endorse India as the birthplace of Buddhism to stoke the Tibetan uprising and gather support from India.<sup>612</sup> But, on November 2, Zhou allowed the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama to accept India and Nepal’s invitation to attend the celebration of the Buddha’s 2,500<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary.<sup>613</sup> As Tsering Shakya and Melvyn Goldstein argue, this was partly because the PRC wanted to “reassure the Indians, whose friendship was a valued asset in Chinese foreign affairs”.<sup>614</sup>

Towards the end of 1956, the PRC’s popularity in Western Sichuan and Tibet had reached its nadir. Indubitably, the Dalai Lama’s pilgrimage to India came during a moment of crisis in China’s Tibet policy and threatened to further stoke the Tibetan revolution. Mao, in his speech on November 15, at the Second Plenum of the CCP’s Eighth Central Committee, asked: “should we let him go or not?” There were two risks. First, if the Dalai Lama’s convoy passed

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<sup>610</sup> Report on the visit of Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama to India. Apa B. Pant papers, subject file no. 7, NMML.

<sup>611</sup> Xiaoyuan Liu, *To the End of Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), pp. 342.

<sup>612</sup> Anton Harder, *Defining Independence in Cold War Asia*, pp. 164.

<sup>613</sup> MEA to India’s mission in Lhasa on 8 October 1956. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1642.

<sup>614</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (London: Pimlico, 1999); Melvyn Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet. Volume 3, The Storm Clouds Descend, 1955-1957* (Berkeley, California, 2014).

through Kalimpong he would be able to consort with Tibetan rebels, American spies, as well as secret agents of the KMT. In a desperate bid to evade his sojourn in Kalimpong, the Dalai Lama's trip was not arranged by land and air travel was preferred instead. Second, using the pretext of Communist invasion of Tibet, the Dalai Lama might formally declare Tibetan independence and decide not to return, putting the final nail in the CCP's efforts to legitimise its rule in Tibet. He could, Mao argued, "direct reactionaries of the Tibetan upper stratum to call for a great upheaval so as to drive [China] out". Privately, he asked Zhang to prepare for war and make "military and material deployments and preparations". Mao was preparing PRC leaders for a potential onslaught of anti-Communist propaganda too. It did not matter, he defiantly said, if the Dalai Lama joined the chorus of voices "hell bent" on condemning the Communists for being "extremely vicious and utterly evil, cruel and inhumane, and communizing property and women".<sup>615</sup> Considering the multitude of threats posed by the Dalai Lama's visit to India, it is clear that the PRC would not have accepted such vulnerabilities unless they were certain of India's cooperation on the matter.

The PRC had adopted a softer stance and deferred the revolution in Tibet. Policymakers in Beijing had decided to "suspend their agenda for piecemeal change in Tibet and reorient drastically toward an even more patient gimmick". The Politburo, with Liu Shaoqi and Zhou leading the charge, had—at least momentarily—decided to maintain Tibet's autonomous status.<sup>616</sup> But the PRC's decision to allow Dalai Lama's pilgrimage to proceed as planned cannot be explained in the absence of strong convictions in India's motives and the practicability of China's united front policy. Zhou candidly shared with Nehru PRC's fears related to anti-China subversive activities in Kalimpong and the looming spectre of Tibetan independence. The PRC had accepted the invitation as "friendly relations existed with India", but now rumours were rife in Beijing of Dalai Lama's plans not to return to Lhasa. Despite China's clever manoeuvring of travel plans, local Tibetans had issued an invite to the Dalai Lama to come to Kalimpong. Zhou

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<sup>615</sup> Xiaoyuan Liu, *To the End of Revolution*, pp. 352.

<sup>616</sup> *Ibid.*

argued that if he went “there [was] bound to be some trouble”. In Lhasa, since the Dalai Lama left, “those bent on trouble” were already “preparing for an incident...these people [had] some armed forces”. This threat had been momentarily quelled by the PRC, but subversives in Kalimpong were planning on “keeping Dalai as long as possible so that his absence could be taken advantage of”. Zhou wanted India to intervene if any such situation “designed to create an independent Tibet” arose or there was “espionage or encouragement subversive activities”. Nehru assured him that it was India’s policy not to allow anti-Chinese propaganda to be carried out and that India fully recognised Chinese sovereignty in Tibet. If any espionage activities came to light, he was ready to take appropriate measures.<sup>617</sup>

Later, when Nehru met the Dalai Lama, he pressed the latter to accept Chinese suzerainty as any attempt to do otherwise would “result in a major conflict and much misery to Tibet”. In an armed conflict, Tibet could not possibly defeat China. Any plans to stay back in India would be the “height of folly” and would not aid the Tibetan cause either. Nehru privately conveyed to the Dalai Lama’s followers in Kalimpong that India did not approve of any agitation or trouble in regard to Tibet. As was requested by Zhou, he informed Indian officials not to tolerate any “mischief” and to take “special steps” during the Dalai Lama’s visit to Kalimpong.<sup>618</sup> Zhou even told the Dalai Lama and his officials that “Nehru maintained a friendly relationship with the PRC, recognized Tibet as part of China, and [would] not permit any anti-Chinese activities in Indian territories”. The hope of US assistance was also a hoax as it “could not airlift aid materials to Tibet over the air space of India”. The Dalai Lama stayed in Kalimpong between 22 January and 25 February 1957 and eventually, as the Chinese expected, returned to Lhasa on April 1. Nehru’s efforts were appreciated in Beijing. In April 1957, Mao would state that “Nehru’s leadership of the Indian freedom struggle [was] an example of the invincibility of the

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<sup>617</sup> Talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai between 31 December 1956 and 1 January 1957. ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1749-1772

<sup>618</sup> Fourth round of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai between 31 December 1956 and 1 January 1957 ASB (ed.), *India-China Relations*, vol. II, pp. 1790-1791.

people in progressive struggle”.<sup>619</sup> The acceptance of vulnerability on issues so closely related to the national security provides strong evidence for the presence of strategic trust between Nehru and Zhou.

### **Alternative Explanations**

For a rationalist perspective, it could be argued that India-China cooperation in the 1950s was produced by an interest-based calculation in light of their material deficiencies and the presence of security competitors on other fronts. India was overstretched in military terms due to the continuing territorial dispute with Pakistan on the Kashmir border. China on the other hand, an active partaker in the Cold War, faced an equally hostile security environment on its Eastern frontier with US presence in on-going civil wars in Vietnam and Korea as well as across the Taiwan straits. Under these circumstances, the costs of offensive war or a taxing rivalry, especially across the Himalayan borders where India and China’s military and administrative presence was still weak, were extremely high. I have argued in this chapter that shared weaknesses, as compelling shared interests, did form an integral part of the trusting story between India and China. However, a purely materialist-rationalist perspective fails to uncover why these interests became compelling, allowing the two rivals to overcome mutual fears over a disputed frontier and the ideological rivalry of the early Cold War period. While material deficiencies were significant, so were the stakes involved. Typically, disputes over territorial sovereignty or frontier demarcation are indivisible, have high issue salience, and are less amenable to conflict termination through side-payments and bargaining. Moreover, how would rationalists explain India’s decision to provide food supplies for Chinese troops in Tibet and sustain its military presence across the border? Or, how would they explain China’s decision to allow the Dalai Lama to visit India even as the challenge to their legitimacy in Tibet was growing louder than ever? Rationalists cannot account for the deeper intimacies between Nehru

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<sup>619</sup> Anton Harder, *Defining Independence in Cold War Asia*, pp. 182.

and Zhou in the mid-1950s or explain why both states chose to prioritise their mutual relationship as opposed to zero-sum territorial and political gains.

It could also be argued that post-colonial solidarity provided the ideological foundation for India and China to cooperate in the 1950s. This was part of the public narrative Indian and Chinese leaders were propagating at the time. However, to assume that post-coloniality had significance beyond public propaganda is mistaken. First, post-colonialism is a complicated socio-historical process that did not have monochromatic effects. Instead of creating a basis of cooperation, scholars have argued that the colonial experience made these states more insecure about bargaining over territory.<sup>620</sup> Second, the limits of post-colonial solidarity were laid bare at the Bandung Conference in 1955. Ideological differences between Asian countries meant that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were expanded to ten principles to build consensus. Nehru publicly claimed that this was merely an act of elaboration that had successfully broadened the scope of the Panchsheel to thirty countries.<sup>621</sup> But this expansion had amended the principles beyond recognition. On the insistence of Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, and the Philippines the “right of every nation to defend itself singly or collectively” was added. This was entirely antithetical to the Five Principles that were intended to act against the formation of military alliances.<sup>622</sup> Even Nehru’s romanticism surrounding China in the pre-independence period and his personal equation with Chiang Kai-shek was quickly sacrificed for prudence after the Communist takeover. He continued to hold that India and China would be important regional players in shaping Asia’s destiny. But the confidence that they would collaborate on this front rather than compete came from the trust-building process, rather than preceding it.

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<sup>620</sup> Manjari Chatterjee Miller, *Wronged by Empire: Post-imperial Ideology and Foreign Policy in India and China* (California: Stanford University Press, 2013).

<sup>621</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, speech at a public meeting in Moscow on 21 June 1955, in *SWJN-SS*, vol. 29, pp. 225-228, at pp. 226.

<sup>622</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, note to Chief Ministers on 25 April 1955, in *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28 pp. 129-138, at pp. 137.

Similar to the Nehru-Liaquat case, Nehru and Zhou did not use costly signals, institutions, or build shared identities. However, from a psychology-based perspective, it could be argued that the interpersonal diplomacy between Nehru and Zhou played a key role in building the trusting relationship. If they had not been exposed to face-to-face contact, a trusting relationship could not have been built. This is certainly evident in the cases. Both Zhou and Nehru showed a preference for interpersonal diplomacy and relied on information inferred during the course of these interactions to discern each other's intentions. But these cases also reveal that there is more to the trusting story. For instance, actors did not enter the room with a blank slate. Nehru had already received consistent information from a wide-range of Indian diplomats about Zhou's reputation as a moderate and someone India could work with. His meeting with Zhou confirmed this reputation. Similarly, the trusting story does not end when actors leave the room. The case shows that initial reciprocity based on trusting commitments made during the course of interpersonal interactions was a vital source of trust. Moreover, not only are actors judging each other's sincerity as communication takes place, they are also paying attention to the nature of the information that is being communicated. It was relevant that both Nehru and Zhou directly addressed each other's central fears through their trusting commitments. Therefore, as has been argued in this thesis, the trusting story between rivals is incomplete without a mention of the social factors that facilitate it.

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India and China formed strategic trust and overcame their mutual fears and deep-rooted concerns over the un-demarcated border and dissimilar regime types in the early Cold War period. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was able to appreciate the complexity of China's military motives after the occupation of Tibet and also successfully communicate his understanding of fear's dangerous escalatory dynamics to his Chinese counterpart Premier Zhou Enlai. Nehru's projected empathy and perspective taking, which was a reflexive appreciation of the security dilemma based on historical learning, was activated as India and China began to

confront and militarily prepare for security measures across the 2100-mile long un-demarcated border. He recognised the long-term perils of militarising this frontier. During bilateral talks with Zhou and Mao leading up to the Bandung Conference therefore, Nehru tried to explain the effects of aggressive Chinese propaganda and actions on its neighbourhood. It was only due to an appreciation of the fears of other states in its region that the PRC began to reorient its policy towards the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, laying the foundations for eventual trust-building in India-China relations.

Subsequently, via interpersonal diplomacy during numerous bilateral visits and at the Bandung Conference, India and China were able to build strategic trust. This was however, only possible because of four social factors: discrepant information relating to changes in Chinese propaganda and the mitigation of India's and China's central fears through the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the personal reputations of Nehru and Zhou as moderates, shared weaknesses in administering border areas, and positive reciprocity based on their trusting commitments in Tibet and abroad. The presence of strategic trust becomes visible in the changing beliefs of India's and China's leaders as well as their mutual willingness to accept vulnerabilities with respect to issues that could directly compromise their national security; such as India's decision to allow the transfer of food grains to Tibet for the sustenance of Chinese troops and the PRC's decision to allow the Dalai Lama to visit India as the Tibetan revolution was beginning to take shape in Kham. In light of this historical reconstruction, it is pertinent to ask: if India and China were able to successfully build strategic trust, why were they unable to resolve the border dispute peacefully and avoid a border war in 1962? I will answer this question in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Trusting Failure: Nehru-Bogra Talks, 1953-55**

Trust holds a coveted place in scholarship in international relations on conflict termination. However, domestic spoilers can “block” it if trusting actors are too weak to overcome barriers. This chapter will study such an instance of trusting failure in India-Pakistan relations in the 1950s. It examines talks between Pakistan’s Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Bogra and his Indian counterpart Jawaharlal Nehru in 1953 and 1955, which attempted to resolve the territorial dispute over Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). While there is evidence to suggest that strategic trust was taking shape, the process eventually failed. Despite taking steps to build strategic trust and the presence of the social factors, since the dispute over J&K affected Pakistan’s domestic stability and the legitimacy of its claim to nationhood, Bogra, and Governor General Ghulam Mohammed, were unable to muster the wherewithal to insulate the trust-building process with Nehru from domestic spoilers. These attempts at trust-building culminated in mutual disappointment. This chapter helps limit the scope conditions of the four social factors as facilitators of trust-building, which were highlighted in Chapter 2, and emphasises the importance of elite control over public opinion to trust-building processes. While discrepant information, personal reputations, and shared weaknesses were present and did lead to diplomatic breakthroughs, they proved insufficient to sustain the trusting process as Bogra and Ghulam remained unable to justify concessions or a compromise on J&K to domestic audiences and other members of the ruling coalition. This made a diplomatic resolution of the J&K dispute and the trusting relationship with India incompatible with Bogra and Ghulam’s survival as political actors as well as the survival of the Pakistani state.

#### **When Trust-Building Becomes Anti-Social**

The territorial dispute over Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has been the most vexing issue in India-Pakistan relations since Partition. On both sides, the dispute represents deep-rooted divergences

in claims to nationhood. Pakistan claims sovereignty over J&K as a Muslim majority state whilst India does so via a secularist logic of territoriality. Despite the seemingly intractable and unchanging nature of the dispute, the relationship has ebbed and flowed and India and Pakistan have made multiple attempts at achieving a peaceful resolution over the years. Partly on account of recency bias, the most popularly known case is that of the Agra Summit between Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Pervez Musharraf in 2001, which was derailed as negotiations broke down.<sup>623</sup> Unlike the three wars and other near-war-like crisis situations between these rivals, such cases of failure on the brink of settlement have received little scholarly attention. The only survey of the Nehru-Bogra summit in 1955 was opportunely published in *Frontline Magazine* in July 2001 on the eve of the Agra Summit by historian A.G. Noorani as part of a brief book review.<sup>624</sup>

A recovery of the Nehru-Bogra summitry between 1953 and 1955 from the coffers of history offers insights on trusting failure as this was the first instance of India and Pakistan attempting to settle the dispute outside the UN's purview through direct talks. As I will demonstrate, strategic trust was taking shape between Nehru and Bogra when the latter became Prime Minister under Ghulam's patronage in 1953. In fact, India and Pakistan came close to a possible breakthrough twice during this period. The intervention of the two superpowers during the Cold War did not irreparably harm the prospects of a settlement, unlike in Korea, Laos, or Vietnam. Instead, on J&K, the Anglo-American bloc favoured a compromise solution that could help expand its influence in the region whilst the Soviets had relegated South Asia to geopolitical irrelevance until the advent of US-led military alliances showed otherwise. However, despite positive efforts towards the development of strategic trust and favourable external pressures, the trusting process still broke down. It was unable to usher a resolution of the territorial dispute. In this chapter, I examine why trust-building proved insufficient to resolve the J&K dispute and why the Nehru-Bogra talks failed between 1953 and 1955, leading to

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<sup>623</sup> Khalid Mahmood, *The Agra Summit and Beyond* (Karachi: Ushba International, 2005).

<sup>624</sup> A.G. Noorani, "Of the India-Pakistan summit, 1955," *Frontline Magazine*, July 21, 2001.

subsequent disappointment and the consequences thereof. Social factors can facilitate trust-building under certain permissive circumstances, but even if weak leaders are able to develop strategic trust with rivals, domestic spoilers may block this from resulting in a cooperative outcome, especially when trusting choices challenge popularly held beliefs.

### **Winds of Change**

On 17 April 1953, Mohammed Ali Bogra, a lesser known Bengali politician was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The nature of Pakistan's ties with India changed dramatically after his promulgation to power. In a private letter to his Chief Ministers, Nehru admitted that "ever since there has been a new Prime Minister in Pakistan" he had cause for optimism. He believed Bogra had a "sincere desire to succeed" in terms of promoting friendly relations between the two countries. Nehru was hopeful that informal talks with Bogra on the side-lines of the Commonwealth summit in London would allow both prime ministers to establish "confidence in each other's motives" and lay the foundations for "great progress" through future talks.<sup>625</sup> Finally, Nehru and Bogra met in London on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1953 and held talks of a "preliminary and exploratory character" on several bilateral issues such as the J&K dispute, the workings of the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement of 1950 on minorities, and evacuee property.<sup>626</sup> During their talks Bogra confessed to Nehru that his domestic position in Pakistan was not as strong as the latter's in India. Bogra was "a newcomer and had to function under some limitations". Indian Cabinet Minister Maulana Azad had earlier invited Bogra to New Delhi for talks. But to strengthen Bogra's position in Pakistan, Nehru agreed to travel to Karachi for a short visit before more detailed discussions took place in New Delhi.<sup>627</sup>

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<sup>625</sup> "India—The New Horizons," Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 56.

<sup>626</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.F.H.B. Tyabji on 16 June 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 330.

<sup>627</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Shaikh Abdullah on 28 June 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 195.

Nehru had snubbed a discussion on the J&K dispute with Bogra's predecessor as he did not believe these would yield any result.<sup>628</sup> He also turned down Khawaja Nazimuddin's offer to visit Karachi.<sup>629</sup> But with Bogra in office his expectations changed. Initially, the implications of Bogra's appointment were unclear. He was an "unknown quantity".<sup>630</sup> Since he was previously ambassador to the US, Nehru believed his choice as Prime Minister meant that "Pakistan [was] now very much under the influence of the US". This meant there was a greater risk of Pakistan getting drawn into the Cold War. However, unexpectedly, Bogra made a series of goodwill gestures. He told a press conference on 18 April 1953 that if Nehru was "earnest and honest about settling Indo-Pakistan issues", he was "prepared to go more than half way to meet him". On 27 April, he told a PTI correspondent in Karachi that he looked upon Nehru as "an elder brother". This was an unprecedented remark and was blacked out in the Pakistani press. Bogra claimed he was optimistic of an early solution of the J&K dispute and even floated the possibility of a joint defence plan with India.<sup>631</sup> Reflecting on these developments Nehru noted with satisfaction that "at present, more so than in the past, the general outlook [was] a much more friendly one between India and Pakistan".<sup>632</sup> He wrote to his Chief Ministers that "the relations of India and Pakistan [were] more friendly or less unfriendly than they [had] been at any time during the past five or six years".<sup>633</sup> Bogra's reputation was aided by the fact that he was an outsider and a Bengali (although this undercut his authority in Punjabi-dominated Western Pakistan). This created the impression that he was not as mawkish about the J&K dispute. Similarly, Nehru was seen in Pakistan as the only leader in India who could sanction a compromise on the J&K dispute. Pakistani Minister for Kashmir Affairs Shuaib Qureshi for

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<sup>628</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's note to Cabinet Secretary on 6 April 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 210.

<sup>629</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Khawaja Nazimuddin on 13 April 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 315.

<sup>630</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 19 April 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 544.

<sup>631</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Sheikh Abdullah on 27 April 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 212.

<sup>632</sup> "Kashmir—a Bilateral Problem," press conference in Cairo by Jawaharlal Nehru on 25 June 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 216.

<sup>633</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 24 May 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 557.

instance, privately affirmed that a breakthrough could only be achieved in “an era when Nehru was presiding over the destinies of India”. A similar opinion was expressed by Ghulam.<sup>634</sup>

Nehru was able to exercise empathy as security dilemma sensibility with Pakistan. He had written to Bogra’s predecessor Nazimuddin that in a world “so full of fear and talk and preparation of war” it was incumbent upon India and Pakistan to stop the “rot” in their relations. This was demanded by history and cultural similarities between both states—as any war between India and Pakistan would be akin to an ethnic conflict due to their “past close associations”.<sup>635</sup> He would later tell Bogra that he believed that behind various contentions between India and Pakistan were “mutual hostility, fear, anger and suspicion”. This had clouded the judgement of politicians. Though with Bogra in office the “atmosphere between Pakistan and India [was] now much better than before...and therefore it [had] become easier to hold talks”.<sup>636</sup> Nehru’s message to Bogra was clear: “fear can never yield good results and so we must not live in constant fear”.<sup>637</sup> India and Pakistan needed to find a way to overcome the security dilemma. This was not a simple undertaking as the distrust between India and Pakistan, in Nehru’s words, was produced by “a conflict of ideals as well as some conflict of interests, in addition to the memory of past conflicts”.<sup>638</sup> But a recognition of these circumstances was a positive step. It allowed Nehru to appreciate the role of Indian reactions in provoking “distrust and ill will” in Pakistan.<sup>639</sup> He often counselled his compatriots “to deter from causing injury to the feelings of the other side and to create amiable conditions, promote goodwill and discourage ill will”.<sup>640</sup> It was precisely to arrest the security dilemma spiral that Nehru kept pressing for a

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<sup>634</sup> Fortnightly reports from the High Commissioner of India in Karachi, 1953. MEA files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13232-A/201K, NAI.

<sup>635</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Khawaja Nazimuddin on 25 January 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 21, pp. 495.

<sup>636</sup> “India and the World,” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on 13 April 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 24.

<sup>637</sup> “India faces tremendous tasks,” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on 15 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 65.

<sup>638</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Minister on 15 August 1954. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 26, pp. 583.

<sup>639</sup> Statement by Jawaharlal Nehru to the press in Karachi on 27 July 1953. In Avtar Singh Bhasin [henceforth ASB], *India-Pakistan Relations, 1947-2007: A Documentary Study*, vol. I (New Delhi: Geetika Publishers, 2012), pp. 289.

<sup>640</sup> Statement by Jawaharlal Nehru to the press in Karachi on 27 July 1953. In ASB (ed.), vol. I, pp. 290.

No-War Declaration so that both states could formally renounce any resort to war or armed forces in settling their disputes. He was convinced this “would be very helpful in creating an atmosphere of less fear and suspicion”.<sup>641</sup>

Nehru sought to establish empathic conveyance with Bogra and Ghulam when he visited Karachi in 1953. He argued that the conflict between the two rivals was an “outcome of Partition and what happened afterwards”. This had created an “imponderable atmosphere of fear and suspicion”. However, it was incumbent upon them as neighbours with shared cultural backgrounds and histories of anticolonialism to seek a way out. Their economic and social deficiencies as well as the compulsions of geography provided an “opportunistic” basis for this effort. Nehru reassured Bogra that India had no nefarious designs on Pakistan’s independence. Although certain reactionary elements had expressed this desire, it was not the official policy of the Indian government. To help overcome “suspicions and fears,” Nehru affirmed India’s commitment to Pakistan’s “independence, integrity and respectability”.<sup>642</sup> The only sensible way forward for India was to establish friendly relations with Pakistan.<sup>643</sup> Bogra too, he believed, “desire[d] something like that”.<sup>644</sup> There is evidence to suggest Bogra and Ghulam had come to share such a reflexive understanding of the security dilemma between India and Pakistan. It is unlikely that they would have pursued such a conciliatory line with Nehru unless they believed the rivalry was avoidable and India was not inherently hostile. Ghulam espoused an understanding of the Indo-Pak rivalry that was similar to Nehru’s. He too spoke of a “sad fact of history that some happenings in the wake of freedom [had] left behind a large legacy of misunderstandings and bitterness due to which [their] relations [had] not been very pleasant”.<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>641</sup> Ibid, pp. 292.

<sup>642</sup> Statement by Jawaharlal Nehru to the press in Karachi on 27 July 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 429.

<sup>643</sup> “Work hard and stand united,” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on 7 November 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 24, pp. 50.

<sup>644</sup> “Reaching the rural folk,” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on 3 January 1954. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 24, pp. 82.

<sup>645</sup> Speech by Governor General of Pakistan at the Banquet held in honour of visit to New Delhi on 25 January 1955. In *ASB (ED.), VOL. I*, pp. 423.

Bogra also understood that the Indo-Pak rivalry would be “suicidal” if the two states continued to arm against each other.<sup>646</sup>

Other sources of strategic trust such as shared weaknesses were also observable. Nehru argued Pakistan’s domestic weaknesses were partly responsible for the recent advance in ties with India. He believed Pakistani peoples had finally realised that “conditions in Pakistan, both political and economic, [had] deteriorated greatly” due to the hardships caused by hostility with India and the ill effects of Partition. This had created a “genuine desire both in the public and among the leadership for some way to be found to settle the issue between India and Pakistan”.<sup>647</sup> His views were reaffirmed after his visit to Karachi. He noted “a strong desire among the public for Pakistan and India to resolve their differences and a belief that Pakistan was suffering from these conflicts”. The change in popular sentiment was seen as a response to the deteriorating political and economic conditions in Pakistan. The pitiful condition of thousands of Muslim refugees stranded on the streets of Karachi reminded Nehru of New Delhi’s situation post-Partition in 1948.<sup>648</sup> Kashmir was not as much of a “live issue” as economic issues and evacuee property.<sup>649</sup> Eventually, this larger resentment with socio-economic conditions and desire for peace had swayed Pakistani leaders who were “fully convinced now that there [was] no hope for them in carrying on conflicts with India, and they [were] prepared to go pretty far in resolving them”.<sup>650</sup>

Such inputs had been communicated from the Indian High Commission in Karachi. One fortnightly report noted that if the Kashmir issue was not resolved with India through bilateral negotiations it would remain stalemated indefinitely. Pakistan’s “internal conditions”

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<sup>646</sup> Fortnightly reports from the Deputy High Commissioner for India in Lahore, 1953. MEA Files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13256-A/201L, NAI.

<sup>647</sup> “Improving relations with Pakistan,” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on 26 April 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 321.

<sup>648</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Bakshi Ghulam Muhammed on 30 July 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 302.

<sup>649</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to G.S. Bajpai on 30 July 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 453.

<sup>650</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on 29 July 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 443.

had outworn “the call for Jihad” in J&K. The dispute still roused public opinion, but “everyday problems [took] up so much of their thinking and powers of agitation that these long-standing disputes [had] receded into the background”. The report estimated that for Bogra’s survival as prime minister it was essential to revive the economy of Pakistan, provide relief to those financially distressed, and solve the disputes with India “without compromising what the Pakistani people [had] come to believe as their point of honour”. The Indian High Commission concluded that in particular Bogra and Ghulam were “desperately keen” to settle outstanding issues with India as they had realised that in its absence Pakistan’s condition would continue to deteriorate. The exorbitant defence expenditure was the only reducible part of the budget. The business community in Pakistan was seen as particularly sympathetic to better ties as Partition had unravelled profitable colonial supply chains and devastated Pakistan’s economy. This larger realisation, Nehru hoped, would be able to overcome the resistance of anti-India reactionaries in Pakistan.<sup>651</sup>

Although India’s industrial development and general economic conditions were better—notwithstanding food shortages, struggles with land reforms, and unbalanced industrialisation—domestic weaknesses were also a concern for Nehru. The Constituent Assembly of J&K had dismissed Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the first Prime Minister of J&K, and arrested him for conspiring against the state and espousing the cause of an independent Kashmir. As Gowher Rizvi argues, “India’s moral claim to Kashmir had been weakened and Nehru could no longer be sure of the support of the people of Kashmir for India in view of the communal violence”.<sup>652</sup> Not only did this strain India’s relations with the Kashmir valley, it also provoked Pakistan’s disapproval. An emergency cabinet meeting was called in Karachi to ask Bogra to immediately parley with Nehru on the J&K dispute. Local newspapers were more direct in their criticism. *The Dawn* newspaper reported that Abdullah’s dismissal was “a

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<sup>651</sup> Fortnightly reports from the High Commissioner of India in Karachi, 1953. MEA files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13232-A/201K, NAI.

<sup>652</sup> Gowher Rizvi, “Nehru and the Indo-Pakistan rivalry over Kashmir 1947–64,” *Contemporary South Asia*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1995), pp. 17-37.

challenge to Pakistan” as Nehru was determined to force J&K’s accession to India. The *Pakistan Times* accused Nehru of trying to “prejudice the case for a free and unfettered plebiscite”.<sup>653</sup> These issues were weighing Nehru down. Even before Abdullah’s dismissal, internal circumstances in J&K had become so tense on the Indian side that Nehru felt “naturally handicapped” when discussing the dispute with Bogra in London.<sup>654</sup> Similar concerns over dissension with Azad Kashmir leader Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas hobbled the Muslim League’s leadership in Pakistan to some extent.

Before summitry in Karachi and New Delhi began in 1953, empathic conveyance and strategic trust was taking shape between Nehru and Bogra. They both had personal reputations—as a secular nationalist and Bengali-outsider respectively—that were conducive to the trust-building process, were willing to make conciliatory gestures capable of acting as discrepant information, and also had shared weaknesses on the domestic front to provide a rational basis for the trusting relationship to develop. However, this early trust-building and unprecedented improvement in ties since Partition was ultimately blocked by Bogra’s cabinet colleagues and the general public opinion in Pakistan. Strategic trust proved insufficient to overcome the rivalry and sustain the diplomatic breakthrough. The next two sections will discuss the summitry between India and Pakistan in 1953-1955 and examine why this was the case.

### **Nehru-Bogra Talks, 1953**

Two summits took place between Nehru and Bogra in 1953. First, as had been agreed between the two Prime Ministers in London, Nehru and his sister and Indian Diplomat V.L. Pandit travelled to Karachi for talks between 25 to 27 July 1953. India’s approach to the J&K dispute was based on two factors: reducing external interference, and seeking a viable alternative to an

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<sup>653</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Bakshi Ghulam Muhammed on 10 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 317.

<sup>654</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.F.H.B. Tyabji on June 16, 1953. In *ASB* (ed.), vol. I, pp. 266.

overall plebiscite in favour of preserving the status quo. The J&K dispute had been debated before the UN Security Council since 1947 but no progress had been made. Nehru argued “external interference [had] complicated the issue further and if [other actors] stopped interfering, it [would] become much easier to solve it”.<sup>655</sup> In his view great powers occupying positions of responsibility on the UN Security Council, such as the US and the UK, had unhelpfully viewed the J&K dispute through the prism of their own regional ambitions to counter Soviet influence. This meant they cared more about the strategic value of J&K rather than the principles of fairness. Nehru’s apprehension was that nonaligned India might face a prejudiced trial against a more pliable Pakistan. Moreover, India was materially stronger in comparison to Pakistan. Bilateral talks were thus favourable in terms of India’s relative leverage during bargaining. This is why Nehru had rejected General Mohamed Naguib’s offer to intercede despite Egypt’s neutral position.<sup>656</sup> Finally, Nehru did not believe external mediation was helpful in terms of reaching a settlement. Since the issue was tied up with national identity, any mediation or arbitration forced Indian and Pakistani delegates to act as “advocates of a cause”. Direct talks, Nehru hoped, would allow both sides to substitute a language of uncompromising values with practicable solutions.<sup>657</sup>

Second, the Indian side was anxious about the results of an overall plebiscite and was actively seeking to dilute its commitment for the same. Even as Nehru publicly kept up the appearance that the wishes of the people of J&K would inevitably determine their future, he had begun to have serious reservations about what this would mean, especially as protests carried out by the Hindu political party, the Jammu Praja Parishad, had created a tense atmosphere and Sheikh Abdullah’s allegiances to India were under suspicion. As Indian President Rajendra Prasad wrote to Nehru, “in case of an overall plebiscite, India might not only lose the whole of

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<sup>655</sup> “India—The New Horizons,” Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 57.

<sup>656</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to K.M. Panikkar on 14 April 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 211.

<sup>657</sup> “Kashmir—a Bilateral Problem,” press conference in Cairo by Jawaharlal Nehru on 25 June 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 216.

Jammu and Kashmir, but would also have to face the problem of exodus and rehabilitation of the Hindu population of the State". Not only did a plebiscite risk diminishing India's territorial holdings, it could also have caused a mass migration of Hindu refugees and reproduced the chaos and violence of Partition in 1947. Therefore, Prasad suggested that Nehru look for a settlement with Bogra on the basis of the "existing ceasefire line as the boundary between India and Pakistan". However, if this was deemed unsuitable, India could propose a plebiscite confined to the Kashmir Valley or, alternatively, zonal plebiscites in Jammu, Ladakh, the Valley and Azad Kashmir.<sup>658</sup> Nehru had already implicitly communicated this approach to Bogra in London. He had unequivocally stated that he wanted "no external interference" and for the J&K dispute to be settled through direct talks between the governments of India and Pakistan. Moreover, only those solutions would be practicable that "upset present conditions a little as possible". In his opinion, India and Pakistan had two options. Either they could continue down the previously ineffective path and keep debating the terms of a plebiscite through UN appointed intermediaries such as Frank Graham. Or else, they could "explore other avenues".<sup>659</sup> In London, Bogra was non-committal and only expressed hope of an early settlement. However, when he met Nehru in Karachi, discussions proceeded further.

Discussions in Karachi were lengthy but did not lead to any major breakthrough. Nehru described Bogra and Ghulam as "terribly eager to have a settlement, though they would not make any precise proposals". Their repeated appeals for a peaceful settlement of the J&K dispute appeared "plaintive and almost pathetic" instead of capable of genuine problem solving. A variety of other issues such as minority religious interests, evacuee property, exchange of enclaves, canal waters etc. were also discussed, but the J&K dispute was the most important item on the agenda. To Bogra's annoyance, Nehru patronisingly began talks on J&K by outlining the cosmopolitan history of region, right from the Greek period to the present. He reiterated India's

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<sup>658</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Rajendra Prasad on 15 July 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 288.

<sup>659</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Sheikh Abdullah on 28 June 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 22, pp. 194.

stance on external interference and advocated for continued direct talks.<sup>660</sup> In Nehru's opinion the "only safe solution was to accept the status quo with minor modifications". Any other pathway would risk social upheavals and unwarranted migrations. This in turn would have an adverse effect on India-Pakistan ties and ultimately vitiate the prospect of friendly relations they were both aiming for. However, Bogra demurred. He did not believe "he could put this through". Bogra recognised the domestic limitations of agreeing to such a basis. He instead asked Nehru if they could improve upon Frank Graham's proposals for demilitarisation and an overall plebiscite. Nehru did not believe this approach would be productive as India objected to the presence of all Pakistani civilian and military personnel in J&K prior to a plebiscite. Bogra then asked Nehru if any other options were available "such as regional plebiscite or plebiscite only in a selected area, with the rest divided up without a plebiscite, and partial independence, etc." He did not want to dilute Pakistan's commitment to an overall plebiscite but wanted to propose these alternatives for consideration.<sup>661</sup> No consensus was reached.

Although talks in Karachi were inconclusive, they still proved useful. First, Nehru and Bogra agreed that the independence of J&K was impractical and would leave the door open to future intrigues and trouble. This condensed the range of options under consideration. Second, Nehru left Karachi with the clear impression that Bogra favoured a "regional or zonal plebiscite".<sup>662</sup> This was in line with Indian thinking at the time and potentially offered a meaningful basis to conceptualise a formula for settlement moving forward. Third, the rise in bilateral summitry was an indication that Pakistan was also willing to pursue a direct settlement with India on the J&K dispute. In fact, the Deputy Indian High Commissioner in Lahore relayed that Bogra had also convinced Azad Kashmir leaders of the merits of such an approach. This was understandable considering Pakistan too had become disillusioned by the UN Security

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<sup>660</sup> Talks between Mohammed Ali Bogra and Jawaharlal Nehru on 25 July 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 427.

<sup>661</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed on 30 July 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 301-302.

<sup>662</sup> *Ibid.*

Council's ability to resolve the issue and overcome Indian dilatoriness.<sup>663</sup> Finally, as the official joint statement indicated, both India and Pakistan agreed that the "independence and integrity of the two countries [would be fully respected]".<sup>664</sup> Nehru had used the talks to reassure Bogra and address Pakistani fears of Indian non-acceptance of Partition. Earlier, before the Calcutta press, Bogra had appealed for India to "respect the sovereignty of Pakistan without any mental reservation".<sup>665</sup> Similarly, Qureshi had argued that no progress was possible on J&K until India had "recognised in unequivocal terms Pakistan's complete independence and sovereignty".<sup>666</sup> Clearly, there were concerns that given the opportunity India would reverse Partition and merge Pakistan into the Indian Union. Thus, assuaging Pakistan's fears was vital. Speaking to the press afterwards Nehru refused to divulge details on talks related to J&K. However, he clarified that the talks were much better than any of the ones he had before and helped bring the two sides closer to a settlement.<sup>667</sup> In his words: "Kashmir continued to be a hard nut to crack. Yet, even in regard to Kashmir, I think that we had a greater understanding of each other's viewpoints".<sup>668</sup> He remarked that the talks were noteworthy for their "friendly and informal" tenor rather "a rigid and formal one".<sup>669</sup>

The second summit in New Delhi took place shortly thereafter in the backdrop of Sheikh Abdullah's dismissal as Prime Minister of J&K and subsequent arrest on suspicion of plotting Kashmir's independence from the Indian Union. An emergency meeting of the Pakistani Cabinet was called and there was a build-up of public and parliamentary pressure on Bogra to intercede with Nehru and arrest the alarming situation. *Dawn* reported that "a wave of

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<sup>663</sup> Fortnightly reports from the Deputy High Commissioner for India in Lahore, 1953. MEA Files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13256-A/201L, NAI.

<sup>664</sup> Joint communique by Jawaharlal Nehru and Muhammad Ali Bogra on 27 July 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 438.

<sup>665</sup> Fortnightly reports from the Deputy High Commissioner for India in Lahore, 1953. MEA Files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13256-A/201L, NAI.

<sup>666</sup> Fortnightly reports from the High Commissioner of India in Karachi, 1953. MEA files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13232-A/201K, NAI.

<sup>667</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's remarks at press conference on 30 July 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 446.

<sup>668</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 1 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 582.

<sup>669</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's remarks at press conference on 30 July 1953. In *ASB* (ed.), vol. I, pp. 299.

repression has already followed Abdullah's dismissal and....Bharati troops are shooting and killing Muslims in the streets of Srinagar".<sup>670</sup> Moreover, the Constituent Assembly of J&K had also passed a resolution confirming their accession to India. This too caused controversy in Pakistan as India was perceived to be recanting its UN commitments and vitiating conditions for an impartial plebiscite. However, Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan Mohan Sinha Mehta strongly advised Bogra to postpone his visit as the "present context" was not conducive to a settlement of the J&K dispute.<sup>671</sup> Nehru agreed with Mehta as he believed any "attempt to discuss [the dispute] in a hurry and in an excited atmosphere [could not] possibly yield any result. In fact, it might make matters worse".<sup>672</sup> He even told Bogra that if their discussions proceeded "in an abnormal and excited atmosphere," then they would not be beneficial. Instead, they risked "public disappointment" by fostering further inconclusive summitry.<sup>673</sup> Bogra was hoping to positively impact the situation to shore up his domestic position. Yet, Nehru could not resist his demand for talks in New Delhi.<sup>674</sup> Nehru acknowledged that Bogra was not the force inciting anti-India propaganda in Pakistan. As he wrote to Krishna Menon, "newspaper reports in Pakistan full of amazing falsehoods resulting in mass hysteria [were] encouraged by leaders, chiefly rivals of [Bogra], who wish[ed] to weaken his position".<sup>675</sup> Thus, albeit reluctantly, Nehru was willing to meet with Bogra and proceed with the agenda leftover from Karachi. Bogra informed Nehru that he would arrive in New Delhi on 16<sup>th</sup> August and was willing to stay "as long as may be necessary to ensure positive results".<sup>676</sup> He assured Nehru that regardless of the prevailing sentiment in Pakistan, he was prepared to discuss outstanding issues "calmly, dispassionately and in a friendly and co-operative manner".<sup>677</sup> However, as we

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<sup>670</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 11 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, 322.

<sup>671</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>672</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 323.

<sup>674</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Rajendra Prasad on 12 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 325.

<sup>675</sup> Note from Jawaharlal Nehru to Commonwealth Secretary on 14 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 327.

<sup>676</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Rajendra Prasad on 12 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 325.

<sup>677</sup> Letter Mohammad Ali Bogra to Jawaharlal Nehru on 13 August 1953. In *ASB* (ed.), vol. I, pp. 306.

will see, Bogra and Nehru's personal will as interlocutors was not enough to overcome the obstacles inherent to a peace process on J&K.

Before the talks began, Nehru debated India's position on the conditions for a plebiscite, the scope of the plebiscite and the appointment of the plebiscite administrator, and finally, the timeline for a plebiscite. He was in favour of an overall plebiscite but on a regional basis. The peoples of J&K would be able to cast their votes but this would only determine the fate of their specific sub-regions. This would lead to a Partition of J&K but would avoid mass migrations. However, Nehru further qualified his support for such a regional plebiscite. On the question of partition, "the views of the people [would] naturally have a great say, but not a final say about every area". If a partition on the basis of a regional plebiscite was the only consideration to fix the international boundary, it may cause difficulties with respect to geographical features. Any boundary, in Nehru's opinion, needed to be "clear and defensible boundary for both parties". This why there could not be "islands of territory" on either side. As an alternative to a plebiscite, Nehru was also willing to consider a "new election for a Constituent Assembly all over the State". This Constituent Assembly then could take up the subject of partitioning of J&K. As was stated earlier, the only option rejected outright was the independence of J&K as a state. On the plebiscite administrator Nehru was clear that the nominee needed to come from a "smaller and neutral" country of Europe or Asia. An American such as the UN appointed Admiral Nimitz was entirely unacceptable. This principle would also logically apply to the administrator's staff. Finally, he estimated it would take at least a year for the plebiscite administrator to formulate the electoral role and frame terms for a plebiscite. Hence, if Bogra agreed, he anticipated the plebiscite could take place sometime after the summer of 1954.<sup>678</sup>

When talks began with Bogra, Nehru started by stating his dismay at the "hysteria" in the Pakistani press and amongst prominent politicians on J&K. There were calls for a Jihad or

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<sup>678</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Bakshi Ghulam Muhammed on 15 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 330.

holy war to be carried out against Indian occupation by leaders such as Khan Abdul Qayum Khan, Firoze Khan Noon, and Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman. These incidents had vitiated the positive atmosphere for the talks that both prime ministers desired. Bogra however, quickly diffused the situation. He expressed regret for the exaggerated reports in the Pakistani press and the reaction of select politicians. He confided in Nehru that it was “difficult to control” such elements. In particular, Shuaib Qureshi had proven himself to be “very rigid and limited in his outlook”.<sup>679</sup> This opened the door for productive talks on J&K and a plebiscite. Both sides had previously held long discussions on this subject but could not achieve progress on preliminary matters such as quantum of troops and the retention of Pakistani forces in Azad Kashmir. However, there was renewed hope that an officials’ committee could take up these preliminary issues on the basis of a new consensus be adopted in New Delhi and seek to resolve them over the next six to eight months. This would in turn clear the pathway for the plebiscite administrator to be appointed by the J&K government after April 1954. The administrator would survey the situation and take necessary steps to hold the plebiscite over the next year or so. Nehru then broached the proposal for a regional plebiscite then. UN Representative, Owen Dixon had first proposed a zonal plebiscite in 1950 but the nature of his proposal was unacceptable to India since it was predicated on the partition of Hindu and Muslim majority areas in J&K. But it was clear that an overall plebiscite of J&K as a single unit was impractical. Therefore, a religion-agnostic basis for a regional plebiscite needed to be evolved for a partition of the state. After the results of the plebiscite became known, Indian and Pakistani officials would demarcate the boundary avoiding “islands of territory” and taking into consideration the counsel of military advisors.<sup>680</sup> The objective was to alter the existing status-quo as little as possible.

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<sup>679</sup> Transcript of talks between Mohammed Ali Bogra and Jawaharlal Nehru on 17 August 1953. In *SIJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 333.

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid*, 334.

Nehru then explained India's position on the choice of plebiscite administrator. In light of the rivalry of the great powers and the strategic value of J&K in the Cold War, it was necessary to appoint a plebiscite administrator from a smaller and neutral country of Europe or Asia. Finally, Nehru rejected the rehabilitation of refugees prior to a plebiscite as the examination of each claim would be a cumbersome task and may indefinitely delay the process. Bogra expressed his broad agreement with Nehru's suggestions although he did not "commit himself to everything fully".<sup>681</sup> The final matter for discussion was the independence of J&K or the independence of the Kashmir valley with a plebiscite for the rest of the state. Nehru argued such an independent entity would be "neither politically nor economically viable" and would invite external great powers and India and Pakistan to compete for influence. Bogra agreed with this argument wholly and the proposal for independence was conclusively shelved. Thereafter, the Indian side drew up a joint draft statement on the basis of the talks so far. After Pakistan's Foreign Minister Zafrulla Khan intervened, Bogra proposed a new draft, which went much further than the Indian version. But Nehru claimed this would require a "de novo consideration" of the issues and was unacceptable. Eventually, the Indian draft with a few minor changes was accepted as the joint statement. However, most noticeably, the reference to the plebiscite administrator coming from a small and neutral country of Europe or Asia was omitted. Zafrulla had persuaded Nehru that it would be embarrassing for Bogra to accept this without prior consultation with his cabinet. He assured Nehru that this was a mere courtesy and a formal acceptance of the condition would follow soon thereafter. Nehru was unconvinced but he relented.<sup>682</sup> Additionally, the joint statement referred to a plebiscite in the "entire state" but Nehru was clear that the Pakistanis understood that this would proceed on a regional basis as had been agreed.<sup>683</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> Ibid, 335.

<sup>682</sup> Transcript of talks between Mohammed Ali Bogra and Jawaharlal Nehru on 20 August 1953. In *SIJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 343.

<sup>683</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Karan Singh on 21 August 1953. In *SIJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 347.

Nehru was satisfied with what had been achieved in the joint statement. He claimed Bogra was a “much better person to deal with than any [he had] encountered thus far from Pakistan. He [was] really desirous of friendship and cooperation” with India.<sup>684</sup> Similarly, he told his Chief Ministers that he “found [Bogra] much easier to get on with than his predecessors.” After the talks, Nehru described him as “frank and amiable” and as anxious as him to arrive at a reasonable settlement on J&K.<sup>685</sup> Beyond personal impressions however, for the first time, India and Pakistan had an agreed basis for the plebiscite and a realistic timeline to follow. G.S. Bajpai, former foreign secretary, congratulated Nehru for achieving this “remarkable feat of firmness, patience and skill”. An agreement had been reached on J&K without sacrificing India’s basic principles and interests.<sup>686</sup> At the same time, as Gowher Rizvi argues, “Nehru had offered virtually everything that Pakistan had been seeking since 1947: plebiscite for the entire state and almost immediate appointment of a mutually acceptable plebiscite administrator”.<sup>687</sup> Bogra would refer to it as “a compromise hammered out of conflicting claims in an atmosphere of suspicion, mistrust and mutual recrimination”.<sup>688</sup> He also mentioned that he had “great faith” in Nehru and was “convinced that he [would] honour the agreement...both in letter and spirit”.<sup>689</sup> This was indeed an unprecedented breakthrough carrying the potential for a permanent settlement and for a brief moment it seemed like India and Pakistan had found a way to navigate their thorniest bilateral dispute.

The consensus however was short-lived. As soon as Bogra returned to Pakistan a vicious press campaign was started against the joint statement. This was orchestrated by his Minister of Information and Broadcasting Shuaib Qureshi. The Pakistani Cabinet convened seven times to discuss the joint statement, but the opposition to Bogra did not abate. Press criticism followed

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<sup>684</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to G.S. Bajpai on 24 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 349.

<sup>685</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to U Nu on 11 November 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 24, pp. 420.

Jawaharlal Nehru to G.S. Bajpai on 24 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 349.

<sup>687</sup> Gowher Rizvi, “Nehru and the Indo-Pakistan rivalry over Kashmir 1947–64,” pp. 17-37.

<sup>688</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 3 September 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 362.

<sup>689</sup> Fortnightly reports from the High Commissioner of India in Karachi, 1953. MEA files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13232-A/201K, NAI.

thereafter. *Dawn* accused Nehru of misquoting Bogra and claimed there was no agreement to replace Admiral Nimitz.<sup>690</sup> Another article in *Dawn* was published under the caption “foolish, suicidal and criminal”. Similarly, an editorial in the *Times of Karachi* described the joint statement as “worse than nothing” and claimed “the terms of the agreement [were] not worth the paper they [were] written on”. It proceeded to admonish Bogra for seeking a settlement with India “at any price”.<sup>691</sup> Nehru wrote to Bogra that he was worried such developments would derail the progress they had made on the J&K dispute. He had expected that Bogra and his colleagues would influence public opinion positively, but this would not be forthcoming. Instead, their efforts had been “checked and vitiated by the activities of people who [lacked] all goodwill and [preferred] conflict and trouble”. Nehru reiterated to Bogra the value of the joint statement. It was for the first time, he argued, India and Pakistan had gotten “out of the vicious circle which had caught [them] during these past years.” They had taken definite steps in the direction of a solution and “[this] was no small matter, considering the past background of fear and suspicion and interminable and fruitless debate”.<sup>692</sup> However, Nehru was shocked to find that “a number of newspapers in Karachi had suddenly come out with big headlines accusing India, and more especially [Nehru], of flouting Delhi decisions”. He singled out *Dawn* and the *Times of Karachi* for censure. This press campaign was worrying mainly because it “could only have taken place under some kind of official backing and inspiration”. Nehru asked Bogra: “are we to be caught again in the vicious circle which has been our fate during the past few years?” Or, alternatively would they be able to trust each other’s bona fides and make progress?<sup>693</sup> Events would answer the former question in the positive and negate the latter.

Bogra admitted to the Indian High Commissioner that the Pakistani press had been “mischievous” and it was “serious problem” for him”. He asked Nehru for time in the hope that

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<sup>690</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Mohan Sinha Mehta on 28 August 1953. In *SIJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 353.

<sup>691</sup> Fortnightly reports from the High Commissioner of India in Karachi, 1953. MEA files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13232-A/201K, NAI.

<sup>692</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 28 August 1953. In *SIJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 355.

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid*, 356.

this would help “calm down the passions in Pakistan” and improve his position.<sup>694</sup> However, Bogra was unable to do much to “stem the dangerous drift”. He privately told the Indian High Commissioner that he wanted peace with India but the Indians needed to be “sympathetic and realise [his] difficulties”. The fortnightly report of the High Commissioner concluded that Bogra was “helpless vis-à-vis his colleagues and the people so far as the Kashmir issue [was] concerned”. For years the Pakistani peoples had been fed a steady diet of propaganda on the vitality of supporting the struggles of Muslims in Kashmir. Bogra was afraid to “expose this fallacy” by taking an alternative line that could precipitate his downfall.<sup>695</sup> In light of public and parliamentary pressure, Bogra was forced to withdraw three key commitments he had made in New Delhi. First, he asked Nehru to reconsider the replacement of Nimitz as plebiscite administrator and disclaim any attempt to settle the issue outside the UN’s aegis. Bogra argued he had been appointed with the agreement of the governments of India and Pakistan and his impartiality was beyond question as he would not at the behest of any particular country, but rather as a UN official. He even issued a public statement formally distancing himself from any attempt to replace Nimitz.<sup>696</sup> His response inspired Nehru’s disbelief. The more he considered Bogra’s response, the more he felt that it “bore little relation to [their] talks or to the [joint] statement”. Instead of progressing, as he had anticipated, they seemed “to be going backwards”. He told Bogra that he could not accept Nimitz’s candidature as this would risk inviting great power intervention in the J&K dispute.<sup>697</sup> Ultimately this argument between Nehru and Bogra would become moot as Nimitz voluntarily resigned. Even then, Bogra pleaded with the Americans to change Nimitz’s mind as his resignation would “cause [the] public to brand him liar and become convinced he [had] made a secret deal with Nehru”.<sup>698</sup> US officials reported

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<sup>694</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 3 September 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 361.

<sup>695</sup> Fortnightly reports from the High Commissioner of India in Karachi, 1953. MEA files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13232-A/201K, NAI.

<sup>696</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 18 December 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 24, pp. 408.

<sup>697</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 3 September 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 362.

<sup>698</sup> Ambassador in Pakistan (Hildreth) to the Department of State, Foreign Relations of The United States, 1952–1954, Africa And South Asia, Volume Xi, Part 2.  
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v11p2/d789>.

that public disappointment in Pakistan over talks in New Delhi was “deep and widespread” and Bogra had lost “strength and prestige”.<sup>699</sup>

Second, Bogra rescinded his commitment for a regional plebiscite without a clear understanding of what these regions would be. This, he argued, was simply not “concrete enough for the expression of a definite view for or against it”. Nehru however disagreed and stated that only after an overall plebiscite could the regions be determined as the very act of “defining regions rather prejudge[d] the result of the voting”.<sup>700</sup> This was a major concern for the Indians as any definition of the regions on a religious basis was untenable for India’s domestic stability and risked forced migrations. In Nehru’s words, “the large minorities in India and Pakistan [would] be affected by [any] solution” in J&K.<sup>701</sup> Third, Bogra resisted Nehru’s idea that a plebiscite would be only be the dominant basis for settling the international border and other factors such as geographical and military prudence needed consideration. In Bogra’s view, the plebiscite was final and binding on the two parties and could not be reassessed for a final solution as “as there would be no assurance that an agreed solution would be found even after the plebiscite has been held”. Nehru disagreed. He continued to hold that merely relying on the plebiscite risked an “absurd result” in a military sense, especially if it created untenable islands of territory on either side.<sup>702</sup>

Apart from this, Bogra also wanted modifications to the joint statement. He argued that at the time of the plebiscite the administration of J&K should be in the hands of an impartial authority or a joint India-Pakistan Commission. However, Nehru rejected this proposal outright as he could not countenance a dilution of the authority of the state administration led by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. He argued this principle had been accepted by the UN as well.

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<sup>699</sup> Ibid.

<sup>700</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 3 September 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 362.

<sup>701</sup> Ibid, pp. 368.

<sup>702</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 10 November 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 24, pp. 405.

Therefore, there could be “no question whatsoever of Pakistani or any outside authority sharing, in any way, in the administration of the State”. However, he assured Bogra that the J&K government would not interfere in the workings of the plebiscite administrator or hinder the organisation of a fair and impartial plebiscite. Relatedly, Bogra had also proposed the exclusion of troops of either country from the plebiscite area or the presence of a joint force. This too was anathema for the Indian side. Nehru reminded Bogra that previous UN Security Council resolutions had asked for the complete withdrawal of Pakistan’s forces but had allowed India to maintain a minimum quantum. In fact, it was precisely a disagreement over the size of this remaining force that had deadlocked talks so far.<sup>703</sup> Bogra, also revised his position on Nehru’s proposal to exclude refugees from participating in the plebiscite. He said, ostensibly under pressure from local groups whose interests this mechanism prejudiced, that refugees were entitled to have their votes recorded for the region of their origin. He saw “no reason either in justice and equity or on the basis of the agreement already reached [with Nehru] which would justify depriving them of their right to participate in the plebiscite”.<sup>704</sup> Nehru argued once again that such large-scale rehabilitation would be a challenging bureaucratic undertaking as the residency of refugees would be difficult to establish beyond reasonable doubt. Not only would this delay and potentially derail the plebiscite, it would also lead to a refugee crisis in J&K as new camps would have to be established to accommodate incoming refugees and some may even have to be resettled from their existing stations as previous residents returned. Such social upheaval the Indians were desperate to avoid.<sup>705</sup>

Nehru was somewhat culpable for Bogra’s predicament. Before Bogra could inform his Cabinet colleagues, he had let slip to correspondents of *Dawn* and the *Associated Press of Pakistan* that there was an agreement to replace Nimitz as the plebiscite administrator and to proceed

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<sup>703</sup> Public address by Jawaharlal Nehru on 23 January 1954. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 365.

<sup>704</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 10 November 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 24, pp. 406.

<sup>705</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 3 September 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, 366.

with a regional plebiscite.<sup>706</sup> This left Bogra exposed to criticism and awkward questions upon his return to Karachi. Bogra was dismayed and saw these officially inspired leakages as India's attempts to force his hand.<sup>707</sup> He tried to wriggle out of this difficult situation by claiming he had always maintained that he could not commit to Nehru's proposals without the concurrence of his Cabinet colleagues. However, he had earlier stated this was a mere formal courtesy. It quickly became clear that he was withdrawing from his position entirely under the weight of the domestic backlash. The Indian High Commissioner in Karachi did relay some of the pressures being faced by Bogra at the time. After Nehru's earlier visit to Karachi for instance, he noted that although Bogra was keen on a settlement with India, his Cabinet colleagues and official advisors were "bringing pressure on him not to trust [India's] intentions too much and not to exceed the brief". This is also why he had to periodically give anti-India statements to maintain his credibility within the party. Especially after Abdullah's dismissal he took up strong language against India on J&K to "escape being overthrown, or worse still, being assassinated". In another fortnightly report, the Indian High Commissioner claimed that while Bogra was working for a rapprochement with India, most of his reactionary colleagues preferred "threats, lies, and ultimatums". He was thus "forced to play the role of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" on the J&K dispute.<sup>708</sup> Similarly, after the New Delhi talks, he would rely on sabre-rattling to rehabilitate himself with public opinion in Pakistan and overcome the charge that he had surrendered Pakistan's interests to Nehru.<sup>709</sup>

Nehru suspected that although popular, Bogra, as a Bengali, had "no roots and no basic strength" in Pakistani politics as he had mostly stayed abroad as a career diplomat. He was "not the most important man there".<sup>710</sup> These impressions were then confirmed with the flow of

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<sup>706</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 28 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 356.

<sup>707</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 23 September 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 379.

<sup>708</sup> Fortnightly reports from the High Commissioner of India in Karachi, 1953. MEA files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13232-A/201K, NAI.

<sup>709</sup> Fortnightly reports from the Deputy High Commissioner for India in Lahore, 1953. MEA Files (Pak-I), no. PI/53/13256-A/201L, NAI.

<sup>710</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.C. Roy on 29 July 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 443.

events. Bogra confided in Mehta that the anti-India press campaign was “officially inspired” by Cabinet colleagues and his position in Pakistan was “extremely difficult”. He threatened to resign if his policies, including the joint statement with Nehru, were not endorsed by his colleagues.<sup>711</sup> After this, the pressure on him momentarily abated. But, by and large, he did eventually yield the consensus reached with Nehru on key pre-requisites for a plebiscite. As the Annual Report from the Indian Mission in Karachi stated, “[Bogra] although convinced of the bad effects of [Pakistan’s] policy, could not gather enough courage to denounce it openly. In the end he meekly submitted to the diktats of other members of the cabinet and toed the line laid down for him.”<sup>712</sup> It was not until 4 February 1954 that he could express Pakistan’s willingness to appoint a new administrator for the plebiscite (empty gesture considering Nimitz had resigned). Nehru too faced domestic opposition. For instance, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, the then Prime Minister of J&K, even sent in his resignation after hearing of the joint statement with Pakistan. But unlike Bogra, Nehru could gather enough support for his position and draw Bakshi in line. Not only was Bakshi persuaded to rescind his resignation, he issued a public statement that the communique with Pakistan had been finalised with the “concurrence” and “unqualified support” of the government of J&K.<sup>713</sup>

The final nail in the coffin was Pakistan’s decision to obtain military aid from the US. When rumours of what would be known as the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement between the US and Pakistan were confirmed on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1954, Nehru rescinded his previous commitment to a plebiscite made as part of the joint statement since he now believed India’s security environment had been adversely impacted. There were two consequences for India. First, US military intervention in the region was bound to upset the extant “balances and equilibrium in [India] and Pakistan and in South Asia”.<sup>714</sup> The prospect of US aid bankrolling

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<sup>711</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s statement in the Lok Sabha on 17 September 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 405.

<sup>712</sup> Annual Political Report Karachi, 1953. MEA Files (Pak-I), no. PI/54/1312/201K, NAI.

<sup>713</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Karan Singh on 21 August 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 23, pp. 347.

<sup>714</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru speech at AICC meeting on 15 January 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 21, pp. 491.

Pakistan's war machine was a daunting one for New Delhi despite US President Dwight Eisenhower's assurances to the contrary. As Indian Ambassador G.L. Mehta told US Secretary of State J.F. Dulles, the Indian armoury was superior but dated and would now be entirely negated due to Pakistan's access to modern equipment and aircrafts. He said, "this made a tremendous difference in [India's] relative strength...this was a very large addition to Pakistan's military strength".<sup>715</sup> Similarly, an MEA report on the aid to Pakistan worryingly flagged the potential for an armament race in the region. Moreover, it was also possible that the aid would incite Pakistan's "expansionist tendencies" and Jihad (holy war) in J&K.<sup>716</sup> Such fears were based on the understanding that Pakistan's military strategy fixated on India. So, Nehru argued, if Pakistan was "anxious to build up her military strength" it was either to use it "as a bargaining factor in dealing with India, [and] if necessary, in a regular war on India".<sup>717</sup>

Second, defeating Nehru's vision of Asia as an "area of peace", the Cold War had come right up to India's borders.<sup>718</sup> Until then, South Asia had remained isolated from the superpower rivalry of the Cold War. However, US aid now meant India could be dragged into conflict even outside the dynamics particular to its rivalry with Pakistan, especially if US aid was followed up by military bases.<sup>719</sup> Thus the danger to India stemmed not only from Pakistan's increased military strength but also because it could potentially become a major theatre of conflict in the Cold War. In light of this, Nehru told Bogra: "these joint statements become further and further removed from reality and tend to fade away before the cruel logic of facts as they are developing, in the shape especially, of the proposals to increase the armed forces of

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<sup>715</sup> Conversation between Jawaharlal Nehru and J.F. Dulles on 10 March 1956. G.L. Mehta private papers, (III-IV Instalment), sub file no. 1, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library [henceforth NMML], New Delhi.

<sup>716</sup> US-Pakistan Military Pact, Relevant Correspondences. MEA files (Pak-I), no. PI/54/1332/2, NAI.

<sup>717</sup> Note from Jawaharlal Nehru to Secretary General on 27 November 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 24, pp. 432.

<sup>718</sup> "Reaching the rural folk," Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on 3 January 1954. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 24, pp. 82.

<sup>719</sup> "Enlargement of war zone," Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on 18 January 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 21, pp. 493.

Pakistan”.<sup>720</sup> The whole question of demilitarization in J&K now had to be considered afresh in the light of this new development. Nehru claimed he could take no risks as he was prepared to take previously, and India needed to retain the liberty to keep such forces and military equipment in J&K as may be considered necessary to deter Pakistani invasion or aggression.<sup>721</sup>

The joint statement agreed to in New Delhi as well as the period of progress that had ushered it was well and truly over. While US aid to Pakistan was indeed a factor in terminating the trust-building process, the trusting process had already come undone in large part after Bogra’s volte-face. The second meeting of the officials’ committee to discuss preliminaries in January 1954 was contrived and proved ineffective, marking India’s penultimate attempt to agree on terms for a plebiscite with Pakistan in J&K.<sup>722</sup> Bogra’s example in 1953 demonstrates that domestic spoilers can overwhelm attempts at trust-building, forcing weak leaders to dilute their trusting commitments, causing disappointment. While trust-building in 1953 also had Ghulam’s support, Bogra was nonetheless the key figure during negotiations and also the public face in Pakistan driving the trusting process with India. However, since he was largely an outsider to Pakistan’s politics and his standing with Cabinet colleagues was insignificant, he could not stand by the concessions he had made to Nehru on the plebiscite mechanism. He had to retract his commitment to replace the Admiral Nimitz as the plebiscite administrator, reject the basis for a regional plebiscite, and put forth the rehabilitation of refugees and a change in the government of J&K as pre-requisites. Bogra’s withdrawal derailed the progress he had made with Nehru in Delhi and blocked progress on negotiations on the J&K dispute, which were ultimately terminated with US decision to grant military aid to Pakistan in 1954.

### **Nehru-Bogra Talks, 1955**

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<sup>720</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 9 December 1953. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 24, pp. 437.

<sup>721</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Muhammed Ali Bogra on 5 March 1954. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 25, pp. 320.

<sup>722</sup> Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *Pakistan’s Defence Policy, 1947-58* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990).

The prospect of an India-Pakistan settlement on J&K was brought back in from the cold by the efforts of Pakistan's Governor General Ghulam Mohammed in 1955, who substituted Bogra as the main figure driving the peace process with India. Another window of opportunity was opened when Indian President Rajendra Prasad invited Ghulam to New Delhi for India's Republic Day celebrations. Prasad wrote to Ghulam that it was "not usual [for India] to invite guests from abroad on Republic Day but, nevertheless, as the head of a friendly neighbour country and as a person closely associated with India in the past, [his] coming [to New Delhi] on this occasion would be very welcome".<sup>723</sup> Nehru claimed India was "anxious to demonstrate [its] friendly approach." Having been disillusioned with Bogra and based on his reading of the domestic turmoil in Pakistan he had grown keenly aware that Ghulam was the person who wielded the greatest authority and not Bogra.<sup>724</sup> On his part, Ghulam accepted this invitation and arrived on 25 January 1955, along with three new Cabinet Ministers, Chaudhuri Mohammad Ali, Iskandar Mirza, and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. During his visit, Ghulam made several promising remarks about an improvement in ties with India. Nehru anticipated that these efforts indicated that "some fresh attempt might be made by Pakistan to have talks with [with India]".<sup>725</sup> Ghulam's health was failing and he told Nehru that he only had a few months to live. It was his aspiration to resolve pending issues with India before his demise. Nehru was struck by "the genuineness of his desire for settlement and of his urge to do something before it is too late insofar as he himself is concerned".<sup>726</sup> There was a noticeable shift in the Pakistan press as well. Nehru took note of the official Civil and Military Gazette in Pakistan advocating for direct talks with India.<sup>727</sup>

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<sup>723</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Mohan Sinha Mehta on 12 January 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 27, pp. 182.

<sup>724</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 26 January 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 27, pp. 573.

<sup>725</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Bakshi Ghulam Muhammed on 14 November 1954. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 27, no. 243.

<sup>726</sup> C.C. Desai to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on November 13, 1955. In *ASB* (ed.), vol. I, pp. 439.

<sup>727</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Bakshi Ghulam Muhammed on 23 November 1954. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 27, pp. 246.

Before Ghulam left Palam airport on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> January, he handed a private note to Nehru on “four points relating to the plebiscite in the J&K state and like matters”. Ghulam preferred to persist with a direct approach instead of taking the issue back to the UN Security Council. Nehru appreciated this. However, he was not in favour of Ghulam’s proposal to revisit terms for a plebiscite. Nehru dismissed them, stating: “the four points that your paper contained seemed to me not to be very helpful and appeared removed from present facts. They did not bear much relation to what had happened thus far and the suggestions made in them did not seem to be feasible”. For instance, Ghulam had suggested October 1955 as the date for a plebiscite but Nehru could not foresee how disagreement over preliminaries that were so far preventing a plebiscite could suddenly be overcome. Another peculiar suggestion to build empathy was for Nehru to represent Pakistan’s position in mock negotiations and for Chaudhuri Mohammad Ali, Pakistan’s Finance Minister, to represent India’s. Nehru thought this was impractical too. Although this would have ordinarily aligned well with Nehru’s empathic capacity, he was still reeling from the failure of previous attempts. He reminded Ghulam of the failure of previous efforts with Bogra and the inability to overcome even initial hurdles for a plebiscite as well as the new circumstance produced by US aid to Pakistan. Outside of armed intervention then, what were the choices available? Nehru argued that their approach needed to be “realistic and in accordance with the facts of the situation. This was an early feeler to Ghulam to test the possibility of partition of J&K on the basis of the status-quo.”<sup>728</sup>

Although Nehru did not agree to Ghulam’s terms for a plebiscite, he was encouraged by his overtures. He could “recognise and feel that Ghulam [was] anxious to have a settlement and [was] prepared to go some distance for it”. However, a plebiscite was no longer acceptable to India. The government in Jammu and Kashmir led by Bakshi was unlikely to consent to any future disruptions. Nehru did not want to explicitly say so to Ghulam as it would be construed as a breach of India’s international commitments for a plebiscite. But he was now seeking a “a

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<sup>728</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Ghulam Muhammed on 27 February 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 231.

recognition by both parties of the status quo, subject to minor modifications”.<sup>729</sup> Diplomat V.K. Krishna Menon was also similarly in favour of a “standstill agreement” or “modification of boundaries” so that there could be some semblance of “finality on either side of the ceasefire line”.<sup>730</sup> There were indications that Pakistan too would agree to alternatives to a plebiscite. Nehru asked Desai to explore beforehand if Ghulam was “desirous of exploring other means of settlement than by a plebiscite”.<sup>731</sup> Desai’s impression was that Ghulam was also “reconciled in finding a solution of the Kashmir problem without a plebiscite which would repeat post-Partition 1947 bitterness and madness regardless of the result”.<sup>732</sup> The Americans too had been in favour of a partition-based solution along the existing ceasefire line. US President Dwight D. Eisenhower deputed Paul Hoffman as a private mediator to specifically advance partition as a solution to the Indians and the Pakistanis.<sup>733</sup> They were hopeful that the Pakistanis may be “willing to compromise and may eventually become reconciled to [their] inability to shake India’s grip on Kashmir; there [were] already some signs that Pakistani emotionalism on the subject [was] beginning to subside”. US officials however were apprehensive that such a solution could stall over Pakistan’s demand for a plebiscite in the Kashmir Valley.<sup>734</sup> But they were willing to keep the proceedings in the UN Security Council in abeyance to allow direct talks an opportunity to succeed.<sup>735</sup>

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<sup>729</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C.C. Desai on 27 February 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 235.

<sup>730</sup> V.K. Krishna Menon note on Kashmir on 6 May 1955. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) private papers, file no. 344(I).

<sup>731</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C.C. Desai on 8 March 1955. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) private papers, file no. 324, NMML.

<sup>732</sup> C.C. Desai to Jawaharlal Nehru on 2 March 1955. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) private papers, file no. 322, NMML.

<sup>733</sup> The Chargé in India (Mills) to the Department of State, Foreign Relations of The United States, 1952–1954, Africa And South Asia, Volume Xi, Part 2.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v11p2/d765>.

<sup>734</sup> National Intelligence Estimate, Foreign Relations of The United States, 1952–1954, Africa And South Asia, Volume Xi, Part 2. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v11p2/d620>.

<sup>735</sup> The Acting Secretary of State to the United States Mission at the United Nations, Foreign Relations of The United States, 1952–1954, Africa And South Asia, Volume Xi, Part 2. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v11p2/d771>.

Ghulam pushed for direct talks on J&K despite resistance from his own cabinet colleagues as well as Nehru. Iskandar Mirza, Pakistan's Interior Minister, tried to dissuade Ghulam from going to New Delhi until substantial progress was made. He also believed prime-ministerial level talks needed to be delayed until there was some chance of success.<sup>736</sup> Nehru too was of this opinion. He wrote to Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan C.C. Desai that high-level talks could be held "only after broad agreement [had] been reached". Until then, there was no point in continuing fruitless meetings that were bound to raise expectations and result in "frustration and disappointment". Evidently, he was still reeling from the effects of the failure of his previous attempts to resolve the issue with Bogra. Nehru wanted a "private approach" to discuss his idea of partitioning J&K based on the status-quo. Ghulam's in-principle acceptance of this idea was important before high-level talks as he could not bring up this proposal directly.<sup>737</sup> Desai accordingly informed Bogra that although India welcomed talks, it was important to bridge the distance between their viewpoints before progress could be made. Nehru added later that it was not his intention to seek postponement of talks and he would continue if the Pakistanis insisted, but he was not optimistic of the results of such a meeting without prior preparation.<sup>738</sup> Bogra communicated his concurrence with Nehru's suggestion, stating "postponement was lesser of the two evils". He also suggested "the idea of secret representatives of the two Prime Ministers meeting to explore possibilities under a fresh approach".<sup>739</sup> Nehru agreed to the use of secret envoys to facilitate backchannel talks. He asked Desai to distance himself from these envoys so alternative approaches such as partition and territorial swaps could be discussed without the risk of leaks and domestic backlash.<sup>740</sup>

Nehru wanted the postponement of talks scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> March 1955 to be announced in Karachi and New Delhi in identical language to provide an appearance of

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<sup>736</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C.C. Desai on 3 March 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 236.

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>738</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C.C. Desai on 8 March 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 238.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>740</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C.C. Desai on 13 March 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 239.

unanimity.<sup>741</sup> Desai cabled Nehru to say that Bogra agreed but wanted the joint announcement to also say that the meeting would now be held in early May. However, there was miscommunication thereafter. The next morning, Pakistan's High Commissioner met Nehru and protested the postponement of talks. Contrary to Desai's assessment, he claimed Bogra and Ghulam were not in favour of this. To Nehru's embarrassment, Pakistan Radio also announced that postponement had taken place solely at India's insistence.<sup>742</sup> Nehru would then use the pretext of other pressing commitments to justify his decision to Ghulam.<sup>743</sup> Ghulam in his reply on 8<sup>th</sup> March pressed Nehru for talks on J&K without which the improvement in Indo-Pak ties could not be sustained. He believed enough time had passed since Partition in 1947 for the matter to be considered dispassionately. Ghulam did not foresee any mass migrations or civil unrest resulting from a settlement on J&K and avowed that Nehru could rely on him to handle the fallout in Pakistan, if any. In response, Nehru once again pushed for a status-quoist solution. He argued in favour of "a realistic approach to the situation" and an "understanding of the present position and the possible consequences of any action".<sup>744</sup>

Before talks were held in New Delhi in May, private envoys played their part in discussing a possible settlement of the J&K dispute outside the glare of public scrutiny. Mulraj Kersondas was India's envoy. Nehru considered him well-meaning but did not trust his judgement. However, as a trader with existing links to Pakistan's leaders he was preferred for the role at Ghulam's insistence.<sup>745</sup> Pakistan was represented by the businessman Wajid Ali. When Mulraj met Ghulam, the latter at first insisted on an early plebiscite. However, Mulraj dissuaded him from this approach, claiming a "solution could only be found on some other basis". Eventually, Ghulam agreed if India would consent to the common defence of the Kashmir Valley and transfer of Poonch and all areas West of the Chenab river to Pakistan. In return

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<sup>741</sup> Ibid, 238.

<sup>742</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C.C. Desai on 15 March 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 241.

<sup>743</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Ghulam Muhammed on 17 March 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 242.

<sup>744</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>745</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C.C. Desai on 3 May 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 245.

Ghulam was willing to transfer some part of Ladakh on the Pakistani side of the cease-fire line to the Indians. Mulraj reported to Desai that Ghulam had agreed to waive the plebiscite and opted for territorial swaps instead. He also said that after a settlement of the J&K dispute, Pakistan was willing to sign a No-War Declaration and would work with India to frame a common defence policy for the subcontinent.<sup>746</sup> Since this was a major advance, Mulraj asked Ghulam to pen down these points so he could handover a formal note to Nehru. The note developed Ghulam's initial suggestions further. He wanted a deferred plebiscite<sup>747</sup> in the Kashmir Valley, which would include the districts of Kargil and Kishtawar. The plebiscite would be held under the joint control<sup>748</sup> of the Governor General of Pakistan and the President of India and there would be a complete demilitarisation of the plebiscite area one-month in advance of the vote. The districts of Bhimbhar, Haveli, Riyasi, Udhampur, and Medham and other areas north of the Chenab river would be transferred to Pakistan. India would get the districts of Ramban, Rampur, and Ladakh and other areas south of the Chenab river. In addition, India and Pakistan would jointly exploit and finance the Dhyangadh bend of Chenab river for electricity and irrigation purposes. Finally, refugees would be free to return to their homes and their properties would be restored.<sup>749</sup>

Wajid Ali told Ghulam that based on his interactions in New Delhi the “atmosphere in the highest circles in which he moved and discussed was cordial and definitely of the view for a settlement”. But in his opinion neither side was primarily concerned with “bargaining or how to get and give something more or less”. Instead their main preoccupation was “how to create a

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<sup>746</sup> C.C. Desai to Jawaharlal Nehru on 16 March 1955. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) private papers, file no. 326(II), NMML.

<sup>747</sup> The Kashmir Valley would remain a semi-independent area for a period of five years, after which India and Pakistan could mutually agree to hold a plebiscite in six-month's time. However, if no agreement is reached they could differ the plebiscite for another five years. But the plebiscite had to be held at the end of twenty years at the most.

<sup>748</sup> Joint control would be exercised via two administrators who would be in-charge of economic and financial affairs, general administration, and military policy as well as law and order. Number of troops in the Valley would be equal for India and Pakistan, not exceeding 5000 troops each. The government of J&K would consist of Ministers nominated by the two administrators.

<sup>749</sup> Mulraj Kersondas to Jawaharlal Nehru on 21 March 1955. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) private papers, file no. 328, NMML.

public opinion so that it may be acceptable to the public” (sic). Domestic audience costs dominated the minds of Indian and Pakistani elites. When Ghulam shared his detailed note with Mulraj, he expressed hope that Nehru would not needlessly bargain and take a “long-term view”. He plainly told Mulraj that he could not go any further, otherwise “he [had] no solution at all to face his country”. Wajid Ali and the Governor of Punjab Habib Rahimtoolah chimed in to remind Mulraj that if Ghulam could not reach a settlement with India on J&K, “there [was] no soul in Pakistan at present who would be able to do anything”. Rahimtoolah added that India had captured more of J&K’s territory and had the upper hand. Therefore, Nehru needed to be “magnanimous” and concede territory to facilitate a final settlement, if necessary.<sup>750</sup> Considering India’s disposition at the time, Nehru would have been pleased at Ghulam’s willingness to consider territorial swaps, although his demands were still a tall order. As Nehru told Desai, there persisted “a big gap” between Ghulam’s thinking and his.<sup>751</sup>

Prime-ministerial talks between Nehru and Bogra began on 14 May in New Delhi. Ghulam could not attend due to his ill health. Bogra was instead accompanied by Interior Minister Iskandar Mirza while Nehru was seconded by Cabinet Ministers Gobind Ballabh Pant and Maulana Azad. Bogra began by laying out the desirability of settling the J&K dispute and having friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries. Nehru concurred entirely but reiterated his demand to resolve the dispute in a “realistic manner”.<sup>752</sup> Bogra asked Nehru how they could proceed. Nehru responded that they could only do so by facing the situation as it was. After all, “the position had stabilised itself somewhat on both sides of the ceasefire line”. There was no reason to cause disruption. He dissuaded Bogra from the consideration of a plebiscite as it risked mass migrations akin to Partition in 1947. If a settlement was agreed on such a basis, it “would not lead to the solution of [their] problems, but rather to the aggravation

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<sup>750</sup> Ibid.

<sup>751</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C.C. Desai on 3 May 1955. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) private papers, file no. 342(I), NMML.

<sup>752</sup> Transcript of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammed Ali Bogra, Iskandar Mirza on 14 May 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 248.

of [their] difficulties and, perhaps, more bitterness. If large numbers of refugees trooped out either to Pakistan or to India, they would bring trouble and discord and bitterness with them, and the relations of India and Pakistan would be poisoned afresh". Keeping these factors in mind, Nehru had concluded that the "only practical and safe way" of resolving the J&K dispute was to accept "present conditions as they were, that is the status quo, and then proceed on that basis". He was open to discussing minor rectifications to simplify the boundary but wanted an in-principle acceptance of the status-quo. Bogra wanted to take up the proposal after discussing in greater detail the rectifications Nehru was amenable to.<sup>753</sup>

When talks resumed the following day, Bogra asked Nehru to elucidate his approach further. Nehru said that he wanted to work towards a final settlement, which would leave no uncertainty or pending issues. He proposed the partition of J&K along the ceasefire line. This drew Mirza's rebuke. He told Nehru it was infeasible for them to put this across to their people. In his words, "no government would last twenty-four hours in Pakistan on this basis". Nehru still tried to persuade him. He argued that any major change to the status quo "would not only produce violent reactions on the other side but would have a gravely upsetting effect". To him there was no alternative but to accept the existing situation. Or else, India and Pakistan risked "facing the problem of migrations on a large scale". Mirza then brought up a territorial swap proposal Ghulam had earlier conveyed through the private envoys, namely the transfer of territory in Jammu province including Poonch, Riyasi, Udhampur, north of the Chenab river, to Pakistan. He was prepared to concede Skardu to India. Kargil was to be attached to the Kashmir province, which would be placed under the collective control of a joint Indo-Pak army and the equal supervision of the President of India and the Governor General of Pakistan. As a face-saving mechanism, Ghulam envisioned some type of a deferred plebiscite in the Kashmir province. Nehru rejected this proposal as he could not sanction the transfer of large territories to Pakistan. Constitutionally speaking this would be a stumbling block as it would require the

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<sup>753</sup> Ibid, pp. 252.

approval of the J&K state legislature.<sup>754</sup> Moreover, India was uninterested in Skardu, which was very sparsely populated and a mountainous area in Ladakh. Ghulam's desire for joint control of the Kashmir Valley was deemed fantastical and impractical.<sup>755</sup>

Mirza and Bogra agreed that Ghulam's proposals were perhaps a bit far-fetched but appealed for a concession from India so they could justify a territorial swap to domestic audiences. They asked Nehru how far India was willing to go. Nehru was apprehensive to put forth the Indian position clearly. However, he indicated that he preferred Kishanganga as the international boundary in the Northern areas instead of the existing ceasefire line. He was also willing to consider the transfer of a certain part of the Poonch region on the Indian side as this had historically been a recruiting ground for the Pakistan army. Bogra sought adjournment to discuss this with his officials and experts before responding.<sup>756</sup> But once again, when Bogra and Mirza returned for talks on day three, they were overcome with pessimism. They told Nehru that if "they accepted [Nehru's] proposals of the previous day, they would be blown sky-high in Pakistan". There was no reasonable way for them to gain popular acceptance for such a territorial swap in Pakistan, unless India was prepared to make "some major adjustments". Or else, Bogra argued it was better to return to the UN Security Council and reconsider the conditions governing the plebiscite. Maulana Azad stepped in to persuade Bogra and Mirza that what Nehru had suggested was "a practical step in view of all the circumstances". The status-quo was a suitable basis for a final settlement. Pant too tried to extol the virtues of considering the dispute "from a practical point of view". However, Bogra did not relent. He asked India as the "big sister of Pakistan" to be "generous and magnanimous". Mirza followed up by stating that their government would fall if they dared to accept Nehru's proposal.<sup>757</sup> He would later also

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<sup>754</sup> This is a proviso to Article 253 of the Constitution which was inserted in 1954 by a Presidential Order under Article 370.

<sup>755</sup> Transcript of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammed Ali Bogra, Iskandar Mirza on 16 May 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 259.

<sup>756</sup> Transcript of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammed Ali Bogra, Iskandar Mirza on 15 May 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 255.

<sup>757</sup> Transcript of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammed Ali Bogra, Iskandar Mirza on 16 May 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 258.

tell the Americans that talks failed because a “settlement along present cease-fire line [was] wholly unacceptable to Pakistan...any Pakistan Government accepting such proposition would not last 4 hours”.<sup>758</sup> Therefore, if India was unwilling to budge, Pakistan would have to “go back to the old talks”. Nehru explained that the possibility of success was “slender” based on previous experience and “therefore, to talk in old terms was not helpful”.<sup>759</sup>

On the fourth and final day Bogra put forth a map ostensibly made by UN officials in Kashmir showing religious majorities in various districts of J&K. The areas inhabited by Hindus marked in yellow were just a few districts in Jammu. The rest of the areas starting from the ceasefire line on the left and below the northern ceasefire line were all green, indicating a Muslim majority. Above the northern ceasefire line, there was no colouring; it was white (unclear what this indicated).<sup>760</sup> But religious separation was not an acceptable formula for the Indians. Maulana Azad reiterated that a final settlement could only be achieved on the basis of the existing ceasefire line. However, in addition to Poonch, India was also willing to consider the transfer of Mirpur areas on the Indian side. Returning to Ghulam’s proposals, Nehru explicitly stated that he could not concede large chunks of Indian territory in the Jammu province at the risk of “upsetting of the populations there” while Pakistan still maintained joint control in the Kashmir province. He curtly asked Bogra: “What exactly did India gain by this?” Mirza responded that if Ghulam’s proposals were unacceptable then there was no alternative left but to go back to the negotiations of 1953. In a final attempt, he said Pakistan was willing to attach the Ramban area to the Kashmir Valley, which would be subject to a limited plebiscite. He was also willing to transfer the Riasi area as the home of the Hindu Dogras. However, these minor concessions did not move the needle for the Indians who were seeking a final settlement. The

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<sup>758</sup> Telegram from the Embassy in India to the Department of State, Foreign Relations of The United States, 1955–1957, South Asia, Volume VIII.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v08/d7>.

<sup>759</sup> Transcript of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammed Ali Bogra, Iskandar Mirza on 16 May 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 258.

<sup>760</sup> Transcript of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammed Ali Bogra, Iskandar Mirza on 17 May 1955. In *SWJN-SS*, vol. 28, pp. 260.

Pakistanis were not looking for a settlement on reciprocal terms. Rather, they expected India to make the greater allowances to reach a face-saving compromise. In Nehru's view, this amounted to "a surrender by India which might perhaps follow a complete defeat and a dictation of terms". He despondently added that "they appeared to be millions of miles away in their respective approaches".<sup>761</sup> Even a return to the disappointment of the 1953 joint statement was considered futile and hopeless.

The failure of the 1955 talks did not leave Bogra unscathed. Even before he left Karachi, he was being advised in the domestic press to "wait indefinitely" but not to yield to any other solution but an overall plebiscite.<sup>762</sup> After the talks ended, vague rumours of Bogra's acceptance of alternative methods to a plebiscite began to surface. One Pakistani newspaper reported that "in preaching this alternative, the Prime Minister accepted a solution which [amounted] to a betrayal of the whole cause". The report argued for direct talks with India to be terminated and for Pakistan to refer the issue back to the UN Security Council. Then Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Sardar Mumtaz Ali was forced to come to Bogra's defence and state that Pakistan had not "deviated and shall not deviate from her stand on a fair and impartial plebiscite in Kashmir". Bogra in his public broadcast too asserted that if an "honourable settlement" was not possible through direct talks he would refer the matter to the UN Security Council. While he was open to "other measures for a peaceful settlement" there could be "no question of giving up [Pakistan's] stand for a plebiscite". The fortnightly report of the Indian High Commissioner noted with dismay: "it seems [Bogra] is once again repeating his earlier performance of 1953, when on his return from Delhi talks...he was forced to go back on the good start he had made, in the face of opposition from the press and his own officials".<sup>763</sup> Bogra had indeed reverted to a hard-line on J&K to preserve his own position in Pakistan. Although once Ghulam succumbed to his failing health and the Governor General's patronage was lost,

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<sup>761</sup> Ibid, pp. 261-262.

<sup>762</sup> Fortnightly reports from India's Deputy High Commissioner in Lahore, 1955. MEA files (PAK I), no. F2(86)/55/-Pak-I, NAI.

<sup>763</sup> Ibid.

Bogra was replaced by Chaudhuri Mohammed Ali, a well-known hawkish figure on India as Prime Minister.

Much like 1953, the trusting process in 1955 too was blocked by domestic spoilers. Unlike Bogra, Ghulam was a much stronger political actor in Pakistan. For instance, when Bogra tried to curtail the remit of the Governor General in Pakistan through legislative action and expand the powers of the parliament and the prime minister, Ghulam dismissed the Government on 24 October 1954 and called for fresh elections. Ghulam also had the support of two key political figures in Pakistan at the time, Iskandar Mirza (who he made Interior Minister in the new government) and Army Chief Ayub Khan. This is why he was able to consider territorial swaps as an alternative mechanism to an overall plebiscite. Ghulam, may have also been willing to push the envelope of negotiations with Nehru because of his fast deteriorating health and shorter time horizon in Pakistan's politics. However, while his control over Cabinet colleagues was enviable from Bogra's perspective, he could not sanction a compromise on a reciprocal basis either, especially one that deviated from the principle of a limited plebiscite in the Kashmir Valley. Ghulam too therefore lacked the ability to find a middle-ground with Nehru, who was looking for a status-quo solution with minor rectifications, although Ghulam may have preferred territorial swaps privately.

### **Alternative Explanations**

A common refrain in extant explanations of the India-Pakistan rivalry is ideological fundamentalism.<sup>764</sup> If we were to extend this argument to explain repeated breakdowns of the bargaining process, it would imply that since the territorial dispute over J&K is imbued with high ideological value and represents a conflict of national identities it would be near impossible to resolve through bargaining as this would mean a dilution of moral and ethical qualities. James Fearon has categorised this as issue indivisibility or the inability of certain issues to admit

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<sup>764</sup> See Stephan C. Cohen, *Shooting for a Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum* (Washington D.C.: Brookings, 2013).

compromise.<sup>765</sup> For instance, a compromise over J&K would challenge Pakistan's claim to a separate nation for Muslims while for India it would mean an acceptance of the basis for Pakistan's creation and the impracticality of India's secular democratic experiment. This was not merely an abstract concern over ideology and could have serious ramifications for civil society in both states. Such barriers, it is argued, has rendered the J&K dispute diplomatically insoluble. However, even such territorial disputes—which are arguably more arduous to resolve—can be rendered divisible and amenable to bargaining. Paul R. Hensel and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell in their analyses of 191 territorial claims in the Americas and Western Europe (1816–2001) find that—although they are more conflict prone—peaceful settlements can also be more likely in territorial disputes that are valued for intangible reasons.<sup>766</sup> In the Indo-Pak case, for several years since Partition and the war in 1947-48, the J&K territorial dispute did evoke powerful emotive responses on both sides, thus narrowing the bargaining range. But eventually, the sway of these events began to peter out. As I will demonstrate, Nehru, Bogra, and Ghulam came up with innovative ways to overcome the deadlock and resolve the issue, including discussing variations on a plebiscite mechanism and territorial swaps. Moreover, in their talks, wider ideological constructs were not an obstacle. In fact, they both recognised the need to avoid major migrations and a repeat of Partition's ills. While being a damaging break, Partition became a source of mutual learning on dealing with cases of territorial separation.

A second reason provided in the literature on post-colonialism and human geography is cartographic anxiety. As Sanjay Chaturvedi argues with respect to India, “once the political elite of post-colonial India began constructing India as a nation-state, they were compelled to negotiate the geopolitical disjuncture between an acknowledgement of difference (diversity) and an insistence upon similarity (unity)”.<sup>767</sup> This logic applies to Pakistan equally. In other words,

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<sup>765</sup> James Fearon, “Rationalist Explanations for War,” *International Organization*, vol. 49, no. 3 (1995), pp. 379-414.

<sup>766</sup> Paul R. Hensel and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, “Issue indivisibility and territorial claims,” *GeoJournal*, vol. 64 (2005), pp. 275–285.

<sup>767</sup> Sanjay Chaturvedi, “Indian geopolitics: Unity in diversity or diversity of unity?” *Ekistics* vol. 70 (422/423) (2003), pp. 327-39.

the compulsions of forging cultural homogeneity and cohesive nationhood imposed a sacredness on the geographical boundaries of these states. Especially after Partition and the severance of their respective geobodies, the anxiety to maintain the territorial integrity of the nation assumed paramount importance, both for the purposes of physical and ontological security. As opposed to the emphasis on ideological values particular to J&K, such reasoning observes the constraints imposed by the larger task of nation-building on the respective bargaining capacities of India and Pakistan with respect to J&K. However, India and Pakistan did participate in a range of territorial concessions after Partition. For instance, Pakistan signed a boundary agreement to swap northern parts of J&K with China in 1963 in exchange for grazing lands. India and Pakistan too signed an agreement for the exchange of enclaves on the East Pakistan-Bengal border in 1958. Therefore, factors preventing a peaceful settlement of the J&K dispute are specific to its history and the associated domestic and institutional politics and on both sides.

A final possible explanation may lie in other sections of Pakistan's domestic politics. It has been argued that the Pakistani Army, which is arguably the most significant actor in Pakistan's domestic sphere, has been partly responsible for stalemating the diplomatic process with India to maintain the military's national importance.<sup>768</sup> Moreover, Christine Fair argues that the "enduring security competition over Kashmir" left "indelible marks upon the Pakistan Army's perception of its nemesis, India, and its intentions". It has since been "convinced that those who ruled in New Delhi have not resigned themselves to Partition and craved for what the Hindu nationalists called *Akhand Bharat* (re-unified India)". Fair argues that the Pakistani Army's position on J&K is grounded in its long-held pledge to protect the founding logic of the state in Islamism and the correlated two-nation theory.<sup>769</sup> As per this understanding, for the Pakistani Army, yielding to India is tantamount not only to defeat, but also, fundamentally, to eroding the legitimacy of the Pakistani state. My purpose is not to challenge these accounts of the Pakistani

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<sup>768</sup> Ayesha Siddiqa-Agha, *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, (Second ed. London: Pluto Press, 2017).

<sup>769</sup> Christine C. Fair, *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Army or its beliefs. But I argue that its effects on the J&K dispute have been uneven and there have been windows of opportunity in the long history between India and Pakistan where such instincts for self-preservation have compelled the Pakistani Army to support a settlement of the J&K dispute with India. Even the Agra Summit took place under the dictatorship of a Pakistani Military General in Pervez Musharraf, despite his also being at the helm during the Kargil War in 1999. Such accounts are thus inadequate to explain diplomatic near-misses and social barriers are key to better understanding the limits of trust-building that have historically prevented a settlement of the Indo-Pak territorial dispute in J&K, as has been argued in this chapter.

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In this chapter I have sought to underscore the importance of elite control over dominant factions and public opinion during the trust-building phase, in the absence of which domestic spoilers can block efforts at trust-building. Even if the social factors to facilitate the development of strategic trust are present, there is the political will to force a breakthrough, and there is sustained diplomatic engagement at all levels of government including via private envoys, the trusting process can still succumb to domestic spoilers that are able to challenge and dislodge leaders—who are willing to make trusting choices—from their control over ruling coalitions. Weaknesses of leaders can take two forms, as was typified by Bogra and Ghulam; both very distinct political figures in Pakistan. Bogra was a Bengali outsider to the Punjabi-dominated politics of Pakistan and had a tenuous control over ruling coalitions. His weakness stemmed from his disadvantaged bargaining position vis-à-vis Pakistan's elites. On the other hand, Ghulam's limitations stemmed from the weakness of Pakistan's regime vis-à-vis domestic publics. For Pakistan, a country with feeble institutional structures and administrative control, which was compensating for a crippling lack of domestic stability by flirting with Islamic fundamentalism and had for years securitised the J&K dispute in furtherance of this aim, the bargaining range was severely limited.

## Chapter 5

### Trusting Failure: Nehru-Zhou Talks, 1960

China has not behaved properly to us. We have been let down in many ways. You may, if you like, say that our policy was such that we permitted them to do so...we are in error, we are guilty of it. But the major thing is we feel that we have been let down, that injury has been caused to our principles, and indeed, to our frontiers.<sup>770</sup>

- Jawaharlal Nehru

In this chapter, I examine the failure of border talks between the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1960. Despite strategic trust being built and a positive outcome being achieved in the short term, as was shown in Chapter 3, it is possible for trust to be overridden by an intervening event, leading to betrayal and an escalation of the dispute. This can occur if the trusting actor has developed a positive arc of expectation that the trusted party fails to live up to under changing circumstances, even if unintended. In particular, it was the feeling of betrayal on both sides—as the Tibetan revolution unravelled—that caused a definitive break and fomented hostility and intractability, negating prospects of a peaceful resolution of the border dispute between the two erstwhile strategic trustors. This shows that even outside the risk of deception, social factors and the strategic trust they help build can ultimately fail to overcome rivalries if actors are unable to live up to commitments engendered during the trust-building process, often leading to more damaging consequences.

#### No One's War

As was established in Chapter 3, both India and China had built strategic trust despite the still un-demarcated status of the Indo-Tibetan boundary. The two states had also worked out a mechanism for bilateral dealings in the Global Cold War via the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence”. Material factors too favoured a compromise. India and China were facing

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<sup>770</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's speech in the Rajya Sabha on 12 February 1960. In Sarvepalli Gopal (General Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series* [Henceforth SWJN-SS], (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1972-2020), vol. 57, pp. 48.

difficulties in imposing their administrative will in border areas, in the Naga hills and Tibet, respectively. On the domestic front too, India suffered an economic recession and balance of payments crisis in 1958, whilst Communist China was reeling from famines and the turmoil of the Great Leap Forward program. More importantly, the primary adversary for the PRC was the US and the Kuomintang on the eastern frontier, whereas for India it was Pakistan on the Western frontier. They both risked a two-front war if relations deteriorated. Although territorial disputes are notoriously difficult to resolve through bargaining and side-payments, if there was ever an ideal case for a negotiated settlement, it was the India-China border dispute in the late 1950s.

Would not then two strategic trustors be able to bargain and resolve a dispute over territory that was largely un-populated and devoid of any material or strategic resources, especially when a resolution would favour their larger economic and political interests? Should not the presence of strategic trust have been sufficient to assure both parties of each other's bona fides and make a compromise based on territorial swaps mutually acceptable? Especially since the territory sought by China to safeguard its control over Tibet, namely the "largely deserted scrublands" of the Aksai Chin region, did not overlap with the territory needed to secure the plains of North-East India, namely the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA).<sup>771</sup> Dispute over mountainous and largely inaccessible Himalayan terrains did not concern issues of national identity either, at least not to the extent of J&K or Taiwan (low issue indivisibility). Why did strategic trust then prove insufficient in the India-China case? Why did the Zhou-Nehru talks fail in 1960?

### **Not Every Chamberlain Needs a Hitler**

While India and China built strategic trust in the mid-1950s, they did so on the basis of positive expectations that were ambiguous, one-sided, and difficult to live up to for the trusted party. For

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<sup>771</sup> Kanti Bajpai, *India versus China: Why They Are Not Friends* (New Delhi: Juggernaut, 2021), pp. 64.

instance, for India, Zhou, in multiple interpersonal interactions with Nehru, had confirmed China's acceptance of the McMahon Line. However, in 1959, when Zhou raised doubts about the Indo-Tibetan boundary and disclaimed any previous acceptance of the McMahon Line, the Indian side read this as a sign of Chinese duplicity. China, in the words of diplomat Jagat Mehta, had "deliberately lulled [Nehru] into a fake sense of security and then betrayed India's pledge of friendship".<sup>772</sup> Mehta believed that once they became strong enough to articulate their revanchist territorial claims, they wanted to bully the Indians into submission.

On the other hand, for the PRC it was Nehru who had betrayed Chinese expectations, exposing himself as an Indian "reactionary" and "expansionist". The Indians, the Chinese believed, had concealed but not conceded their imperialist ambitions of maintaining Tibet as a buffer state. Moreover, they were exploiting the window of opportunity provided by the Tibetan revolution to exploit China's vulnerability and force their territorial claims, even turning the PRC's key ally, the Soviet Union, against it. More implicitly, there was a mutual betrayal of each other's international vision. Nehru mistakenly thought he had mitigated China's Communist zeal and established a partnership based on Asianism and peaceful coexistence. Mao's China similarly failed to appreciate that non-aligned India could not be co-opted into the socialist bloc and made part of the PRC's bid to intensify hostilities and add force to the "East Wind". Both, to their detriment, had presupposed the realisation of their respective ideological projects and developed regional and international ambitions on this basis. I detail the feeling of betrayal on the Indian and Chinese side and examine its implications for the Nehru-Zhou talks in 1960.

#### *Why India felt betrayed*

As late as December 26, 1957, Nehru rejected an internal report that claimed China would exert pressure on India's borders in Ladakh, Tawang, and across Nepal, if India declined

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<sup>772</sup> Jagat Mehta, *Rescuing the Future* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2008), pp. 93.

support for Tibetan autonomy. He said the report was not objective and the author's views were "static and out of date".<sup>773</sup> As the Tibetan revolution was beginning to take shape, Nehru was careful to disallow sympathies for Tibet to affect India's relationship with the PRC and remained steadfast in his acceptance of Chinese sovereignty in Tibet.<sup>774</sup> He rebuffed numerous Tibetan overtures for succour against the PRC.<sup>775</sup> However, despite his intentions, the Tibetan revolution had an adverse impact on how the relationship unfolded. At first, when the Indians found out about a road the Chinese had built through the Aksai Chin region via a map published in the *China Pictorial Magazine* (no. 95—July 1958, pp. 2021), they were unsure whether it traversed through Indian territory. Due to logistical and climatic difficulties, India did not maintain a permanent military presence in the area and only carried out seasonal patrols. Before lodging a formal protest therefore, Nehru ordered the Army to carry out land reconnaissance to confirm the road's alignment. He gave the party instructions "not to come into conflict with the Chinese".<sup>776</sup> At this stage, the MEA was unsure of India's claim to the Aksai Chin area and contemplated giving it up if substantial evidence in India's support was not found.<sup>777</sup> Meanwhile, Nehru decided to send a formal protest note against the map published in the *China Pictorial Magazine*, as it showed significant portions of Indian territory on the Chinese side. Zhou had previously stated that these were "old maps" and the PRC had "no time to correct them", but corrections needed to be made now to avoid future controversy.<sup>778</sup>

On 18<sup>th</sup> October 1958, MEA followed up with another informal note. It drew the attention of PRC officials to the motor road that had been constructed in Eastern Ladakh, which was now known to be passing through Indian territory. The Indians meekly claimed to be "aggrieved" and "shocked" that the Chinese government had built the road without seeking any

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<sup>773</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's note, in ASB (ed.), *Vol. III*, pp. 1873.

<sup>774</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on 20 August 1958, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 43, pp. 442.

<sup>775</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's note on visit to Bhutan on 26 September 1958, in ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 1935.

<sup>776</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's note to Subimal Dutt on 4 February 1958, in ASB (ed.), *Vol. III*, pp. 1888.

<sup>777</sup> Subimal Dutt private papers, sub file no. 31, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library [henceforth NMML], New Delhi, pp. 2.

<sup>778</sup> MEA's note to the Chinese counsellor on 21 August 1958, in ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 1915.

prior permission or informing them. Moreover, they asked the Chinese if they knew the whereabouts of the reconnaissance party, which was missing since August.<sup>779</sup> The Indians considered it important to raise the issue at this stage or else “indifference might serve as encouragement to the Chinese authorities to take unilateral action in other contested areas”.<sup>780</sup> On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Chinese Foreign Ministry responded with a protest memorandum. It claimed that Chinese frontier guards had intercepted the Indian reconnaissance party on the Xinjiang-Tibet road as they were carrying out an “unlawful intrusion” into Chinese territory. The PRC had however already deported them from the Karakoram Pass on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>781</sup> This was the first time it became officially known to the Indians that the Chinese laid claim to Aksai Chin area.<sup>782</sup> Another Chinese note reiterated that the map in the *China Pictorial Magazine* was an old reproduction. But it ominously added that the PRC had not undertaken a survey of the boundary and would consult with neighbouring countries before making revisions. This diverged from the Indian stand, which considered the frontier to be more or less settled, apart from minor disputes pending resolution. Nehru was forced to directly confront Zhou on the matter. He stated his surprise at China’s reply and recounted interactions in which Zhou had acquiesced to the McMahon Line in light of China’s friendly relations with India and Burma. Nehru finally stressed that nine-years was enough time for the PRC to revise its old maps. He also turned down Chinese appeals for a joint survey as they were pointless to confirm “well-known and fixed boundaries”.<sup>783</sup>

Thereafter, hostilities between Tibetan-Khampa rebels and PLA forces escalated dramatically, eventually leading to the Dalai Lama abandoning Lhasa and seeking refuge in India in April 1959. After this watershed moment, the PRC’s approach to the Indians grew

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<sup>779</sup> Informal note given by the Indian foreign secretary to the Chinese Ambassador to India on 18 October 1958, in ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 1946.

<sup>780</sup> Amit Das Gupta, *Serving India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2017), pp. 327.

<sup>781</sup> Chinese Memorandum given to the Indian Ambassador to China on 3 November 1958, in ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 1954.

<sup>782</sup> Note given by the Indian Ambassador to the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of China on 8 November 1958, in ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 1955.

<sup>783</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 14 December 1958, in ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 1971.

inimical, especially on the border. Various speeches by prominent PRC officials and leaders at the National People's Congress (NPC) labelled India as "expansionist" and an inheritor of the British imperialism. In response, Nehru expressed his shock and deepest regret, maintaining that these accusations were unbecoming of China as a friendly nation and entirely void of substance.<sup>784</sup> It is against this backdrop that Zhou would lay out China's stand on the Sino-Indian boundary through a letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1959. He rebutted Nehru's claim by stating that the border had never been formally delimited before. Aksai Chin for instance, Zhou claimed, had "always been under Chinese jurisdiction". But the Indians had now raised claims over this area. This itself was evidence that "border disputes [did] exist". Zhou told Nehru that he had not raised the issue before as it was "not ripe for settlement" and the PRC did not have enough time to study the issue. The McMahon Line, he clarified further, "was a product of the British policy of aggression...and aroused great indignation" in China. Therefore, it was not recognised by the Chinese government and legally untenable. However, the PRC wanted friendly relations with India. So, he was willing to take a "realistic attitude" but needed time to deal with the issue. Zhou granted that Chinese maps were not defensible in all places. However, he denied Nehru's request for a revision in Chinese maps by restating the need for surveys and mutual consultation, as without them the PRC would face domestic criticism for compromising Chinese territory.<sup>785</sup> Until consultations took place, Zhou suggested that the two sides should "temporarily maintain the status quo", especially in known disputed areas.<sup>786</sup>

Zhou's response was a rude awakening for the Indians. Nehru responded on March 22<sup>nd</sup> by claiming that the boundary conformed to the geographical principle of watershed and also had the sanction of specific international agreements signed between India, China, and Tibet. The boundary in Sikkim was defined by the Anglo-Chinese Convention (1890), in Ladakh by the Ladakhi Letter of Agreement (1842 Treaty), and in NEFA by the Simla

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<sup>784</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's statement in parliament on 27 April 1959, in ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2338.

<sup>785</sup> Zhou Enlai to Jawaharlal Nehru on 23 January 1959, in ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2378.

<sup>786</sup> Ibid, pp. 2380.

Agreement (1914). He added that India had exercised administrative authority up to this boundary line for decades and went on to accuse the Chinese of unilaterally trying to change the status-quo in Barahoti by erecting permanent structures and despatching military detachments. Nehru was amenable to negotiations, but asked Zhou to produce documentary proof of PRC's claim to the area before surveys could be conducted. The Indians was apprehensive that the Chinese were unaware of Bara Hoti's location and would use the surveys to "define the exact borders of the area they were claiming".<sup>787</sup> Nehru hoped that his reply had disabused Zhou of his belief that the boundary had never been formally delimited.<sup>788</sup> Moreover, he wanted the status-quo ante preceding the recent flare up of disputes to be restored, before India could agree to its maintenance. Saddled with the fallout from the Tibetan revolution and an inadequate knowledge of the issue, Zhou was unwilling to open up the border dispute at this stage. But the PRC's hand was being forced by the Indian demand for clarity. This was inescapable as the knowledge of the Chinese road in Aksai Chin had become public and Nehru was facing uneasy questions in parliament about China's cartographic and physical encroachments on Indian territory.<sup>789</sup>

In light of Zhou's backsliding on Chinese maps and the McMahon Line, Nehru's views of the PRC grew darker and previous empathic disposition began to erode. Citing China's national characteristics, Nehru argued that India now faced "a strong and united Chinese State, expansive and pushing out in various directions".<sup>790</sup> In sharp retreat from singing paeans of Chinese prudence and friendship, he believed the Chinese were suffering from the "middle-kingdom" syndrome and "[looked] down upon every country other than their own."<sup>791</sup> In a letter to India's ambassador to China, G. Parthasarathy, he described a widespread feeling in India that the PRC acted like a "bully" and had hurt India's "pride and self-respect".<sup>792</sup> Although

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<sup>787</sup> Subimal Dutt private papers, sub file no. 32, NMML, pp. 3.

<sup>788</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 23 March 1959, in ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2383.

<sup>789</sup> Question in Lok Sabha asked on 22 April 1959, in ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2392.

<sup>790</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's letter to Chief Ministers on 1 October 1959, *SIJN-SS*, vol. 53, pp. 3.

<sup>791</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's statement in the Lok Sabha on 8 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2479.

<sup>792</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to G. Parthasarathy on 10 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2489.

shared weaknesses were earlier a source of trust, when Chinese ambassador Pan Zili cautioned India about the risks of a “two-front war”, this was seen as “extremely cynical” and aimed at exploiting India’s weaknesses. From India’s perspective, not only had the Chinese betrayed their faith with respect to their maps and deliberately concealed the border dispute, they were now also actively looking to exploit India’s dependencies. China was seen as trying to “sharpen the spaces” between Pakistan and India to make the latter’s security responsibilities more “onerous”.<sup>793</sup> Parthasarathy regretfully concluded: “there [was] no idealism in our Panchsheel”. In his view the PRC was unscrupulous and if “circumstances [made India] dependent on Chinese friendship, then the character of the friendship [would] be determined by the dominance of China”.<sup>794</sup> Nehru then recorded a reply for the Chinese ambassador, indicting the PRC’s application of the Five Principles as per convenience and opportunism.<sup>795</sup> Evidently, fear was creeping back into Indian assessments of Chinese motives, just as trust was in sharp retreat.

Disputes and intrusions would become a general feature along the 2100-mile long border. In pursuit of Tibetan rebels who were looking to flee and seek refuge across the border, PLA forces began to move up to areas north of the Indo-Tibetan boundary. Indian and Chinese forces thus came face-to-face along a border that lacked on-ground demarcation and precision, making clashes and stand-offs somewhat inevitable. For example, another Indian patrol party of six persons was arrested by the Chinese in Spanggur Tso in Ladakh on 28<sup>th</sup> July.<sup>796</sup> The MEA issued general instructions to India’s border forces on how to stop large Chinese patrols from seizing physical possession of disputed areas. It was considered China’s strategy to present India with *faits accomplis* and then engage in “endless arguments”. Therefore, it was crucial to establish Indian military pickets where possible to resist Chinese forces, even if there was a risk of them being apprehended.<sup>797</sup> This was India’s response, as foreign secretary Subimal Dutt

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<sup>793</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 31 August 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2600.

<sup>794</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 19 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2503.

<sup>795</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note to Subimal Dutt on 22 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2507.

<sup>796</sup> MEA’s note to the Chinese Ambassador to India on 30 July 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2551.

<sup>797</sup> Subimal Dutt to ADGA, Shillong on 11 August 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2558.

specified, to China's "deliberate unfriendliness" and "active policy of violation of [India's] international frontier and intrusion into [Indian] territory".<sup>798</sup> He felt aggrieved because India had repeatedly drawn the attention of PRC officials to inaccuracies in Chinese maps, but they had never raised concerns before. In fact, Zhou had personally conveyed to Nehru that the PRC "in practice would respect the existing border, even though he could not accept it as legally valid". Stating Zhou's betrayal in clear terms Dutt said: "the Chinese Premier seems to have gone back on his position".<sup>799</sup> After futile deliberations with the Chinese on the Bara Hoti plains, Dutt grew convinced that India had been "wantonly tricked" and the PRC could "never again be trusted".<sup>800</sup> Nehru too acknowledged that for Zhou "to have it at the back of [his] mind that [he] was going to change the whole frontier between Tibet and India and later bring it up, [did] not seem to be quite straight or fair-play".<sup>801</sup>

The Indians believed the PRC was deliberately despatching large patrols to disputed border areas with the intention of occupying them and overrunning Indian forces. Dutt noted that the Chinese determined to extend their control and were "pushing their outposts up to the border of what they claim[ed] to be their area". This, he said, was China's "two-faced attitude". On one hand the PRC had declared its aptitude for a reasonable settlement and on the other was using force to extend its occupation of Indian territory.<sup>802</sup> Nehru too alleged that Chinese action belied "their professed anxiety to settle the disputes with [India] peacefully".<sup>803</sup> He would later raise concerns over reports of large-scale movements of PLA forces along the Indo-Tibetan frontier, claiming that PRC's mobilisation signified "a new policy of actively probing into Indian territory along the whole length of the Sino-Indian frontier".<sup>804</sup> The Chinese, Nehru was now convinced, [wanted] to come down on [India's] side of the Himalayan barrier" and endanger

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<sup>798</sup> Subimal Dutt to India's Missions on 29 August 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2597.

<sup>799</sup> Ibid.

<sup>800</sup> Amit Das Gupta, *Serving India*, pp. 337.

<sup>801</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's speech in Rajya Sabha on 10 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 192.

<sup>802</sup> Subimal Dutt's speech at the Governor's Conference on 28 October 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2788.

<sup>803</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Krishna Menon on 5 November 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2804.

<sup>804</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 26 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 228.

India's "basic security".<sup>805</sup> This feeling of betrayal was only aggravated when, according to Indian reports, PLA forces attacked established Indian check-posts and forward pickets in Longju and the Kongka Pass.<sup>806</sup> This was seen as more evidence of the PRC's intent to enforce its territorial claims "by the unilateral application of force".<sup>807</sup>

Verbalizing his betrayal before parliament, Nehru stated: "it does not make very much of a difference physically to India or China whether a mile or two in the high mountains belongs to them or to us, but it does matter very much if a treaty is broken or an aggressive attitude is taken".<sup>808</sup> The key issue was that the PRC had behaved in "an insulting, aggressive, offensive, [and] violent manner" towards India. He argued it was "improper" for a state to treat another with such high-handedness, "even much more so when the nations have been friendly".<sup>809</sup> In his opinion, China had committed "a definite breach of faith" by "[creeping] up and [taking] possession of these various areas and territories".<sup>810</sup> Ambassador Parthasarathy too was of the opinion that China's deliberate provocations and "two-faced policy" intended to "show that all along the frontier there [were] disputes and so the entire frontier should be subject of negotiations".<sup>811</sup> Especially in light of speeches that had been made at the National People's Congress accusing India of "holding territories gained by British aggression" he had become anxious about the prospect of "China [sponsoring] Tibetan irredentist claims".<sup>812</sup>

Whatever lingering hopes Nehru may have had with respect to Chinese motives dissipated with Zhou's letter on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1959. Zhou clarified that the boundary dispute was a complicated question left over by history and British imperialism. Considering India had

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<sup>805</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 1 October 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 53, pp. 6.

<sup>806</sup> Subimal Dutt to India's Missions on 29 August 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2598.

<sup>807</sup> Note given by the Indian Ambassador to the Chinese Foreign Office on 28 August 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2928.

<sup>808</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru statement in Rajya Sabha on 31 August 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2931.

<sup>809</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's speech in Lok Sabha on 12 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 201.

<sup>810</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's speech in Lok Sabha on 27 November 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 54, pp. 538.

<sup>811</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 27 October 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2965.

<sup>812</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Jawaharlal Nehru on 3 May 1959. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 48, pp. 602.

also endured colonial rule, the PRC had hoped that Nehru would take a sympathetic view on the matter. Instead, he was demanding “formal recognition to the situation created by the application of the British policy of aggression against China”. Zhou challenged the historical register, detailing China’s grounds for non-recognition of the international agreements cited by Nehru. Chinese forces had not crossed the McMahon Line to maintain amity with India, but this did not imply the PRC’s acceptance of this Line. Zhou claimed Nehru had misunderstood his comments in previous interactions. He facetiously claimed that no Joint Communique was issued and nor did the PRC keep any official record of the meetings. Finally, he repeated the need to provisionally maintain the “long-standing status-quo” on the border and stop unilateral revisions. Afterwards, an “overall settlement” could be sought by both parties based on “the historical background and existing actualities and adhering to the Five Principles”.<sup>813</sup>

Although Zhou was still pressing for surveys and professed not to impose Chinese maps on India, his letter confirmed Nehru’s worst fears. Not only was the PRC contesting minor pockets in the Central Sector as well as uninhabited parts in Ladakh like the Aksai Chin area, it was denying acceptance of the entire Sino-Indian frontier. The Indians had been prepared to negotiate the alignment of the border in specific places and trusted their Chinese counterparts to acquiesce to this arrangement in light of their conduct since 1954. What the Indians did not expect however, is that the Chinese would reject the historical basis for the entire boundary, lay claim to large territories on the Indian side (about 50,000 sq. miles), and upstage the long-standing status quo by force. Nehru privately admitted to Dutt that the Indo-Tibetan boundary was un-demarcated. But he could not countenance the PRC’s “gradual encroachment and occupation of [Indian] territory.”<sup>814</sup> The threat posed by China was not a mere border adjustment but a “serious threat from a powerful nation which [was] aggressive and [was] showing its pride and arrogance of might”.<sup>815</sup>

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<sup>813</sup> Zhou Enlai to Jawaharlal Nehru on 8 September 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2611.

<sup>814</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Subimal Dutt on 15 August 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 51, pp. 456.

<sup>815</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s Press Conference on 11 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 5.

This realisation shook the very foundations of India's trust in China based on the Five Principles. Voicing his surprise and distress, Nehru responded to Zhou's letter on 26<sup>th</sup> September. In disbelief, he returned to his meeting with Zhou in 1956, claiming he supposed it was only the on-ground demarcation of the McMahon Line in the Eastern sector that was pending thereafter. He had not anticipated Zhou's reversal of position and rejection of the McMahon Line as a basis for the border in the Eastern Sector. He demanded that the Chinese cease their policy of threats and intimidation and withdraw from their forceful occupation of Longju as well as from recently constructed posts in Spanggur, Mandal, and one or two other places in Eastern Ladakh. Nehru told Zhou that his letter had come as a "great shock" to him. Negotiations could take place only if China did not bring "within the scope of what should essentially be a border dispute, claims to thousands of miles of territory which [were] integral parts of the territory of India".<sup>816</sup> No Indian government, he argued, could negotiate and whittle down this principle. Such conditionalities show that the feeling of betrayal demanded payback before the normal course of diplomacy could resume. Subsequent Indian diplomatic notes continued to retell the story of China's perfidy. For example, the note sent on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1959 to protest the killing and capture of Indian soldiers at the Kongka Pass restated the accusation that PRC officials had not once raised territorial issues before and faked ignorance of the frontier based on "old maps" when the Indians had raised concerns. This had led the Indians to wrongly suppose that "the Chinese government had no serious doubts about the correctness of Indian maps, except perhaps for some minor disputes".<sup>817</sup> Even in the Aksai Chin, the note stated, the "Government of India had no reason to suspect that the [Chinese], with whom they had friendly relations, would trespass into the area and build a road...flouting" the Five Principles.<sup>818</sup>

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<sup>816</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 26 September 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2694.

<sup>817</sup> Note given by MEA to the Chinese Ambassador to India on 4 November 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2968.

<sup>818</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 2972.

It is important to note that China's betrayal was of a public nature, which worsened the sense of betrayal. As news of China's hostility gained traction, Nehru was forced to defend the vulnerabilities he had previously accepted with respect to the PRC. Prince Peter of Greece, who was a resident in Kalimpong, had accused Nehru of abetting China's takeover of Tibet by offering supply routes for PLA forces. This of course, awkwardly exposed India's contribution in maintaining PLA forces on the very borders which they were now threatening. Nehru timidly defended building a road to Nathula Pass to facilitate trade with Tibet by downplaying the quantity of food aid transported via the route.<sup>819</sup> This was however, far from the truth. India had been the "main line of supply for a great part of Tibet".<sup>820</sup> Especially as the Tibetan revolution raged on, the PRC was putting increasing pressure on Indian traders to import large quantities of "petrol, cement, steel and other such materials...to build up their military potential in Tibet".<sup>821</sup> But, as relations worsened, India decided to cut-off all food grain, steel products, hand tools, auto parts, fuel, clothing, tea, and sugar exports to Tibet despite having a favourable balance of trade.<sup>822</sup> Second, Nehru was questioned on India's border security. He accepted that India could have done more for its defensive preparedness. But existing military commitments and spending to counter Pakistan on the Western frontier as well as priorities in the social and economic field were considered more pressing. Moreover, the deployment of "large forces [along] thousands of miles of frontier would have meant a tremendous drain on [India] without any real advantage".<sup>823</sup> So far, India had focused limitedly on improving its lines of communication, albeit at a laggard pace compared to the Chinese.

Nehru still refused to publicly concede the charge of complacency but agreed that he had not expected the "crisis to arise in this way and with such rapidity".<sup>824</sup> He was forced to

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<sup>819</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's press conference on 5 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2169.

<sup>820</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's public speech on 24 December 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 55, pp. 242.

<sup>821</sup> From Indian Trade Agency in Yatung to Political Officer Sikkim on 6 September 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2608.

<sup>822</sup> Annual Report from Lhasa 1954, Ministry of External Affairs, file no. 3(19)R&I/54, National Archives of India [henceforth NAI], New Delhi, pp. 7.

<sup>823</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 4 November 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 54, pp. 3.

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 5.

concede that “the thought of Chinese aggression against India never crossed [his] mind at all”.<sup>825</sup> As a staunch democrat, he was perturbed by parliamentary criticism that he had kept these disputes with China hidden, misleading the parliament and public at large.<sup>826</sup> As he acknowledged to Zhou, he had refused to give publicity to minor border disputes since 1954 “in the hope that peaceful solutions of the disputes could be found by agreement...without public excitement on both sides”. Now he was facing “sharp but legitimate criticism” on this account.<sup>827</sup> In response, he conceded to parliamentarian Vajpayee’s request to table white papers, listing all correspondences with the Chinese government since independence.<sup>828</sup> While this measure was meant to placate parliamentary opposition, it did quite the opposite. Nehru made a large trove of information available for mass consumption, which had revealed both, India’s trusting relationship with China and the subsequent betrayal. China’s vehement anti-India propaganda was also causing “frequent discussions in parliament” and “animated discussions in press”, further diminishing Nehru’s standing.<sup>829</sup>

What inflamed public opinion subsequently were border clashes at Kongka Pass and Longju in the latter half of 1959, which resulted in the martyrdom and capture of several Indian soldiers (casualties did occur on the Chinese side too but details are unknown). As Mao Zedong would profess to Khrushchev, neither Nehru nor he had premediated the clashes. They only learnt about them “much later, after the incidents took place”. In fact, even at a time when his vitriol for Nehru had reached its apogee, Mao admitted that Nehru had tried to deescalate the crisis and withdrawn India’s troops from Longju.<sup>830</sup> Nehru too referred to these as “minor incidents” before parliament and demonstrated restraint.<sup>831</sup> For instance, after the Kongka Pass

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<sup>825</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s public speech on 1 November 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 54, pp. 50.

<sup>826</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 26 September 1959. In *ASB* (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2695.

<sup>827</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 26 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 217.

<sup>828</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s statement in parliament on 4 September 1959. In *ASB* (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2604.

<sup>829</sup> Subimal Dutt to Indian Embassy on 29 August 1959. In *ASB* (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2595.

<sup>830</sup> Meeting between Nikita Khrushchev and Mao Zedong with politburo members on 2 October 1959. In *ASB* (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2730.

<sup>831</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in Lok Sabha on 28 August 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 51, pp. 489.

clashes he stated that the “incident resulting in conflict was probably unplanned on either side”. It was unlikely that the PLA forces were acting on the basis of any “special directions from the Chinese Government”.<sup>832</sup> Similarly, after conducting several eyewitness interviews in NEFA, General B.M. Kaul affirmed that Indian and Chinese forces had “blundered into each other” at Longju.<sup>833</sup> But while some elites understood that these clashes were unfortunate and somewhat unavoidable considering the complexity of navigating and patrolling undelimited border areas, public opinion could not grasp why a friendly neighbouring country would choose to capture, torture, and even kill Indian soldiers for territorial gains. Nehru faced hours of questioning before the parliament as well as before more informal gatherings of Congress parliamentarians. He could not escape the effects of the “tremendous excitement and indignation” the border dispute with China had caused.<sup>834</sup> At this time, as B.M. Kaul would later recount, Nehru “stood discredited in the public eye in India”.<sup>835</sup> He would be forced to state his determination not to “make a gift of the Himalayas to anybody whatever the consequences”.<sup>836</sup> The public nature of betrayal amplified its pernicious effects and limited India’s bargaining range. Neither the strategic trust nor the elite control over public opinion that helped foster it were existent.

At first, Nehru had assumed that local developments in Tibet and China (where the domestic economic situation appeared to be deteriorating) as well as the anti-Communist uprisings in Yugoslavia had made the PRC’s outlook more “rigid”.<sup>837</sup> In 1958, he had asked educationist Humayun Kabir to proceed cautiously with the visit of Indian scholars to Tibet as “Indian intentions [were] suspect in China”.<sup>838</sup> Similarly, he admitted to Apa Pant, India’s political officer in Sikkim, that the Chinese believed India was “conniving at the activities of Tibetan emigres in Darjeeling and Kalimpong,” and thus Zhou’s invitation for Nehru to visit

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<sup>832</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on 4 October 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 53, pp. 18.

<sup>833</sup> B.M. Kaul oral transcript, file No. 93, NMML, pp. 106.

<sup>834</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 2808.

<sup>835</sup> B.M. Kaul oral transcript, file No. 93, NMML, pp. 142.

<sup>836</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 1 October 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 53, pp. 6.

<sup>837</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Humayun Kabir on 26 June 1958, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 42, pp. 662.

<sup>838</sup> *Ibid*.

Tibet was likely to be withdrawn. He then asked Apa Pant to be wary in his interaction with Tibetans, so as to not rouse Chinese suspicions further.<sup>839</sup> He was also paying attention to local developments and was later able to foresee PRC's antipathy against India's decision to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama and frustration with the failure of the socialist revolution in Tibet.<sup>840</sup> However, once the feeling of betrayal was roused, there no way for Nehru to continue on his previous path and trust the Chinese. Chinese actions had hurt India's "pride" and "self-respect" and this was more important than the territory at stake. Noticeably aggrieved, Nehru claimed India had not gotten a "fair treatment" and China was acting as a "bully".<sup>841</sup> It is quite clear that he did not take exception to Chinese actions because of the vitality of territorial sovereignty as an abstract good, but because of the manner in which China had acted towards India, which had shocked Nehru's horizon of expectation and the presumptive contract that had allowed him to trust the Chinese in the first place. Outside the socialist bloc, India had been one of the first countries to officially recognise the PRC and had supported its admission to the UN. Nehru had expended great diplomatic capital and staked his reputation for the Five Principles, both as the basis for a trusting relationship with the PRC and as a wider template for Asia as an "Area of Peace".

But Zhou's letters and the PRC's territorial claims had betrayed Nehru's expectations. Merely a few years after the high-point in Sino-Indian relations, Nehru was forced to concede that "the old days of Hindi-Chini-Bhai-Bhai [were] no more".<sup>842</sup> Now, even if "relative peace" continued at the frontier, it was anticipated to be "some kind of an armed peace" with "continuing tension".<sup>843</sup> China was "a powerful country bent on spreading out to what [it considered its] old frontiers, and possibly beyond". Having consolidated its military position in Tibet and its domestic industrial base, the PRC was now determined to "enforce that claim and

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<sup>839</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Apa B. Pant on 11 July 1958, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 43, pp. 534.

<sup>840</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to U Nu on 29 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 232.

<sup>841</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's speech in the Rajya Sabha on 10 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 187.

<sup>842</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to U Nu on 29 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 232.

<sup>843</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 1 October 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 53, pp. 3.

seize territory with the firm conviction that they were only taking back what belonged to them”. Nehru began to increasingly rely on orientalist tropes of China as a historically “expansionist” and “aggressive” power, something he considered anathema before. In his view, the PRC had “reverted to the old imperial days of China when they considered themselves the Middle Kingdom, the centre of culture and enlightenment, and the other nations on their fringes were to be treated in a superior and patronising way”. It was in light of this that his attempts at friendship with the Chinese had “failed” and there was “a great deal of potential conflict in the air”.<sup>844</sup>

Nehru’s feeling of betrayal however, was not produced by the PRC’s premeditated defection, but rather flowed from the manner in which the two states had built trust. There is no evidence to suggest that PRC officials had studied the historical data surrounding the Sino-Indian border, were only biding time to improve their position militarily, and secretly planned to impose their territorial claims through force. In late 1958, the PRC leadership had in fact recognised their “limited knowledge about the frontiers and lack of historical materials, diplomatic files, and accurate maps of the boundary lines”. This is why a State Council Boundary Commission was set up under the chairmanship of Vice Foreign Minister Zeng Yongquan “to comprehensively plan the demarcation work, organize relevant departments to conduct investigations and studies, collect materials, conduct field surveys, and propose negotiations”.<sup>845</sup> On December 13, 1958, the Central Committee also issued a directive which reiterated that the PRC did not “have enough knowledge of the border situation”.<sup>846</sup> As Kanti Bajpai argues, it is plausible that the PRC struggled to pull together fragmented data on the frontiers considering the impact of World War II on the Chinese state archives. Some material may also have been taken by the Kuomintang to Taiwan.<sup>847</sup> Therefore, much like the Indians,

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<sup>844</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 26 October 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 53, pp. 19.

<sup>845</sup> Chaowu Dai, “China’s Strategy for Sino-Indian Boundary Disputes, 1950-1962,” *Asian Perspective*, vol. 43, no. 3 (2019), pp. 446.

<sup>846</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 448.

<sup>847</sup> Kanti Bajpai, *India Versus China*, pp. 86.

the Chinese were gradually improving their historical understanding as well as administrative strength in Indo-Tibetan border areas before beginning negotiations and reaching a peaceful settlement. Chinese occupation of disputed areas up to the PRC's claim line was also akin to India's strategy since 1951, although PLA movement had swelled in the aftermath of the Tibetan revolution. However, this was not India's view. As the annual report of India's trade agent in Gartok in 1960 stated, "the Chinese had planned since the beginning to claim certain areas on the border of India...If they had no expansionist plans towards Indian border areas there was no necessity of amassing huge stores and strengthening military force and starting construction work on roads towards the Indian border".<sup>848</sup> A similar report from the mission in Gyantse concluded: "it can be safely said that the time to trust our neighbour is over".<sup>849</sup>

Betrayal had caused a sharp revision of India's reading of Chinese intentions. But, rather than Chinese defection, India's feeling of betrayal stemmed from Nehru decision not to raise the border issue—leaving it to the PRC to do so—while simultaneously allowing unrealistic positive expectations to develop. Zhou too played his part by hinting that the PRC was willing to compromise on the McMahon Line during interpersonal interactions without stating clearly that he could not formally commit to this arrangement without negotiations on the entire border, especially deprived of reciprocal concessions from India in the Eastern sector. Their exchanges were inferred by Nehru as a tacit commitment of the PRC's position, which later were seen as PRC's evasive replies deliberately delaying consideration of concrete issues. India's official history of the 1962 War refers to this as China's "policy of duplicity" or a covert strategy meant to grab Indian territory whilst using the Five Principles as a "temporary device of diplomacy".<sup>850</sup> From India's perspective, mutual respect for territorial sovereignty was a crucial

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<sup>848</sup> Annual Report of the Indian Trade Agent in Gartok 1959, Ministry of External Affairs, file no. 19(11)-WT/60, NAI, pp. 18.

<sup>849</sup> Annual Report from Lhasa, Gyantse, Yatung 1960, Ministry of External Affairs, file no. 3(19)R&I/60, NAI, pp. 21.

<sup>850</sup> P.B. Sinha and A.A. Athale, *History of the Conflict with China*, History Division, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, 1992. <https://www.bharat-rakshak.com/archives/OfficialHistory/1962War/1962Chapter02.pdf>.

part of the Five Principles, forming the basis of the trusting relationship. However, what the Indians failed to fully appreciate was that there was no shared understanding of the border and thus it was unrealistic for them to assume that the PRC would fall in line and accept an alignment drawn on Indian maps. But there was no consensus on where the McMahon Line was and Indian troops even inadvertently occupied some areas such as Tamaden north of the line only to retreat later.<sup>851</sup>

### *Why China Felt Betrayed*

On the Chinese side, the sense of betrayal was provoked by India's response to the Tibetan revolution, both at the elite and popular levels. The PRC felt betrayed by India's decision to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama even as the situation in Tibet worsened, inaction against Tibetan rebels carrying out anti-China activities in Kalimpong, Nehru's deliberate unwillingness to counter anti-China propaganda in India for political gains, and India's use of its influence with the two superpowers to isolate and build pressure on the PRC. First, the watershed event for Sino-Indian relations in 1959 was the Dalai Lama's escape from Lhasa to seek refuge in India. Once the Dalai Lama was safely transported, the Tibetan rebels had greater leeway to increase hostilities against PLA forces. Nehru had anticipated that the decision to provide asylum was "not going to be liked by the Chinese".<sup>852</sup> Later, he would also accept that the Dalai Lama's stay in India was a "continuing affront and irritation" for the PRC.<sup>853</sup> But he could not ignore the weight of Indian public opinion, and secondarily, his own ethical convictions. He tried to "maintain friendly relations with China" but he also had sympathy for the Tibetans and wanted to "see [the] genuine autonomy of Tibet maintained".<sup>854</sup> The contradictions in this policy would frustrate the PRC's expectations.

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<sup>851</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 26 September 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2709.

<sup>852</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to C. Rajagopalachari on 8 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2196.

<sup>853</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to G. Parthasarathy on 29 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2433.

<sup>854</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 16 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2251.

An article in the *Ta Kung Pao* charged Nehru's India with exploiting China's weakness by using the Dalai Lama to "black-mail" and "compel" the PRC to make concessions on the border.<sup>855</sup> It is to rid Nehru of such "illusions" of using the Dalai Lama as a "bargaining chip" that Zhou considered it necessary to carry out a "counteroffensive" against India.<sup>856</sup> He believed Nehru had given a free rein to Tibetan rebels to carry out anti-China activities. In India, the Dalai Lama was conducting subversive assemblies at will, meeting foreign envoys, and was even allowed to appeal to the UN on behalf of the Tibetan government in exile.<sup>857</sup> When discussing the issue with Khrushchev, Mao too would blame Nehru for the Dalai Lama's escape. He claimed the "Hindus" had acted in Tibet "as if it belonged to them" and it was vital to "crush" them.<sup>858</sup> Chinese Foreign Minister Geng Biao would express China's frustrations for giving asylum to the Dalai Lama and allowing Tibetan rebels to carry out anti-Chinese activities directly to Parthasarathy. He indignantly asked: "if one day a stream of anti-government armed forces or an anti-government figure from India led a bunch of people over here to China and the Chinese government sheltered them and let them engage in anti-Indian activities in areas close to India, what would be the mood of the Indian people?"<sup>859</sup> Chinese commentary also claimed that the Dalai Lama's trip to India in 1956 to attend the Buddha Jayanti celebrations had been used by Indian expansionists to hatch a plan to abduct the Dalai Lama to India and launch the Tibetan rebellion.<sup>860</sup>

However, Nehru had no such designs on Tibet. Despite acknowledging the PRC's policy to "absorb" Tibet and the Tibetan rejection of Chinese hegemony, Nehru was

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<sup>855</sup> Subimal Dutt to G. Parthasarathy on 28 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2415.

<sup>856</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, (London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 35.

<sup>857</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 9 September 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2627.

<sup>858</sup> Meeting between Nikita Khrushchev and Mao Zedong with politburo members on 2 October 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2727.

<sup>859</sup> Memorandum of Conversation: Deputy Foreign Minister Geng Biao And Director Zhang Wenji With G. Parthasarathy on 19 July 1961. Wilson Centre Digital Archive, History and Public Policy Program, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121757>.

<sup>860</sup> Chang Lu, "The Rebirth if the Tibetan People Cannot be Halted," *Peking Review*, 5 May 1959, vol. II, no. 18, pp. 9.

sympathetic to the communist reform agenda. He believed the “social structure” of Tibet was “out of date” and could not remain isolated from forces affecting the rest of the world.<sup>861</sup> Moreover, as he once told the Maharaja of Bhutan, India recognised China’s control over Tibet and therefore “could not encourage any anti-Chinese activities on Indian soil”.<sup>862</sup> In fact, he was averse to Tibetan rebels seeking refuge in India or bordering states, and only later relented under parliamentary pressure.<sup>863</sup> He wanted the large-scale incursions of Khampas and Mimang rebels to be stopped to Bhutan and Sikkim.<sup>864</sup> Although Nehru did not hesitate to extend asylum to the Dalai Lama<sup>865</sup>, he was not to be allowed to operate “on the political plane” in India against the PRC’s interests.<sup>866</sup> Nehru even prevented the Dalai Lama’s brother Gyalo Thandup from meeting him and also advised him against giving a detailed statement to the press describing the circumstances in which he had fled Lhasa.<sup>867</sup> Members of the Dalai Lama’s retinue were restricted from visiting Kalimpong to avoid controversy.<sup>868</sup>

When Nehru discussed the Tibetan revolution before parliament he was extremely cautious. He referred to the revolution as a “clash of wills” and claimed “no major violence had occurred”. He cautioned Indian parliamentarians against any activities which could worsen the “delicate situation” in Tibet. Reassuring the PRC, he affirmed that the India had no intention of interfering in China’s internal affairs. He even denied a request to have a general debate on the Tibetan revolution on the grounds that it was improper to “discuss events in another country”.<sup>869</sup> Later, in a letter to India’s Chief Ministers, he would refuse to condemn the Chinese for the violence that had broken out or for contravening the 17-point agreement.<sup>870</sup> He

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<sup>861</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note on 26 December 1957. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 1872.

<sup>862</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note on visit to Bhutan on 26 September 1958. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 1935.

<sup>863</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in Lok Sabha on 17 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2010.

<sup>864</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note on 10 December 1958. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 1964.

<sup>865</sup> MEA to Political Officer Sikkim on 15 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 1989.

<sup>866</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s press conference on 5 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2155.

<sup>867</sup> Subimal Dutt to Apa B. Pant on 8 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2205.

<sup>868</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note recorded on 12 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2211.

<sup>869</sup> Discussion in Lok Sabha on 23 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2053.

<sup>870</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Chief Ministers on 25 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2065.

did not have access to a “precise account of what had happened. In its absence, he could not speak “irresponsibly” or “just refer to sentiments”.<sup>871</sup> Nehru’s stance was appreciated in Beijing. An editorial in the People’s Daily welcomed Nehru’s call for non-interference and stated: “we believe that the Chinese and Indian governments will continue to observe [the Five Principles] faithfully, and will not permit the friendly relations between our two countries to be damaged”.<sup>872</sup> Foreign Minister Chen Yi also expressed his appreciation for Nehru’s commitment to non-interference in China’s internal affairs and to Sino-Indian friendship.<sup>873</sup> In light of his restrained speeches, the PRC had decided to withhold propaganda efforts against India, despite resentment at the activities of the Praja Socialist Party and other anti-Chinese members of India’s parliamentary opposition. Western imperialists were blamed instead for trying to disrupt India and China’s trusting ties. At this time Yi said the PRC’s strategy was to “neutralise India and then attract her to [China’s] side”.<sup>874</sup>

However, the Dalai Lama’s escape to India darkened the PRC’s perception of Nehru’s intentions. As the Central Committee stated: “India’s response to the Tibetan rebellion, especially the provision of political asylum to the Dalai Lama, led to major changes in the attitudes toward Nehru by Chinese leaders”.<sup>875</sup> The PRC also believed Nehru had coordinated with or at least knew of the CIA’s covert designs to help the Dalai Lama escape, and thus they began propaganda claiming the Dalai Lama had been “abducted” and forced to India by Tibetan rebels. This compelled Nehru to defend India’s involvement in the matter.<sup>876</sup> He had to publicly contradict the PRC’s statement by clarifying that the Dalai Lama had escaped under duress and due to expectation of harm from the Chinese government. Dutt would amend the Dalai Lama’s statement to the press in Tezpur to include a concluding section on the

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<sup>871</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s press conference on 5 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2158.

<sup>872</sup> “Put Down the Rebellion in Tibet Thoroughly”, *Peking Review*, April 7, 1959, vol. II, no. 15, pp. 8.

<sup>873</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 8 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2199.

<sup>874</sup> Yuri Andropov, Report on the situation in Tibet for the Central Committee of the CPSU on 31 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2123.

<sup>875</sup> Chaowu Dai, “China’s Strategy for Sino-Indian Boundary Disputes, 1950-1962,” pp. 448.

<sup>876</sup> Zhou Enlai, “Report on The Work of The Government,” *Peking Review*, April 21, 1959, vol. II, no. 16, pp. 23.

circumstances under which he left Tibet and whether this was of his own free will.<sup>877</sup> In fact, the Indians would invite the Chinese ambassador to India to visit and confirm the Dalai Lama's intentions.<sup>878</sup> Nehru would later affirm before parliament that "the Dalai Lama [had] entered India entirely of his own volition".<sup>879</sup> In light of the outpouring of public sympathy for the Tibetans, Nehru would also challenge the PRC's narrative that the revolution was organised by a handful of "upper strata reactionaries". He said this was "an extraordinary simplification of a complicated situation" and that the revolt was born out of a "strong feeling of nationalism".<sup>880</sup>

Nehru's speech drew the ire of PRC officials as it challenged the official Chinese line and showed sympathy for the Tibetans. The full speech made in the Lok Sabha on April 27<sup>th</sup> was published in leading Chinese dailies to allow Chinese people to understand India's "attitudes and views on Tibet".<sup>881</sup> The New China News Agency blamed Nehru for turning facts related to the Tibetan rebellion "upside down" and defending Tibetan "traitors" as "nationalists".<sup>882</sup> Mayor of Shanghai and member of the Politburo of the CCP remarked that Nehru had "seriously distorted the truth of the Tibetan revolution and defended Indian expansionists".<sup>883</sup> Not only were PRC officials aggrieved that the Dalai Lama had been allowed to make a political statement, but the MEA had also officially distributed the statement and carried it on the official bulletins of Indian embassies abroad. "Weren't the Indian expansionists trying to strike at the unity and solidarity of China's nationalities when they purposely chose the day of the opening of the National People's Congress to issue the so-called Statement of the Dalai Lama?" asked an editorial in the *Peking Review*.<sup>884</sup> The Chinese were also offended by the "impressive welcome" extended to the Dalai Lama by Indian officials as well as Nehru's private

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<sup>877</sup> Subimal Dutt to P.N. Menon on 14 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2234.

<sup>878</sup> P.N. Menon to Subimal Dutt on 14 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2332.

<sup>879</sup> Ibid, pp. 2335.

<sup>880</sup> Article in *People's Daily* on 15 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2340.

<sup>881</sup> "May Day Demonstrations," *Peking Review*, 5 May 1959, vol. II, no. 18, pp. 5.

<sup>882</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's speech in Rajya Sabha on 4 May 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 49, pp. 552.

<sup>883</sup> Indian Counsel in Shanghai to India's Ambassador to China on 4 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2445.

<sup>884</sup> "Chinese People Will Not Tolerate Foreign Intervention in Tibet", *Peking Review*, April 29, 1959, vol. II, no. 17, pp. 8.

meeting with him. These actions were seen as “encouraging the Tibetan rebels”.<sup>885</sup> It was in response to these developments and agony over India’s involvement in the rebellion in Tibet that Mao decided to launch “an open counteroffensive” and retune the CCP propaganda apparatus against India. Mao asked Chinese news agencies to be critical of Nehru as several reports of the Xinhua News Agency highlighted his complicity.<sup>886</sup> He told them: “criticism of Nehru should be sharp, don’t fear to irritate him, don’t fear to cause him trouble”.<sup>887</sup> India was held guilty of “instigating the revolt in Tibet” and Nehru as Prime Minister was “responsible for it”.<sup>888</sup> Articles in Indian communist outlets such as Swadhinata’s editorial on 29 April titled “why does Nehru arrogantly try to advise great China?” were carried in all prominent Chinese dailies. Parthasarathy accurately observed that at first PRC propaganda targeted Indian expansionists, then the Government of India’s, and now Nehru himself.<sup>889</sup>

A second source of betrayal for the PRC was Nehru’s inaction against anti-Chinese forces in Kalimpong, who were allegedly instigating an armed revolution in Tibet at the behest of the Americans and the Chiang Kai-shek regime. In response to Nehru’s demand for evidence, the Chinese Foreign Ministry sent a detailed note to India on 10 July 1958. The PRC argued that Kalimpong was a base for Tibetan reactionaries partaking in “conspiratorial and disruptive activities” against the Chinese regime in Tibet. The note drew India’s attention to the names of several Tibetan operatives in Kalimpong as well as “reactionary” leaflets, newspapers, and other propaganda material that was being smuggled into Tibet. It also claimed that Kalimpong was being used as a base to “collect intelligence, smuggle arms, and despatch agents in to Tibet to incite riots”.<sup>890</sup> The note asked the Indians to “repress the subversive and

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<sup>885</sup> Statement made by Chinese Ambassador to Subimal Dutt on 16 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2498.

<sup>886</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, pp. 33.

<sup>887</sup> John Garver, *China’s Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People’s Republic of China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 150.

<sup>888</sup> Indian Counsel in Shanghai to India’s Ambassador to China on 4 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2445.

<sup>889</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 4 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2447.

<sup>890</sup> Note given by the Foreign Office of China to the Indian Ambassador on 10 July 1958. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 1901.

disruptive activities” of these reactionaries.<sup>891</sup> However, to their dismay, the Indian government did not respond with the type of urgency and heavy-handedness the PRC thought necessary.

Nehru did reject overtures made by Tibetan refugees settled in Kalimpong and also warned them not to “indulge in any anti-Chinese activities on Indian territory”.<sup>892</sup> India would also take action against foreign correspondents sending out “exaggerated reports of happenings in Tibet”.<sup>893</sup> But, India also rejected the PRC’s allegation that Kalimpong was being used by the Americans and the Kuomintang as a base for subversive activities against China. It claimed most of the Tibetans stationed in Kalimpong had come for trade or pilgrimage. India had no “definite evidence” against those named in the Chinese note and therefore could only issue warnings to them. None of the Tibetan organisations mentioned by China were found to be engaging in any “undesirable activities” either. One of the newspapers the Chinese had raised objections against, the Tibetan Mirror, was run by an Indian national and therefore India, constrained by the Constitution, could not take any action against it. India unsuccessfully sought to assure the PRC that its suspicions were based on a “complete misunderstanding of facts” and no anti-China activities were being permitted on Indian soil.<sup>894</sup> For Nehru, Kalimpong was indeed a “nest of spies”, but of spies belonging to both anti-Communist and Communist forces alike.<sup>895</sup> Some clandestine activities may therefore have been carried out but it was absurd to imagine a “small group of persons sitting in Kalimpong [had] organised a major upheaval in Tibet”.<sup>896</sup>

The Chinese were unimpressed with Nehru’s assurances on Kalimpong. Chinese comrades would inform their Soviet counterparts that military aid was reaching Tibetan rebels

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<sup>891</sup> Ibid, pp. 1901.

<sup>892</sup> MEA to Indian Embassy in China on 2 August 1958. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 1907.

<sup>893</sup> Statement by the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of China to Indian Ambassador on 22 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2036.

<sup>894</sup> Note given by MEA to Chinese Ambassador on 2 August 1958. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 1911.

<sup>895</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s press conference on 5 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2168.

<sup>896</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s statement in Lok Sabha on 27 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2339.

through Nepal and India. The Indian Consulate in Lhasa was criticised for taking “direct part in organising the revolt”. As per a Soviet report, they were certain that the rebellion’s “foreign centre” was the “Indian city of Kalimpong”.<sup>897</sup> Commentary in the People’s Daily on 15 April 1959 also rejected Nehru’s assertions. It claimed: “it is true that traitorous activities in Kalimpong are sometimes open and sometimes secret. Our Indian friends may not be aware of it. But this does not warrant a conclusion that we too are not aware of it”.<sup>898</sup> In fact, the Peking Review would publish documentary evidence, constituted by photostats of four letters written by Tibetan rebels that were intercepted by the PLA at Kungtehlin, to prove their point.<sup>899</sup> Thereafter, the PRC protested the celebration of the anniversary of the Tibetan revolution at the Tharpa Choling Monastery in Kalimpong. The Chinese note referred to this as a “meeting of a political character”. Once again, they were frustrated with the inability of Indian authorities to “prevent in advance these activities carried out on Indian territory openly directed against the PRC”. It was alleged that local authorities “connived” at these activities.<sup>900</sup> There was also a similar celebration of the “national day of the Republic of China” in Kalimpong which the PRC alleged was attended by a Director in India’s Crime Investigation Department in Kalimpong and a local police officer.<sup>901</sup> The PRC claimed this was evidence of India’s plot to create “two Chinas” on Indian soil.<sup>902</sup> On 17 March 1959, at a Politburo meeting, Zhou accused India of facilitating American and British aid to the Tibetan rebels via Kalimpong.<sup>903</sup> The PRC decided to take matters into its hands to tackle anti-China activities in Kalimpong. The Chinese trade agent stationed in the region began to circulate the PRC’s propaganda literature to locals. The Indians saw this as PRC’s attempt to influence the loyalty of people of Tibetan origin residing in

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<sup>897</sup> Yuri Andropov, Report on the situation in Tibet for the Central Committee of the CPSU on 31 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2123.

<sup>898</sup> Article in People’s Daily on 15 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2240.

<sup>899</sup> “Kalimpong: A Link Between Tibetan Rebels and Indian Expansionists,” *Peking Review*, 5 May 1959, vol. II, no. 18, pp. 7.

<sup>900</sup> Note given by the Chinese Ambassador to the MEA on 12 August 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2561.

<sup>901</sup> Note given by the Chinese Ambassador to the MEA on 29 October 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2791.

<sup>902</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>903</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, pp. 32.

Kalimpong and imposed restrictions on the movement of China's trade agent.<sup>904</sup> India also blocked China's attempts to acquire more property in Kalimpong to expand its presence.<sup>905</sup> Indian authorities finally acted in Kalimpong, but against the PRC.

Thirdly, public sympathy in India for Tibet and anti-China propaganda also became a part of Nehru's betrayal. An editorial in the *People's Daily* argued that Tibet was China's internal affair and it was as inappropriate for outsiders to comment on the matter, as it would be for the Chinese to raise a hue and cry about the policy of the Indian government in relation to one of its states or its national minorities.<sup>906</sup> Ambassador Parthasarathy understood this as a warning to India that it had no locus to express any views on internal developments in China, even if they were polite. In fact, if the insulation of Tibet was complete and Tibetan rebels subdued, there would be no cause for friction between China and India.<sup>907</sup> However, the Tibetan revolution led to spirited public debate in India against China's occupation of Tibet. Zhou is also reported to have complained to the Ceylonese ambassador to Soviet Russia that he had spoken on the Tibet issue only once before the NPC but Nehru had already made eight statements on Tibet before the Indian parliament.<sup>908</sup> Workings of the Indian parliament frustrated the PRC's expectations and were seen as part of India's many deliberate acts of interference. The *Peking Review* argued that China had never discussed India's internal affairs at the NPC. The discussion in India's parliament on Tibet therefore, was "impolite and improper".<sup>909</sup> What was also egregious was that many on the Indians, especially members of the Praja Socialist Party, were referring to China's suppression of the Tibetan revolution as "interference" and "aggression".<sup>910</sup> The PRC's feeling of betrayal was further aggravated when speeches expressing sympathy for the Tibetan cause were made by people personally related to

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<sup>904</sup> Subimal Dutt to G. Parthasarathy on 4 November 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2800.

<sup>905</sup> Subimal Dutt's note on China's purchase of property in India on 15 December 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2846.

<sup>906</sup> Article in *People's Daily* on 15 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2240.

<sup>907</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 16 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2251.

<sup>908</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Jawaharlal Nehru on 7 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2474.

<sup>909</sup> "Communique on Rebellion in Tibet," *Peking Review*, March 31, 1959, vol. II, no. 13, pp.8.

<sup>910</sup> *Peking Review*, April 21, 1959, pp. 38.

Nehru himself. For instance, Indira Gandhi's (Nehru's daughter) speech on 28 April provoked "adverse and derisive comments in Chinese newspapers".<sup>911</sup> Similar criticism was reserved for V.L. Pandit (Nehru's sister) and Sucheta Kripalani's (General Secretary of the INC) remarks.<sup>912</sup> Zhou had also taken "serious umbrage" at Nehru's inability to prevent Jayaprakash Narayan's Tibet Convention from taking place to rally Afro-Asian opinion on Tibet.<sup>913</sup> All these incidences apparently indicated Nehru's tacit support for and unwillingness to counter anti-China propaganda in India to the PRC.

A related source of protest was the press coverage of the Tibetan revolution in India. As Pan Zili protested to the Indian foreign secretary, there had been a "large quantity of words and deeds slandering China and interfering in China's internal affairs". Indian politicians as well as various publications had shown support for Tibet as a separate country and slandered the PRC for putting down the rebellion. No amount of cultural kinship with Tibetans or India's constitutional freedoms could justify this behaviour in the PRC's view.<sup>914</sup> A survey of 29 Indian newspapers and periodicals between 24 February to 7 April 1959 published in the *Peking Review* claimed that "some 310,000 words of news and commentaries were issued on the rebellion in Tibet".<sup>915</sup> The Chinese expected India to step in and stop accusations of expansionism and imperialism being levelled against the PRC, but "such expectations [did] not meet with due response". Instead, Nehru had used this time to arbitrarily accuse China of encroaching upon Indian territory.<sup>916</sup> Vice Minister Zhang Hanfu accused Nehru of trying to "wage an anti-Chinese campaign".<sup>917</sup> By failing to restrain its press, the PRC believed India was using constitutional "freedoms" as a pretext to escape its commitment to the Five Principles and

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<sup>911</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 30 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2428.

<sup>912</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 4 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2446.

<sup>913</sup> Subimal Dutt private papers, sub file 42, NMML, pp. 12.

<sup>914</sup> Chinese ambassador to Subimal Dutt on 16 May 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2496.

<sup>915</sup> "On Prime Minister Nehru's Statement," *Peking Review*, April 29, 1959, vol. II, no. 7, pp. 16.

<sup>916</sup> "Truth about Sino-Indian Boundary Question" in *People's Daily* on 12 September 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2652.

<sup>917</sup> Meeting Minutes between Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Hanfu and Ambassadors from Fraternal Countries on the Tibet Issue, September 09, 1959. Wilson Centre Digital Archive, History and Public Policy Program. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114756>.

interfere in China's internal affairs.<sup>918</sup> Deng Xiaoping, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CCP, was convinced that Nehru and India were "deeply involved in the rebellion in Lhasa". At a meeting of CCP leaders in Shanghai on 25 March 1959, he "insisted that several of Nehru's speeches about the Tibetan situation, together with the fact that the headquarters of the rebellion was located in Kalimpong, left no doubt that the Indian government was behind the rebellion."<sup>919</sup> Later when India protested China's vehement anti-India propaganda, the PRC would promptly remind India that Chinese people too could exercise their "freedom of speech to India's detriment."<sup>920</sup> As Chen Jian argues, "Chinese leaders did not appreciate India's democratic and plural political system [and] regarded all the criticism from India [including from the Indian media] as indications of the Indian Government's support for the [Tibetan] rebels".<sup>921</sup>

An incident that upset PRC officials concerned protests outside the Chinese embassy in Bombay and the desecration of Mao's portrait. The PRC alleged that India was complicit in this action as local policemen were unwilling to stop protestors from hurling tomatoes at Mao's portrait. The official protest note of 27 April 1959 claimed the police also "pulled off encircling spectators for correspondents to take photographs".<sup>922</sup> This was a "malicious act" and huge insult to the PRC's "beloved" head of state.<sup>923</sup> Counter demonstrations were thereafter organised in Beijing and Lhasa.<sup>924</sup> India regretfully tried to explain to their Chinese counterparts that the law and constitution in India allowed for "complete freedom of expression", whether in the parliament, the press, or elsewhere. Often criticism was also levelled against India, but no

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<sup>918</sup> Subimal Dutt private papers, subject file no. 36, NMML, pp. 143-144.

<sup>919</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pp. 32.

<sup>920</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 11 September 1959. Jawaharlal Nehru (S.G.) private papers, file no. 691 (III), NMML, pp. 11.

<sup>921</sup> Chen Jian, "The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3 (2006), p. 54-101.

<sup>922</sup> Note given by the Chinese ambassador to the MEA on 27 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2408.

<sup>923</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 28 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2412.

<sup>924</sup> In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2318. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2420-2421.

official action could be taken against it as long as actual violence did not occur.<sup>925</sup> Nehru asked the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Y.B. Chavan, to make an enquiry into the incident and find out if the local police had facilitated the demonstration”.<sup>926</sup> After the investigation was completed, India explained to the PRC that they were satisfied the “police did not connive at the deplorable behaviour of some of the demonstrators” and Mao’s portrait had been taken down within a few minutes of it being put up.<sup>927</sup> These clarifications and half-measures were again unsatisfactory for the PRC and only inspired more disbelief. The PRC organised meeting of school committees, factories, military organisation etc. to whip up “chauvinism and anti-India feelings”.<sup>928</sup> Vice Minister Ji Pengfei told Parthasarathy that India needed “to take steps to restrain” reactionary elements in India. India had “the responsibility to take proper measures”. If this anti-China press campaign was allowed to continue, it would “affect the friendship between the two countries”.<sup>929</sup> The *Guangming Daily* bemoaned the “unlimited freedom” Nehru had provided to “Indian expansionists” to criticise the PRC. The article expressed “extreme indignance” at India’s attempts to interfere in China’s internal affairs.<sup>930</sup> Ji curtly asked Parthasarathy: “what is the use of talking of Sino-Indian friendship?” He expressed disappointment since India had taken no measures despite the occurrence of such a “grave incident”.<sup>931</sup>

The final factor in the CCP’s bill of grievances against India was improving ties with the US and USSR as well as Nehru’s waning commitment to socialism. When Mao spoke of uniting the working-class peoples of the world, “including workers, peasants, the revolutionary national bourgeoisie, and the revolutionary intellectuals” he would clarify that his mission excluded a

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<sup>925</sup> Subimal Dutt to G. Parthasarathy on 26 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2332.

<sup>926</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Y.B. Chavan on 26 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2406.

<sup>927</sup> Note given by MEA to Chinese Foreign Ministry on 30 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2435.

<sup>928</sup> Indian Counsel in Shanghai to Indian Ambassador on 27 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2342.

<sup>929</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 28 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2413.

<sup>930</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 28 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2415.

<sup>931</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 30 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2427.

“reactionary national bourgeoisie like Nehru”.<sup>932</sup> India was seen to have three distinct motives in betraying the PRC’s global socialist revolution. India wanted to attack the CPI, receive greater financial aid from the US, and decrease the influence of the Communist economic model in the region and within India. The PRC alleged that “after Tibet’s return to the motherland” the “Indian bourgeoisie became frightened” and were “now conducting an anti-China campaign in order to decrease its influence”.<sup>933</sup> As Mao would personally convey to Soviet diplomat and sinologist S.F. Antonov, it was believed that Nehru was alarmed by Tibet’s “democratic reformation” as this would inevitably affect India’s borderlands.<sup>934</sup> Nehru’s reputation as a socialist had suffered. As late as February 1959, India’s Five-Year Plans were drawing praise from the likes of Chen Yi.<sup>935</sup> But now reports from newspapers affiliated with the CPI were frequently cited to show the Indian economy as “stagnant or progressing very slowly”. The condition of workers and peasants was deemed to be “worsening”.<sup>936</sup> Mao claimed Nehru was refusing to implement land reform, organise militia, or even restrict the flow of imperialist capital.<sup>937</sup> A report produced by the Chinese embassy in India in 1961 for instance noted with concern the “growing rightist and reactionary tendency of India’s ruling circle in India’s foreign relations”. American aid was mentioned as the “lifeblood” of the Indian economy and India described as opposed to China and Communism and “willing tool[s] of American imperialists”.

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<sup>932</sup> Mao Zedong, “Speech At The Tenth Plenum Of The Eighth Central Committee,” 24 September 1962, [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8\\_63.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_63.htm).

<sup>933</sup> Record of Conversation between Mao Zedong and Polish Delegate Aleksander Zawadzki on 14 October 1959. Wilson Centre Digital Archive, History and Public Policy Program, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117781>.

<sup>934</sup> From the Journal of Ambassador S.F. Antonov, Summary of a Conversation with the Chairman of the CC CPC Mao Zedong, October 14, 1959. Wilson Centre Digital Archive, History and Public Policy Program, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114788>.

<sup>935</sup> Chen Yi’s speech on “the common economic advance of all Asian-African countries,” *Peking Review*, February 3, 1959, vol. II, no. 5, pp. 14.

<sup>936</sup> Annual Report from Beijing for 1958, Ministry of External Affairs, file no. 3(5)R&I/59, NAI, pp. 32.

<sup>937</sup> Excerpts of the Memorandum of the Conversation between Mao Zedong and Blas Roca Calderio, the Party Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba, April 28, 1960. Wilson Centre Digital Archive, History and Public Policy Program, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115157>.

Nehru in particular was singled out as the driver of India's "long-term nature of opposition to China" and as a person whose "deceptiveness [could not] be underestimated."<sup>938</sup>

Not only was India's betrayal seen in terms of its increasing reliance on American capital, exports, and military equipment as well as for its pro-American position on international issues such as the U-2 incident in 1960, it was also due to its active efforts to exploit Sino-Soviet discord. India was accused of "brazenly wooing and influencing the Soviet Union and dividing the socialist camp".<sup>939</sup> In light of Soviet neutrality on the Sino-Indian border issue, it had become clear to PRC officials that India was successfully using its influence to undercut China's position within the socialist camp. The TASS statement on 9 September 1959 wished for India and China to settle their differences without apportioning blame.<sup>940</sup> Khrushchev also professed neutrality on the issue and privately even brought pressure on Mao and the PRC to compromise and resolve the issue, lest India join the Anglo-American bloc. As Mao told the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee, "Khrushchev [had] supported Nehru in attacking [China]".<sup>941</sup> At this time, the Chinese also began to see India as a competitor for influence in Asia and Africa rather than a willing collaborator. As Xiaoyuan Liu points out in his study of Chinese MFA archives, by the late 1950s, the "rosy depiction of India as a healthy influence over Asian and African countries was replaced with hard-nosed observations of a distressed neighbour that was potentially detrimental to the cause of the socialist camp".<sup>942</sup> The PRC's campaign against India was anticipated to have "positive revolutionary implications". It intended to "cause India's domestic class struggle and contradictions between the ruling groups to increasingly sharpen, to the benefit of the speedy improvement of the Indian people's political awakening".<sup>943</sup> The

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<sup>938</sup> Cable from the Chinese Embassy in India, Overview of India's Foreign Relations in 1961, January 01, 1962, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116482>.

<sup>939</sup> Ibid.

<sup>940</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's press conference on 11 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 12.

<sup>941</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, pp. 312.

<sup>942</sup> Xiaoyuan Liu, "Friend or Foe: India as Perceived by Beijing's Foreign Policy Analysts in the 1950s," *China Review*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2015), pp. 137.

<sup>943</sup> Anton Harder, "Defining Independence in Cold War Asia: Sino-Indian Relations, 1949-1962," PhD Thesis, London School of Economics, 2015, pp. 236.

PRC's goal was to expose Nehru and "monopoly capitalists" or the "comprador class" to the Indian masses and support the CPI's efforts towards greater electoral and political gains.

During and after the National People's Congress (NPC) the PRC's view of Indian intentions reached its nadir, with many of the anxieties first expressed by PRC officials in 1950 after China's occupation of Tibet resurfacing with a vengeance. Speeches were coordinated between various PRC officials to admonish India for being expansionist, reactionary, interventionist, and inheritors of British imperialism in Tibet. General Fu Zhong, Deputy Chief of the General Political Department of the PLA warned Indian expansionists that their "schemes to invade Tibet would be crushed with iron fists".<sup>944</sup> It was made clear at the NPC that the Chinese considered India's policy to be inconsistent with the Five Principles and an extension of British imperialism. The official resolution adopted on Tibet at the NPC stated that all those who had "sympathy" for Tibetan rebels and were using the revolution as an opportunity to interfere in China's internal affairs had only succeeded in exposing their "true colours". The resolution went on to note with regret the activities of "certain people in Indian political circles" who had made "extremely unfriendly statements and committed extremely unfriendly acts which interfere in China's internal affairs".<sup>945</sup> Earlier criticism was only reserved for anti-China elements in India's parliamentary opposition, but now India was also receiving flak as being part of "expansionist elements" in India.<sup>946</sup> This was intended to act as a "pressure tactic to weaken India's stand on Tibet".<sup>947</sup> Li Jishen, Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang, alleged that the PRC's trust in India had been seen as a "sign of weakness" and Indian elites were stepping up their interference in Tibet with the intention to turn it into a "colony or protectorate".<sup>948</sup> India's betrayal was a consistent motif. Shen Junru, Chairman of the China Democratic League, would ask with reference to India: "is this how

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<sup>944</sup> "Chinese People Will Not Tolerate Foreign Intervention in Tibet", *Peking Review*, April 29, 1959, vol. II, no. 17, pp. 9.

<sup>945</sup> "N.P.C. Resolution on the Question of Tibet", *Peking Review*, April 29, 1959, vol. II, no. 17, pp. 7.

<sup>946</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 24 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2318.

<sup>947</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 23 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2297.

<sup>948</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 26 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2329.

friends behave?” Huang Yanpei, Chairman of the China Democratic National Construction Association would similarly probe: “Didn’t Prime Minister Nehru declare that nothing that would embarrass India’s relations with China would be permitted?”<sup>949</sup>

Zhou also began to believe that Indian reactionaries had brought pressure on the PRC following the Tibetan rebellion “to compel China to accept India’s unilateral position on the border question and revise the map in accordance with India’s claim.” The Indians was exploiting the opportunity provided by the Tibetan revolution and the Sino-Indian border dispute to slander the Chinese government and provide support to the Dalai Lama. Such imposition China was determined to repudiate.<sup>950</sup> India’s position was made more unpalatable by the fact that the maps it sought to impose on the Chinese were inherited from British imperialism. An article on the boundary question in the *Peking Review* empathically said: “the days when the Chinese people could be bossed around are gone forever”.<sup>951</sup> Later, the standing committee of the NPC would hold a session on the Sino-Indian boundary dispute. At this session too, PRC officials such as Li Jishen would accuse India of forcing China to “recognise a situation spawned by British aggression” in the McMahon Line. Huang Yanpei and Guo Moruo were both surprised to find an anti-colonialist like Nehru defending the McMahon Line. These officials demanded that India stop encroaching on China’s borders and withdraw its troops from forward areas it had illegally occupied, especially those north of the McMahon Line such as Shatze, Khinzemane, and Tamaden. Moreover, India also needed to cease attempts to impose its unilateral claims on China by whipping up anti-China sentiment domestically and abroad through its propaganda efforts. Yi’s stated at the enlarged session of the standing committee that it was extraordinary India was “two-faced tactics” with a friendly country like

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<sup>949</sup> “Speeches on Tibet by N.P.C. Deputies.” *Peking Review*, April 29, 1959, vol. II, no. 17, pp. 14.

<sup>950</sup> Subimal Dutt private papers, subject file no. 37, NMML, pp. 51.

<sup>951</sup> “The Crux of the Boundary Question,” *Peking Review*, 15 September 1959, vol. II, no. 37, pp. 3.

China.<sup>952</sup> Border clashes at places at the Kongka Pass were reported as products of India's provocation and its deliberate attempts to enforce its imperial borders.<sup>953</sup>

An article published in the *People's Daily*, which disclosed Chinese thinking on Nehru's betrayal at the time, was "Tibet's revolution and Nehru's Philosophy". It had been written under Mao's direct supervision by his political secretaries Hu Qiaomu and Wu Lengxi.<sup>954</sup> Although it tried to maintain a somewhat friendly tone, in essence the article was a patronising effort to rid Nehru of his imperialist prejudices on Tibet. It claimed Nehru had been "involuntarily pushed" by Indian reactionaries towards the "sympathy-with-Tibet movement". Nehru's autobiography and previous published works were cited verbatim to demonstrate the limitations of his understanding of Marxist methods. The article stressed that Nehru was unable to appreciate the regressive nature of Tibetan serfdom and the need for social reforms being pressed for by the PRC. He had failed to identify Tibet's "cruel system of exploitation", erroneously labelling China's suppression of the rebellion as a "tragedy". It was the PRC and the general Tibetan public that deserved Nehru's sympathy and not Tibetan serfs. Perhaps Nehru was led astray by biased propaganda published in Indian newspapers and was ignorant of the circumstances prevailing in Tibet. The article hoped to remedy this. It also challenged Nehru's claim that India had never interfered in Tibet, recalling that India had protested the PRC's decision to occupy Tibet in 1950. This was more evidence that China's previous fears were resurging. Such interference, the article continued, was being attempted by Nehru once again in 1959 as he had referred to the PRC's punitive measures as an "armed intervention" and appeared to advocate sympathetically for Tibetan autonomy against Chinese "suppression and oppression". All this suggested that it was China who had violated the 17-point Agreement in his view. In a partially foreboding tone, the article asked Nehru how he would feel if the PRC

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<sup>952</sup> "Vice Premier Chen Yi's Speech," *Peking Review*, 15 September 1959, vol. II, no. 37, pp. 15.

<sup>953</sup> "China Protests Against India's Armed Provocations," *Peking Review*, 27 October 1959, vol. II, no. 43, pp. 11.

<sup>954</sup> Mentioned in Chen Jian, "The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union," pp. 88.

declared sympathy for an Indian state and sought to interfere in its internal affairs. In its final analysis, the article described India as a country caught in a class struggle and unable to overcome the contradictions of imperialism and its links to the big bourgeoisie, which was dependent on foreign capital and had an “urge for outward expansion”. Thus, on the one hand India’s leaders professed friendship for China and on the other sought to maintain certain legacies of British colonialist rulers. This was described as the “dual character of the Indian bourgeoisie”.<sup>955</sup>

In private communication, Nehru’s reputation was battered in even cruder and frank terms. M. Suslov, in a draft report prepared for the CPSU Plenum, stated that Mao had claimed that PRC propaganda efforts at the time intended to “unmask Nehru as a double-dealer, half a man, half a devil, half a gentleman, half a hooligan”.<sup>956</sup> It was clear that the PRC now understood that Nehru had led them to believe he recognised Tibet as part of China but he still wanted Tibet to serve as a buffer state and thus wanted to deny the PRC effective control to pursue its social reform agenda. Zhou referred to this as India’s “duplicitous policy”. Nehru, he argued, had only pretended to befriend the PRC, but his “true motive was to prevent progress in Tibet, keeping it poor and backward so it could serve as a buffer under the Indian sphere of influence, and become their protectorate”.<sup>957</sup> Zhou, who was the key person with whom Nehru had built interpersonal trust, was entirely disillusioned. To some extent his views had also been forced into line with Mao as he “was forced to carry out self-criticisms for his handling of Chinese foreign policy in 1958” for being soft on imperialism.<sup>958</sup> He had thereafter been

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<sup>955</sup> “Tibet’s revolution and Nehru’s Philosophy,” *Peking Review*, 12 May 1959, vol. II, no. 19, pp. 6-15.

<sup>956</sup> Draft Report, On the Trip of the Soviet Party-Governmental Delegation to the PRC, by M. Suslov to CC CPSU Presidium for Presentation to a Forthcoming CC CPSU Plenum (excerpt), December 18, 1959, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112989>.

<sup>957</sup> John Garver, *Protracted Conflict*, pp. 62.

<sup>958</sup> Jonathan Ward, “China-India Rivalry and the Border War of 1962: PRC Perspectives on the Collapse of China-India Relations, 1958-62,” DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2016, pp. 121.

replaced as Foreign Minister by Chen Yi. Speaking to the Soviet Ambassador Chervonenko, he would describe his new-found disdain for Nehru:

He is a very dishonest person. He can shamelessly tell lies [even in] the face of the truth. [He never keeps his word.] That which was said last time is already forgotten this time. His entire being is a bourgeois rightist and a typical reactionary. He is a completely untrustworthy person. He would kowtow to the imperialists while still being arrogant towards us. The imperialists' farts he would treat as [the sweet] smell [of incense]. In all ways he seeks any opportunity to oppose China and fight the Indian Communist Party. He is really hostile towards our country.<sup>959</sup>

Coupled with the article on “Nehru’s philosophy”, Mao and Zhou’s remarks help uncover how far Nehru had fallen from his position of prominence in Beijing. He had become an embodiment of India’s betrayal of China. Rather than a socialist ally, he was considered an imperialist puppet who had deceived the PRC into believing India recognised China’s legitimate interests in Tibet. The PRC’s perception of Nehru’s motivation was equally damaging. An internal report of the PLA general staff department attempted to rationalise Nehru’s motives as “the chief commander” of propaganda efforts against the PRC. The Tibet issue, the report argued, had disclosed the “anti-revolutionary nature of the Indian ruling party”. Nehru was stated to have six objectives: first, to inherit British imperialism and to force China to accept the McMahon Line; second, to mobilise domestic public opinion and divert its attention away from rising inflation and unemployment; third, to repair his reputation, which was “at an all-time low both at home and abroad” due to Chinese propaganda efforts; fourth, to counter the rising popularity of the Communist Party of India, who Nehru had overthrown from the seat of the Kerala Provincial Government; fifth, to receive more US aid; sixth, to force Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal in India’s sphere of influence. Under pressure from rightists, the report concluded that Nehru had yielded “neutralism, the Five Principles, and Sino-Indian friendship”.<sup>960</sup>

Indisputably, the PRC came to view India under Nehru’s leadership as a hostile nation.

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<sup>959</sup> Transcript of the Meeting Between Premier Zhou Enlai and Soviet Ambassador Chervonenko, May 09, 1961, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120888>.

<sup>960</sup> Report from the PLA General Staff Department, Behind India’s Second Anti-China Wave, October 29, 1959, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114758>.

However, much like the Indians, the Chinese too felt betrayed despite the absence of a conscious effort on the part of the Indians to defect. The difficulty was, as Jonathan Ward argues, that CCP leaders wanted “an India that would abide by China’s actions and China’s agenda – rather than the India that existed in reality”.<sup>961</sup> The PRC could not comprehend the domestic political pressures Nehru faced nor appreciate the extent to which he was still trying to preserve the Sino-Indian relationship. India’s stance on the Tibetan revolution was intended to be “strictly non-partisan”.<sup>962</sup> For instance, Nehru would bar the All India Radio from broadcasting on-going events in Tibet to avoid embarrassment for the PRC, despite repeated Tibetan appeals.<sup>963</sup> India would also deny recognition to the Tibetan government in exile and dissuade the Dalai Lama from taking his case before the UN.<sup>964</sup> As facts related to the rebellion became more generally known, the popular pressure on Nehru to appear sympathetic to the Tibetan cause increased multi-fold. His sister and diplomat V.L. Pandit was disappointed that India had not addressed the “tragic” events in Lhasa. She wrote to Nehru: “surely we cannot remain idle spectators of a scene which threatens the very ideals to which we are dedicated”.<sup>965</sup> A similar effort was made by Indian President Rajendra Prasad. Nehru however, muted these dissident voices. He told Prasad that India did not have the “full facts” and dismissed his proposal for “military measures” against the Chinese. He asked him not to be swept away by “rumours and sentimental considerations”.<sup>966</sup> Nehru would even dismiss parliamentarian Jayaprakash Narayan’s suggestion for India to take Tibet’s case to the UN.<sup>967</sup> But the Chinese still failed to appreciate that Nehru could not deny asylum to the Dalai Lama in light of the veneration and popular support he commanded in India’s border areas and more generally

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<sup>961</sup> Jonathan Ward, *China-India Rivalry and the Border War of 1962*, pp. 283.

<sup>962</sup> MEA to India’s Counsel in Lhasa on 15 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 1988.

<sup>963</sup> MEA to India’s Counsel in Lhasa on 17 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2006.

<sup>964</sup> Clarification issued regarding the status of the Dalai Lama in India. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2356.

<sup>965</sup> V.L. Pandit to Jawaharlal Nehru on 29 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2097.

<sup>966</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Rajendra Prasad on 30 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2106.

<sup>967</sup> Subimal Dutt to G. Parthasarathy on 30 June 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2513.

amongst Hindus and Buddhists.<sup>968</sup> As an internal report indicated, the decision to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama had a “favourable impression on the minds” of India’s border peoples.<sup>969</sup> Nehru was forced to temporarily sacrifice the interest of Sino-Indian friendship to service his own interests as a politician.

Similarly, on the subject on anti-China propaganda, Nehru had asked Indian media outlets not to “speak or write in an alarmist manner”. “Criticisms of general policy” were permissible under Indian law, but “attacks on China” could be avoided in light of their damaging impact on bilateral ties.<sup>970</sup> However, beyond these personal pleas there was not much Nehru could do to repair the PRC’s image in India. Once the Tibetan revolution, border clashes, and China’s territorial claims became public knowledge, it was impossible for him to stem criticism of the PRC’s actions, both in the parliament and outside. Considering his personal investment in the trusting relationship with China, the fallout after the Tibetan revolution gave Nehru’s political adversaries a weapon to hurt his domestic popularity. If the PRC’s trust in Nehru was based on his ability to manipulate Indian public opinion when required, this was misplaced considering the nature of India’s democratic system. Despite his stature, the Indian constitution simply did not offer Nehru the centralised command and control options enjoyed by the PRC leadership in China to indiscriminately influence the domestic narrative. This limitation would also affect Nehru’s ability to prevent the Dalai Lama from making any statements or act against Tibetans and locals in Kalimpong on the basis of Chinese reports. The Chinese could not understand Nehru’s predicament and chose to scapegoat him instead of shielding him from India’s capitalist press. Ultimately, as this section has argued, both trustors felt betrayed and responded to that feeling of betrayal despite neither intending to defect. When they pledged support to the Five Principles neither Nehru nor Zhou had the slightest inkling that the differences in their respective notions of the frontier and views on Tibet

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<sup>968</sup> Subimal Dutt to G. Parthasarathy on 22 March 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2036.

<sup>969</sup> Political Officer Kameng Division to Advisor to the Governor of Assam on 16 April 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2245.

<sup>970</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to MEA on 13 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 213.

would make a mockery of their trusting commitments. I now explore what impact this mutual sense of betrayal had on the Nehru-Zhou talks in 1960.

### **Negotiating with the Devil**

In light of the prelude, it is worth considering why Indian and Chinese leaders would even choose to have talks on the border in 1960. If the feeling of betrayal was genuine, why would leaders from these two states expend effort to meet each other and seek a settlement? As was argued before, this was because material factors favoured a settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute. This is what makes Nehru-Zhou talks such a useful case to study trusting failure, as it fully demonstrates the damaging consequences of betrayal for dispute resolution even in the face of strong countervailing incentives. It was the Chinese side who first proposed “friendly negotiations” as a means to achieve an overall settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary issue.<sup>971</sup> The Chinese had a relatively more detached view of the issue because they had inherited similarly complex and undelimited borders with Pakistan, Burma, Mongolia, Korea, Nepal, and Vietnam. They better understood the need for joint cooperation with neighbouring states in order to resolve them as well as the risks of a hostile neighbourhood if their actions were perceived to be aggressive. Unlike the Indians who maintained their borders were fixed, this also allowed the PRC to justify concessions on these issues to domestic publics as they were represented as “problems left over by history pending final settlement” and neither India nor China were to blame for the ills of British colonialism.<sup>972</sup> Most prominently however, the PRC was forced to adopt a preference for a peaceful settlement with India because it was struggling to enforce its rule in Tibet and felt isolated in world public opinion on the matter. Even the Soviets had pressured the PRC to resolve the issue at through negotiations and territorial compromise.<sup>973</sup>

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<sup>971</sup> “Truth about Sino-Indian Boundary Question” in *People’s Daily* on 12 September 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2653.

<sup>972</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 9 September 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2627.

<sup>973</sup> See Jonathan Ward, *China-India Rivalry and the Border War of 1962*, pp. 282.

Considering Nehru's disrepute, at first, the PRC suggested India's Vice President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan visit Beijing for informal talks on the border. Radhakrishnan was formerly an ambassador to the Soviet Union and was still well-respected in the socialist bloc as a philosopher-statesman.<sup>974</sup> Chen Yi was hopeful that his visit would diffuse the situation. But the Chinese proposal was summarily rejected by Nehru as the Kongka Pass incident had recently taken place and Indian public opinion would resent such a meeting.<sup>975</sup> Privately, the Indians was also afraid the Chinese may perceive their eagerness to negotiate as a sign of weakness. India could only discuss the border after its defence preparedness was adequate.<sup>976</sup> It was after this that the Chinese proposed talks at the prime ministerial level. For a long time, Nehru had rejected Zhou's proposal for talks as long as China was in possession of Indian territory. He did not believe the distance between India and China's position on the border on basic historical facts could be bridged.<sup>977</sup> Nehru had "no intention whatever to seek a meeting with Premier Zhou Enlai and certainly [he would] not go to any other country for this purpose".<sup>978</sup> Much later however, recurring border clashes and an increasing awareness of India's military deficits would force him to the negotiating table.<sup>979</sup> In light of external and domestic compulsions, both parties were forced to search for a compromise solution within the confines of betrayal and distrust. This was a doomed enterprise from the very beginning. Zhou committed to Khrushchev that the dispute would be resolved at the upcoming talks with India. Mao added that the "McMahon Line would be maintained" and he was confident the "border conflict would end".<sup>980</sup> The Chinese were aware of Nehru's fears in the Eastern sector and therefore believed offering a territorial swap would be sufficient to satisfy India's demands. There were no grounds for such optimism.

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<sup>974</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 28 September 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2719.

<sup>975</sup> Invite from Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 29 October 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2790.

<sup>976</sup> Prime Minister's note on 10 December 1958. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 1964.

<sup>977</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 21 December 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2864.

<sup>978</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Krishna Menon on 24 October 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 53, pp. 491.

<sup>979</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Krishna Menon on 5 November 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2803.

<sup>980</sup> Meeting between Nikita Khrushchev and Mao Zedong with politburo members on 2 October 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2732.

This was not an entirely mistaken belief. Indeed, Nehru was preparing the grounds for a concession on the Aksai Chin region. In parliament, he repeatedly mentioned it as a mountainous area which was “practically uninhabited” and only used in the summer months for cattle grazing. It was land where “not even a blade of grass grows”.<sup>981</sup> Due to the inhospitability of the terrain, India did not maintain any administrative or local police presence in this area either, and most check-posts were placed at a distance from the border.<sup>982</sup> This provided some defence for India’s inability to prevent Chinese encroachments in these parts. For instance, Nehru justified India’s ignorance of the road the Chinese had built from Gartok to Yehchang in the Aksai Chin area by claiming that it was at a high altitude of “16,000 to 17,000 feet” and was “treeless, grassless...without any living thing there”. It was a “frightfully cold” region and India could not gather intelligence in parts where it had no lines of communication.<sup>983</sup> Although Aksai Chin was claimed on Indian maps, Nehru said it was “not at all a dead, clear matter” which parts actually belonged to India and which to China.<sup>984</sup> The “actual boundary of Ladakh with Tibet was not very carefully defined” by British surveyors before the signing of the treaty of 1842.<sup>985</sup> India’s military strategy at the time also reflected his stance. In an internal note on the border dispute with China, Nehru stated that India would leave the Aksai Chin area “more or less as it is”. India had no check-posts in the region and “practically little means of access”. He was prepared, when the time arose, to consider the region “in the context of the larger question of the entire border”. Until then, India needed to “put up with Chinese occupation”. This was different from his advice for the McMahon Line where he asked Indian forces to be resolute when faced with armed Chinese detachments, even if they outnumbered them.<sup>986</sup> He was taking

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<sup>981</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech on 10 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 186.

<sup>982</sup> Discussion in the Lok Sabha on 28 August 1959. In *ASB* (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2589.

<sup>983</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s statement in parliament on 4 September 1959. In *ASB* (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2603.

<sup>984</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in the Lok Sabha on 12 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 202.

<sup>985</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in the Lok Sabha on 4 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 245.

<sup>986</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s note on border dispute with China on 13 September 1959. In *ASB* (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2661.

a “firm line” with the Chinese but Nehru also understood the difficulties of prolonged enmity across a 2100-mile long border.<sup>987</sup>

But what Nehru, and later the Chinese too, underestimated was that the public nature of the feeling of betrayal on the Indians would not countenance such an expedient arrangement. The Chinese could navigate the pitfalls of public diplomacy over a complex border issue much better than the Indians. For instance, when Nehru finally acknowledged to parliament that there was “no actual demarcation” of the Sino-Indian boundary and it was necessary to discuss the issue with the Chinese before it could achieve finality, parliamentarians were enraged.<sup>988</sup> Narayan Gore bluntly asked Nehru if India was unable to prevent any foreign country from invading parts of its territory that were logistically inaccessible.<sup>989</sup> Others such as Acharya Kripalani argued that the Chinese were wasting India’s time by bogging it down in lengthy exchanges. India had failed to act in Ladakh when the Chinese first occupied the area and now it was forced to suffer China’s occupation. If Nehru wasted any more time talking to the Chinese, Kripalani claimed, the PRC would organise “subversive movements” in India’s Himalayan border regions and extend its aggression to more territories. Vajpayee too was of the opinion that China was making “deliberate attempts to prolong negotiations in order to gain time for the consolidation of its illegal accretion”.<sup>990</sup> On his part, Nehru responded by saying he would “negotiate and negotiate and negotiate to the bitter end”.<sup>991</sup> But in essence, his capacity to achieve anything substantial through these negotiations was significantly curtailed. Nehru’s authority weakened further when the Supreme Court of India passed a judgement on the exchange of a portion of Berubari and Cooch-Bihar enclaves between India and East Pakistan, stating that any change to India’s territorial maps would require an amendment to the Indian

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<sup>987</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 31 August 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2600.

<sup>988</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in Lok Sabha on 22 September 1959, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 55, pp. 347.

<sup>989</sup> Discussion in the Lok Sabha on 28 August 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2591-2592.

<sup>990</sup> Discussion in the Lok Sabha on 29 April 1960, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 60, pp. 242.

<sup>991</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in Lok Sabha on 21 December 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2869.

Constitution.<sup>992</sup> This meant any territorial swap would need the concurrence of a majority of Indian parliamentarians. For Nehru to gather such support was an insurmountable task as parliamentarians were opposed to his decision to speak with Zhou in the first place, until the Chinese had vacated their illegal occupation of Indian territories.<sup>993</sup> They had made clear to Nehru that they would not support the handover of territories like Ladakh to China where “India’s administration was yet to reach”.<sup>994</sup> To repair his reputation, Nehru was forced to clarify that if he partook in such “national humiliation” he would resign as Prime Minister.<sup>995</sup>

Since epistolary exchanges on demilitarisation with Nehru had reached an impasse, Zhou proposed a meeting with Nehru in Beijing or Rangoon so that “concrete proposals” could be discussed to settle the boundary issue.<sup>996</sup> In a Politburo meeting in September 1959, Mao had declared that the time had come to negotiate a border settlement with India through the principle of “give and take (*huliang hurang*)”. An internal report of the Intelligence Department of the PLA General Staff specified further that the Chinese were willing to accept India’s claim in NEFA if India in turn accepted China’s claim to some parts of Aksai Chin.<sup>997</sup> The Central Committee had also established a “control line” to prevent PLA troops from entering Indian occupied areas.<sup>998</sup> The Chinese were in favour of a territorial swap as it was conceivable despite their distrust of Nehru’s India. The PLA had superior lines of communication on the border and the Chinese did not fear the prospect of India’s expansionism in the immediate future.<sup>999</sup> In fact, some Indian diplomats had told their British counterparts that India troops were outnumbered by the Chinese in a ratio of 1:7.<sup>1000</sup> This is why, even after relations had soured, Chen Yi was

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<sup>992</sup> Record of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai on 24 April 1960. In ASB (ed.), vol. IV, pp. 3201.

<sup>993</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in the Lok Sabha on 16 February 1960, *SIJN-SS*, vol. 57, pp. 302.

<sup>994</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in the Lok Sabha on 17 February 1960, *SIJN-SS*, vol. 57, pp. 313.

<sup>995</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru’s speech in the Lok Sabha on 22 February 1960, *SIJN-SS*, vol. 57, pp. 321.

<sup>996</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 17 December 1959. In ASB (ed.), vol. III, pp. 2856.

<sup>997</sup> Nirupama Rao, *The Fractured Himalaya: India Tibet China 1949-62* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2021), pp. 377.

<sup>998</sup> Chaowu Dai, “China’s Strategy for Sino-Indian Boundary Disputes, 1950-1962,” pp. 447.

<sup>999</sup> Annual Report on Western Tibet during 1960, Ministry of External Affairs, file no. 19(16)-WT/60, NAI, pp. 14.

<sup>1000</sup> Max-Jean Zins and Gilles Boquerat, *India in the Mirror of Foreign Diplomatic Archives* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2004), pp. 97.

comfortable disclosing China's vulnerabilities with the US on the Eastern frontier to Indian diplomats.<sup>1001</sup> For them, the more pressing concern was local, and if the border issue could be resolved through a barter arrangement, it would allow them to focus their energies on stabilising the situation in Tibet. As M. Taylor Fravel has argued, the Tibetan revolt and internal vulnerability that it reflected led to China's willingness to negotiate and make territorial concessions with southern neighbours such as India.<sup>1002</sup>

This was however, not the sentiment in New Delhi. Dutt argued there was not "the slightest indication that the Chinese were prepared to abate their territorial demands in any of the three sectors". In light of the "irreconcilable" difference in the Indian and Chinese stands, Zhou's proposal for talks could only be viewed as a propogandist measure to appease the socialist camp and the Afro-Asian world. From India's standpoint, to repair the feeling of betrayal there needed to be a "prior vacation of aggression" by the Chinese, "substantially if not completely". Moreover, India would only discuss minor rectifications in those areas where it was willing to make concessions rather than the entire frontier. As Nehru argued, the Ladakh border was "one for consideration and debate," whereas this did not apply to the McMahon Line, which was a fixed boundary apart from minor deviations.<sup>1003</sup> Although Zhou's proposal did not "open up any possibilities for an abiding settlement", Dutt argued that even if a resolution was arrived at during the talks with the Chinese, India needed to ensure that no territorial questions were "left over" that would allow the "Chinese in the future to mount pressure...when they [felt] strong enough to do so".<sup>1004</sup> Thus, approaching the talks, while the Chinese were optimistic of a resolution in principle based on a territorial swap, the Indians were deeply sceptical. Their distrust of the Chinese coupled with the added pressures of parliamentary and public opinion meant that the "concessions [they were] in a position to offer [were] very

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<sup>1001</sup> Talks between Swaran Singh and Chen Yi on 23 April 1960, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 60, pp. 135.

<sup>1002</sup> See M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>1003</sup> Discussion in Rajya Sabha on 31 August 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2933.

<sup>1004</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 18 December 1959. In ASB (ed.), Vol. III, pp. 2858.

limited". For them, the talks were intended to facilitate an exchange of views and save face rather than a sincere effort towards resolving the border question based on mutual concession.<sup>1005</sup> As Nehru would tell B.C. Roy, prior to the talks there was "no real approach to any kind of agreement".<sup>1006</sup> He would reluctantly write to Zhou on 5 February 1960 that though he did not believe there was common ground for an agreement, he was prepared to invite Zhou to New Delhi for talks.<sup>1007</sup> On 26 February, Zhou accepted Nehru's invitation despite the Chinese embassy in India cautioning him that Nehru did not want to meet for talks and was only doing so because he felt "there [was] no other way out".<sup>1008</sup>

The thirty-one-member Chinese delegation to New Delhi was led by Zhou and Chen Yi. The latter had deposed Zhou as Foreign Minister, signifying his decline in formal position and status within the CCP. Similar to Nehru, Zhou had arrived with diminished autonomy and room for manoeuvre beyond the party line. Since talks began on 19 April, the objective of the Chinese delegation was to gain formal acceptance of the status quo. This did not catch Nehru and the Indian delegates by surprise. Right before the talks began, the Indians had received a Chinese note on 5 April 1960. As Dutt said, through repeated emphasis on "mutual understanding and accommodation," the note was preparing India for a "compromise solution" on the basis of "give and take".<sup>1009</sup> In his interactions with Nehru, Zhou would reiterate that the Sino-Indian boundary issue could be resolved in line with the resolution passed at the NPC and the Five Principles, by taking into consideration the "historical background" and "existing actualities".<sup>1010</sup> He repeated his previous assurances to Nehru on the McMahon Line, saying that although the PRC did not recognise the Line but it was willing to take a "realistic" attitude towards India and Burma. By this time, the PRC had already signed a boundary agreement

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<sup>1005</sup> T.N. Kaul private papers, speeches and writings by him, file no. 4, NMML, pp. 1-2.

<sup>1006</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to B.P. Koirala on 10 April 1960, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 59, pp. 357.

<sup>1007</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru to Zhou Enlai on 5 February 1960. In ASB (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 3098.

<sup>1008</sup> Cable from the Chinese Embassy in India, Soviet Attaché in India Tells Us That Nehru Initiated Discussion of Border Issue in Nehru-Khrushchev Talks, February 24, 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121785>.

<sup>1009</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 5 April 1960. In ASB (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 3125.

<sup>1010</sup> Speech by Zhou Enlai on 20 April 1960. In ASB (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 3138.

with Burma and accepted the McMahon Line with minor changes as the basis for a part of the Sino-Burmese border. Zhou claimed that Nehru's anxieties concerning Chinese motives south of the McMahon Line were unfounded. Even though it was considered illegal, PLA troops had never crossed the McMahon Line and the Chinese government had never raised any territorial claims in this sector. Rather, it had only advocated for the maintenance of the status-quo. This is why a settlement could readily be found in the Eastern sector.<sup>1011</sup> Zhou would tacitly hint that this is what he expected of India in the Western sector, where Chinese Sinkiang had exercised jurisdiction since 1848. For Zhou, the maintenance of the status-quo was "fair to both" and he pressed for mutual understanding on this point, even it was only an interim agreement.<sup>1012</sup> This would disallow either side from making territorial claims to areas which were no longer under their administrative control.

However, by this time, a territorial swap was anathema to the Indians. The swap equated India's rightful control over the NEFA with China's illegal occupation of Ladakh. As Nehru told Zhou, for India to accept the status-quo "which [was] a marked change from the previous status-quo would mean accepting that change".<sup>1013</sup> India could not refrain from raising territorial claims in Ladakh as this would practically mean the border dispute was settled and China could continue to occupy Indian territory. This was not a matter of mere legality but stemmed from the manner in which Indian elites believed their Chinese counterparts had treated them. As Morarji Desai conveyed to the British High Commissioner, "Nehru was himself averse to any such bargain [as he] was hurt by the Chinese attitude, partly by Zhou having misled him and let him down completely on the border issue".<sup>1014</sup> Nehru even asked Zhou why he had maintained a deafening silence on the border dispute for nine long years, despite India repeatedly clarifying its border and raising objections to Chinese maps. He

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<sup>1011</sup> Records of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai on 20 April 1960. In ASB (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 3147.

<sup>1012</sup> Ibid, pp. 3153.

<sup>1013</sup> Ibid, pp. 3152.

<sup>1014</sup> Nirupama Rao. *The Fractured Himalaya: India China Tibet 1949-62*, pp. 382.

reiterated that the PRC's decision to raise territorial claims against India had come as a "great shock" to India's policy of friendship and cooperation with China.<sup>1015</sup> Moreover, as Krishna Menon—a man with strong Communist leanings—would tell Zhou, due to the PRC's aggressive moves on the border and brusque propaganda against India, every "reactionary" element in India had been strengthened, making it impossible for "reasonable people to talk and seek ways of settlement".<sup>1016</sup>

The only proposal put forth by Zhou that Nehru was willing to partially acquiesce to was for a joint committee to study the historical data on both sides. This too was whittled down and the joint committee's powers were curtailed to the examination of documents rather than carrying out surveys or border demarcation.<sup>1017</sup> Zhou was denied a joint survey on the lines of the Sino-Burmese agreement. Furthermore, Nehru was agreeable to the cessation of patrolling in the Eastern sector but not the Western sector as this was the only way India could guard vast areas with few check-posts from Chinese encroachments.<sup>1018</sup> In the final communique that was to be issued after the talks, Nehru resisted the inclusion of the Five Principles. When turning down Zhou on this subject he said: "people will say these principles have been broken and still we are talking about them".<sup>1019</sup> While Zhou did not propose the territorial swap clearly, it was obvious to the Indians that it was the Chinese objective to make India accept its position in Ladakh in exchange for China's acceptance of India's position in NEFA. If India accepted the Chinese claim line in Ladakh, the Chinese would reciprocate and accept India's claim line in NEFA. This is why, "throughout the discussions they invariably connected Ladakh with NEFA and stressed that the same principles of settling the boundary must govern both these areas".

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<sup>1015</sup> Records of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai on 20 April 1960. In ASB (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 3140.

<sup>1016</sup> Jairam Ramesh, *A Chequered Brilliance* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2019), pp. 564.

<sup>1017</sup> Record of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai on 21 April 1960. In ASB (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 3162.

<sup>1018</sup> Record of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai on 24 April 1960. In ASB (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 3203.

<sup>1019</sup> Record of talks between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai on 25 April 1960. In ASB (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 3211.

But for the Indians, Zhou's proposal was an empty one. If he had gone back on his word once, there was nothing to assure the Indians that the Chinese would not do so again. As Intelligence Bureau Chief B.N. Mullik recounts, "Nehru had trusted Zhou Enlai's words in all good faith too long and he had been badly bitten. He was not going to be duped once again".<sup>1020</sup> In fact, Dutt contends that Nehru was certain that "even if India gave in to the Chinese claim in Ladakh, other demands would not be long in coming".<sup>1021</sup> Distrust was so deep that Dutt was unsure if the Chinese would even support the working of the joint committee sincerely.<sup>1022</sup> MEA officials too, as Raghavan argues, were "convinced that they had been wantonly tricked and that the Chinese could never be trusted again".<sup>1023</sup>

Despite the push and pulls of material and external factors, the talks ended in failure. The Indians refused to yield to the Chinese contention that the Sino-Indian boundary was wholly un-demarcated because they feared such a concession could further fuel China's appetite for territorial expansionism. Moreover, Jagat Mehta had counselled Nehru that if India accepted the border was un-demarcated it could not charge China with violation of its territorial sovereignty with the same moral force.<sup>1024</sup> It was for this reason that India was determined to reject any Chinese suggestions to jointly delimit the frontier through on the spot investigations.<sup>1025</sup> For the Indians to consider negotiations on the border, the PRC needed to retract their extensive territorial claims, make concessions on the McMahon Line up front, and limit the scope of the negotiations. Not only was this a way to ensure the PRC's commitment to the McMahon Line in a manner that could not be reversed in the future, it was also a means to repair the injury of betrayal. As Indian diplomat N.R. Pillai later stated, "as long as [the Chinese] remained completely unrepentant, there could be no question of the government of

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<sup>1020</sup> B.N. Mullik, *The Chinese Betrayal*, pp. 252.

<sup>1021</sup> Subimal Dutt, *With Nehru in the Foreign Office*, pp. 131.

<sup>1022</sup> Subimal Dutt to Indian Missions on 27 April 1960. In ASB (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 3365.

<sup>1023</sup> Srinath Raghavan, "A Missed Opportunity?" pp. 110.

<sup>1024</sup> Jagat Mehta, *Negotiating for India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), pp. 82.

<sup>1025</sup> G. Parthasarathy to Subimal Dutt on 21 March 1960. In ASB (ed.), Vol. IV, pp. 3105.

India making any concession”.<sup>1026</sup> In Parthasarathy’s opinion, for a reset, China needed to make “a big gesture, expressing sincerity”.<sup>1027</sup> Chen Yi’s verbal assurances that China would give up their rights south of the McMahon Line later, as it had done with Burma and the 1941 line, were not enough.<sup>1028</sup> Indian officials remained unwilling to even contemplate China’s interim measures to stabilise the status quo. A temporary status quo was in some sense even worse than a final settlement as it did not restrain China from making claims in the future whilst still forcing India to suffer the effects of Chinese aggression in the present. The failure of the talks intensified India’s despondency. When Chinese diplomat Qiao Guanhua pushed for the injection of some positivity in the joint communique through a reference to a possible future settlement, Dutt firmly replied that a “settlement [was] nowhere in sight” and any such referral would be “premature and unrealistic”.<sup>1029</sup>

On the other hand, from China’s perspective, a territorial swap was agreeable but not an up-front concession to the Indians on the McMahon Line. A simultaneous and reciprocal concession from India on Ladakh was necessary. Even the permit to use the Aksai Chin road for civil purposes was insufficient to inspire Chinese confidence. Radhakrishnan confided in British High Commissioner Malcolm McDonald that “if the Chinese would yield India the shadow of sovereignty in Ladakh, the Indian [would] yield to the Chinese the substance of administrative and military control there”.<sup>1030</sup> This was intended to protect India’s beleaguered Prime Minister from domestic and parliamentary pressures. But considering their distrust of the Indians, the PRC could not risk Indian interference with such a crucial supply route, especially as they already believed India was abetting the Tibetan revolution. Nehru’s unwillingness to budge and accept Zhou’s offer had further entrenched, in PRC’s view, his reputation as an imperialist and

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<sup>1026</sup> Max-Jean Zins and Gilles Boquerat, *India in the Mirror of Foreign Diplomatic Archives*, pp. 100.

<sup>1027</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between Director Zhang Wenji and Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy (2), July 17, 1961, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121626>.

<sup>1028</sup> Talks between Swaran Singh and Chen Yi on 23 April 1960, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 60, pp. 128.

<sup>1029</sup> Record of Indian and Chinese Officials meeting on 25 April 1960, *SWJN-SS*, vol. 60, pp. 178.

<sup>1030</sup> Jairam Ramesh, *A Chequered Brilliance*, pp. 546.

his desire not to settle the border dispute in order to use it for domestic and international gains. As Deng Xiaoping claimed, Zhou's trip had uncovered Nehru's "true face" and "fully confirmed" the PRC's "previous opinion and position in relation to [him]". He was not being pushed around by rightist and other reactionaries. Instead, he was the "central figure in the anti-Chinese campaign in India". To resolve the border issue with China did not suit his interests as he wanted to suppress the CPI's influence, access more American aid, and most dangerously, maintain India's imperial privileges in Tibet.<sup>1031</sup> Mao told retired British field marshal Bernard Montgomery in May 1960 that "Nehru [was] not friendly to [China] because a person named Dalai Lama [was] his good friend". He also contested Montgomery's view of Nehru's non-alignment, stating India was "actually in the sphere of influence of the United States".<sup>1032</sup>

### **Alternative Explanations**

With the exception of Srinath Raghavan's "A Missed Opportunity?"<sup>1033</sup>, there has been no systematic attempt to analyse the abortive Nehru-Zhou talks in 1960. Most scholars have examined the talks as a precursor to the border war in 1962, rather than on its own terms as part of an open-ended dynamic and sincere attempt to resolve the border dispute. Neville Maxwell has argued that the primary reason behind the failure of talks was Nehru's unwillingness to negotiate India's imperial borders, which rendered the issue diplomatically insoluble despite China's overtures. Nehru, he claims, was an "absolutist" and refused to budge from India's claim line and entertain Zhou's "package-deal" in an attempt to force a unilateral position on the Chinese.<sup>1034</sup> However, while Nehru did appear intractable in 1960 when the talks took place, this was hardly a consistent position. As Raghavan has clarified, Nehru's

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<sup>1031</sup> From the Diary of S. V. Chervonenko, Memorandum of Conversation with the General Secretary of the CC CCP, Deng Xiaoping, 17 May 1960, June, 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112661>.

<sup>1032</sup> Chaowu Dai, "China's Strategy for Sino-Indian Boundary Disputes, 1950-1962," pp. 450.

<sup>1033</sup> Srinath Raghavan, "A Missed Opportunity? The Nehru-Zhou Summit of 1960" in Manu Bhagavan (ed.), *India and the Cold War* (Gurgaon: Penguin, 2019), pp. 100-125.

<sup>1034</sup> Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp.75

initially uncompromising stance in the mid-1950s was meant to act as a “bargaining position”. India wanted to feign ignorance of the boundary dispute and claim it had been settled, leaving the Chinese to raise objections.<sup>1035</sup>

Nehru and other Indian diplomats were unsure of the strength of India’s claims in the Eastern Sector until 1960 and considered it a counter to exact recognition for the rest of the border. As per a note prepared by the MEA on its strategy for discussion with China on Tibet in 1954, India was ready to discuss concessions in disputed areas such as the “the Aksai plain in Ladakh, Hunza, Dakhpo-Garpo, Gritti, Nilang, Jodang, Tawang, and Wolang” in lieu of China’s overall acceptance of the frontier and the McMahon Line. Even the village of Minsar, which was an enclave held by the Kashmir state 70kms from the Niti Pass on the Tibetan side of the border, was held dispensable.<sup>1036</sup> Going back further, Sonika Gupta has helped explicate India’s thinking on the McMahon Line in the early post-Independence years. In response to a Tibetan demand to return “unmistakably Tibetan” territories such as Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling in 1947-48, India had similarly proffered a concession on Tawang in return for Tibet’s recognition of the McMahon Line.<sup>1037</sup> It can hardly be sustained that Nehru’s intractability as a characteristic of India’s unchanging position on the border scuppered the talks in 1960. Instead, it is the reason behind the subsequent hardening of India’s position in 1960 that needs attention.

Another explanation provided for the failure of talks is colonial trauma. Manjari Chatterjee Miller, defining a “post-imperial ideology,” argues that the historical event of colonialism caused “collective trauma” and a consequent obsession with maximising territorial sovereignty and status in postcolonial states.<sup>1038</sup> This, she claims, was the main impediment to

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<sup>1035</sup> Srinath Raghavan, “Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute, 1948-60: A Reappraisal”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 41, no. 36 (2006), pp. 3889.

<sup>1036</sup> Note India’s on strategy for discussion with China on Tibet in 1954. In Avtar Singh Bhasin [henceforth ASB] (ed.), *Vol. II*, pp. 970.

<sup>1037</sup> Sonika Gupta, “Frontiers in Flux: Indo-Tibetan Border: 1946–1948,” *India Quarterly*, vol. 77 no. 1 (2021), pp. 42-58.

<sup>1038</sup> Manjari Chatterjee Miller, *Wronged by Empire: Post-imperial Ideology and Foreign Policy in India and China* (California: Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-2.

Sino-Indian negotiations on the boundary dispute between 1959-62. Such victimhood nationalism it has been argued, also spawned from previous territorial break-ups: Partition in India's case and the "Century of Humiliation" in China's case.<sup>1039</sup> However, India and China also were able to recognise the unintelligibility of colonial cartography and consider concessions and swaps as a means to simplify them. While they failed to do so with each other, India and China did resolve their territorial disputes with other states in the period preceding the border war in 1962. For instance, the PRC signed boundary agreements with Burma and Nepal between 1960-61, while India agreed to the exchange of enclaves with Pakistan on the Bengal border under the Nehru-Noon Agreement in 1958. The disputed territories on the Himalayan border did assume abstract properties, but these flowed from the interactive dynamics of the relationship rather than the predetermined socio-historical effects of colonialism or other territorial disputes unrelated to the Sino-Indian dyad. In fact, even in the midst of the crisis with China in 1959 Nehru said that "no country really sensible [wanted] territorial expansion, especially at the risk of war". He asked: "what good is it to have a few hundred square miles of territory"?<sup>1040</sup>

Finally, there are possible rationalist explanations for the failure of bargaining.<sup>1041</sup> Since the dispute had low issue indivisibility and the concerned territories were not strategically valuable, (although there were reports of reserves of the mineral "Borax" north of the Aksai China area and a possible gold field in the disputed area marked in a map of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India in 1874, these reports were not reliable<sup>1042</sup>) I will instead consider the issues of private information and commitment problems. It cannot be sustained

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<sup>1039</sup> For India see Itty Abraham, *How India Became Territorial: Foreign Policy, Diaspora, Geopolitics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014). For China see William Callahan, "The Cartography of National Humiliation and the Emergence of China's Geobody," *Public Culture*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2009), pp. 141-73.

<sup>1040</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's interview with U.S. News and World Report on 16 December 1959. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 55, pp. 56.

<sup>1041</sup> James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization*, vol. 49, no. 3 (1995), pp. 379-414.

<sup>1042</sup> L. Zutshi to Jawaharlal Nehru on 5 September 1959. *SWJN-SS*, vol. 52, pp. 307.

that the failure of talks in 1960 occurred because of a lack of access to private information. Neither India or China failed to compromise because they underappreciated the resolve or relative power of the other and nor did they seek to misrepresent their intentions during the bargaining process. While they were unable to trust each other to uphold any compromise deal or expand the bargaining range, this did not result because of rationalist motives such as large first-strike or offensive advantages that would have caused the “sucker” to be permanently eliminated (there is no evidence that either was preparing for a preventive/offensive war prior to talks). In fact, considering the larger political advantages—both locally and internationally—of a compromise solution for both India and China, it could be argued that there were no rational incentives to renege. Also, the two states had built strategic trust and overcome the constraints of present and future motivations in the short-to-medium term. In light of the favourable structure of preference and opportunities, explaining the failure of Nehru-Zhou talks in 1960 remains elusive from a rationalist perspective. Ultimately, it is only by uncovering the feelings of betrayal on both sides and the trusting relationship that foreshadowed it that we can fully explain the failure of Nehru-Zhou talks in 1960.

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Even as both sides made sincere efforts, there was no reasonable way to achieve a settlement under the confines of heightened distrust, which had been caused due to the presumed violation of strategic trust and the consequent sense of betrayal. Perhaps, as Jagat Mehta later noted, “if Zhou had been more straightforward, Nehru might have piloted an exchange of NEFA for Aksai Chin in 1957, but it was no longer possible in 1960”.<sup>1043</sup> This is because betrayal had two damaging consequences for Nehru-Zhou talks in 1960. First, at the elite level, even though strong positive incentives were in place to shape preferences, betrayal significantly limited the concessions both sides were willing to consider. China and India were both unwilling to agree to

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<sup>1043</sup> Jagat Mehta, *The Tryst Betrayed: Reflections on Diplomacy and Development* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2010), pp. 120.

a resolution that created dependencies or preserved any vulnerabilities for the other to exploit in the future. This greatly diminished the prospect of a reasonable settlement. Second, in India at the popular level, betrayal imposed significant political costs on Nehru and further made his position as a negotiator untenable. The Chinese tried to seek a political settlement during talks between Director Zhang Wenji and Ambassador Parthasarathy in July 1961. But even a year later this attempt to find “concessions in a broader political sense” failed as Parthasarathy was unconvinced of Nehru’s ability to sway public opinion in favour of such a compromise solution.<sup>1044</sup> These two factors help explain Nehru’s intransigence on the border dispute in 1960 as compared to his more flexible approach in 1954. It was not because there was a mere absence of trust that talks failed in 1960. Instead, it was because there was trust in the first place, which led to betrayal and heightened distrust as India and China could not live up to the positive expectations of their trusting relationship, that proved an insoluble stumbling block for the settlement of the border dispute.

The social factors that helped build trust still persisted in some form. But their potency had been blunted. For instance, India and China still had shared weaknesses in terms of the threat of a two-front war and difficulties in enforcing their rule in border areas. However, when the Chinese envoy brought Pakistan’s threat to the fore explicitly to force India’s position on the disputed border, this was seen as a coercive signal. Similarly, Nehru and Zhou’s reputations had been irreparably damaged and there was a push to engage with other leaders with whom talks were still considered meaningful. Neither side was in a position to make conciliatory gestures, let alone ones that would rise to the threshold of “unexpectedness” required to act as discrepant information. These would be severely criticised by domestic publics and could also be seen as a sign of weakness in the face of provocation and aggression from the other side. Reciprocity in terms of maintaining the trusting relationship too had become undone. While Nehru tried to

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<sup>1044</sup> Memorandum of Conversation between Director Zhang Wenji and Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy (2), July 17, 1961, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121626>.

manage the public outcry in India after the Tibetan revolution began, his actions were insufficient to satisfy Chinese expectations, which were inconsiderate to India's parliamentary democracy and Nehru's limitations as Prime Minister. The Tibetan revolution, as an intervening event, forced India and China to make difficult choices, leaving them unable to live up to the positive expectations of the other. This left them both with a strong feeling of betrayal and scuppered a peaceful resolution of the disputed border. The failure of talks in 1960 became an inflection point in the fast-developing spiral of distrust between India and China, which worsened with time and led to a full-fledged border war in 1962.

## **Conclusion**

Making sense of the rise and fall of trust in India-Pakistan and India-China relations in the 1950s, this thesis has provided a study of the socially contingent nature of trust between rivals in international relations (what I call strategic trust). I have argued that four intersecting social factors were an indispensable part of the decision made by Indian, Pakistani, and Chinese leaders and diplomats to trust each other. In all these cases, interpersonal diplomacy and face-to-face contact did play a role during the trust-building process. This confirms the hypothesis of psychology-based theories of trust in IR. Interpersonal diplomacy does seem to provide a unique path of diplomatic engagement for the purposes of trust-building, which could not entirely be replicated by epistolary exchanges or indirect means. But psychological variables were also insufficient to explain why trust-building was possible between these rivals. Without the conscious efforts of actors to build empathic conveyance; send conciliatory signals capable of acting as discrepant information; the personal reputations of the specific actors involved in these negotiations; the shared weaknesses of both sides; and the initial follow through on trusting commitments, it would be difficult to conceive of a trusting relationship at all. Social factors are not epiphenomenal to psychological variables, but rather facilitators of trusting choices. As I have argued, this is why interpersonal diplomacy is far more common than trust in world politics. Trust is as much a social relationship as it is a mental state of being and rivals consider a wide range of social factors associated with their counterparts before taking the decision to trust them. As the India-Pakistan and India-China examples show, this allows actors to accept vulnerabilities for mutual benefit and overcome the zero-sum logics endemic to rivalries.

During the signing of the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement (1950) and the Panchsheel phase in India-China relations (1954-1957), I find strong evidence for the positive effect of social factors on trust-building processes. The first social factor was discrepant information, which is a measure of the trustworthiness of a conciliatory signal in terms of its “unexpectedness” and its ability to address the central fears of rivals. One of the reasons the Pakistanis saw Indian signals

as trustworthy during the signing of the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement was because an influential and hawkish figure like Indian Home Minister Vallabhbhai Patel voiced his support for the Agreement during a public speech in Calcutta. Similarly, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was taken in by his counterpart Liaquat Ali Khan's willingness to work towards counteracting the Islamic orthodoxy in Pakistan and protecting the rights of the Hindu minority despite the Islamist origins of the Pakistani state. In the Sino-Indian case, the Chinese were positively influenced by India's willingness to concede colonial rights and privileges of its mission in Tibet. This simple act addressed Chinese fears of Indian designs on its territorial claims in the region. The Indians on the other hand, who had keenly followed the press in China to interpret the workings of the PRC, were impressed by the sharp turn in the official propaganda line. As opposed to indifference and contempt expressed earlier, the Chinese state media showed India in a positive light by; as an ally of the socialist bloc and fellow Asian power.

The second social factor at play in these cases was the personal reputation of leaders at variance from the state regime. In IR, the reputations of leaders are devalued in comparison to the reputations of states. However, the productive friction between these two can also be a source of trustworthiness for rivals. In the India-Pakistan case, it is difficult to imagine that commitments on both sides—which related to the protection on religious minorities—would be trusted in the absence of the secular reputations of Nehru and Liaquat. This allowed the two leaders to overcome the enemy image in India that Pakistan was an Islamic republic, and similarly the perception in Pakistan that India was run by Hindu chauvinists. In the India-China case, Zhou and Nehru were the two key leaders at the heart of the trusting process whose personal reputations were beneficial. The Chinese perceived their external relations through a Marxist lens and saw India as a bourgeois Anglo-American ally. But Nehru's reputation as a socialist, which was evidenced in his writings and policies, made him appear trustworthy. From the Indian vantage point, there were concerns over China's dogmatic adherence to Communism. But Zhou was publicly and privately known as a moderate within the Communist ranks who could build a bridge with a non-aligned country like India.

The third social factor was shared weaknesses, which provided a rational basis for strategic trust to form and an opportunity for rivals to collaborate for mutual benefit. For India and Pakistan, the refugee crisis on the Bengal border threatened the survival of the administrative apparatus of the two rivals and fuelled the security dilemma. But these shared weaknesses also allowed them to develop a trusting relationship. Since the influx of refugees was overwhelming in terms of their rehabilitation and local maintenance of civil order on both sides, Indians and Pakistanis were able to signal their trustworthiness and establish a relationship of mutual care to remedy this issue and arrest the crisis from spiralling further. Similarly, for India and China, shared weaknesses in administering border areas and dominant threats on other fronts, were conducive for trust-building. Indian leaders feared losing the allegiance of the 'Mongoloid' population in their border areas as well as the daunting prospect of a two-front war since relations with Pakistan were already tense and drained a significant amount of India's defence capacity. Similarly, China was faced with difficulties in legitimising its rule in Tibet despite the signing of the seventeen-point agreement in 1951, and the threat of the US military on its Eastern frontier. In both cases, a likeness in the nature of the weaknesses was a key contributor to the signal's credibility. Moreover, it also helped justify the trusting choice to relevant stakeholders domestically.

The fourth social factor was initial reciprocity. Trust-building did not end after the initial decision to trust was made. Once a degree of vulnerability was accepted and the trusted party chose not to defect, this became a strong indicator of their trustworthiness and played an important role in trust maintenance phase. The opportunity to exploit the vulnerability would have given the former rival a decisive advantage and therefore non-defection was seen as revealing the actor's true preferences and reaffirmed the newly acquired positive image and offered a positive experiential script for strategic trustors to project onto the future. Nehru and Liaquat both recognised the effort the other was making to ensure the Minorities Pact was successful. They saw administrative difficulties as inhibiting an ideal implementation of the

trusting commitments, but refugee migration numbers were already changing for the better. This reinforced the trust they had built, even leading to breakthroughs on other disputed matters such as evacuee property and trade. In the Sino-Indian dyad, it was reciprocity on the basis of the Five Principles that proved significant for trust-building. The Five Principles led to a revision of India's border policy with respect to Tibet as Nehru was committed to following the Five Principles in letter and spirit. On the other hand, from India's standpoint, it was the Chinese detachment from the Communist Party of India and the handling of the border dispute with Burma that helped build trust.

Trust-building between rivals though, only forms one part of the enquiry made in this thesis into the phenomenon of trust in international relations. I have also considered the risks of building trusting relationships between rivals. It is not sufficient for actors to be confident in their assumptions that the trusted party will not defect. Instead, they must also understand the pitfalls of trust-building outside the risk of defection. Strategic trust built during Nehru's talks on J&K with his counterpart Mohammed Ali Bogra and Governor General Ghulam Muhammed in 1953-55 was blocked by the inability of the latter to isolate the trusting relationship from domestic spoilers. Neither Bogra nor Ghulam, notwithstanding their varying control over the domestic groups in Pakistan, could sanction a reciprocal compromise on the J&K dispute. This episode showed that factors precluding a settlement on contentious issues can be more diverse than distrust, and therefore merely replacing distrust with trust may not be sufficient to widen the bargaining range and make a compromise possible. In such situations, even if the necessary social factors are present and rivals are able to develop strategic trust at the interpersonal level, the inability of leaders to build support for these trusting choices can block strategic trust from leading to a cooperative outcome (in this case dispute settlement), instead causing disappointment and deterring similar attempts in the future.

The other risk is that of trust being overridden during the maintenance phase, leading to betrayal. Whilst India and China did build strategic trust with each other during the

Panchsheel phase (1954-57), they could not resolve the border dispute. Talks in 1960 proved unfruitful. This was not because they were ignorant of the border issue when they built trust, nor was it because strategic trust was insufficient to address the problem. Instead, it was because they both felt betrayed by the other's actions as the Tibetan revolution (intervening event) unfolded on the border, despite the absence of conscious efforts on either side to defect. For China, Nehru's decision to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama even as the Tibetan revolution raged on and his perceived attempts to exploit China's moment of vulnerability to unilaterally enforce imperial borders and isolate it diplomatically, was seen as a betrayal of the trusting relationship. In Mao and Zhou's eyes, Nehru had revealed himself to be a bourgeois affiliate of the Anglo-Americans who had only pretended to disclaim India's imperial privileges in Tibet but still wanted to maintain it as a buffer state. For India, Zhou's backtracking on the McMahon Line and China's use of force on the border were seen as the acts of betrayal. This is why both sides could not agree on a common basis to resolve the border crisis: Nehru rejected the Chinese offer for territorial swaps as he could not rule out intrusions in the future and Zhou rejected the Indian offer to concede the appearance of legitimacy in the Eastern Sector as this could provide legal justification for Indian misadventures against Chinese control of the Aksai Chin road. The sting of betrayal ushered in a distrust so deep that both sides could not compromise despite a favourable structure of preferences and the earlier presence of strategic trust.

### **Further Research**

The findings in this thesis raise further questions and open up avenues for research. There is an opportunity to look for more social factors that facilitate the building of strategic trust. Such studies could show convergence with the social factors highlighted in this thesis and help demonstrate that my findings travel across time and space or even expand the repository of social factors and highlight their value in specific circumstances. Both of these pathways can bring greater predictive capacity to theories of trust-building. There would also be value in conducting a longitudinal study to examine how strategic trust can become bonded trust or socially embedded over a period of time. Moreover, social variables such as personal reputations

of leaders may also have afterlives. When Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif restarted the rapprochement process with India in 2014, he projected A.B. Vajpayee's positive reputation—developed during the Lahore process (1999)—on Narendra Modi as a similarly Hindu nationalist leader of the Bhartiya Janata Party.<sup>1045</sup> In this sense, personal reputations can matter even beyond actors who have built trust initially if enough “like” features exist to allow the past to influence the present.

It would also be interesting to see if cycles of reciprocation and the use of institutional frameworks aids the deepening of trust and allows it to progress from the minimalist end of the spectrum to the maximalist one. Not only can such an enquiry include the transformation of perceptions and beliefs at the elite level, it may also encompass the modes of dissemination of the trusting image to domestic audiences and the relative success of different strategies to do so, especially considering wider efforts to disseminate trust would invite greater domestic audience costs and political opposition. Studying ways in which politicians can address challenges in the domestic sphere associated with building trusting relationships with rivals can be an important research agenda. Understanding how rivals can moderate their interactions in the trust-building phase to ease the pressures of public opinion would enhance the value and use of trust-building as a form of conflict termination in international relations.

On empathy, I have examined how historical learning influenced the making of Jawaharlal Nehru as an empathy entrepreneur. Similar enquiries into the roots of the empathic capacities of actors who chose to make trusting decisions and the unique effects of their global positionality could be useful. For policymakers, this could help decode which rivals are more likely to have empathy as security dilemma sensibility and reciprocate conciliatory gesture. As Nicholas Wheeler and Marcus Holmes have argued, this can affect decision made by leaders to

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<sup>1045</sup> Abdul Basit, *Hostility: A Diplomat's Diary on Pakistan-India Relations* (Noida: Harper Collins, 2021).

participate in summitry.<sup>1046</sup> While I have not had the space to examine this here, it is also possible that explanations of empathic capacity lie in domestic politics, ideological affiliations, or regime types. It was evident in my research that “liberally-minded” leaders who had more progressive ideological affiliations—as Nehru’s example most glaringly shows—were more empathetic than socially conservative ones. Brian Rathbun in his study of the American approach to multilateralism after World War II finds that the Democratic politicians were more trusting than Republican ones.<sup>1047</sup> It would be worth considering if democratic regimes have greater potential to produce empathic leaders as opposed to authoritarian regimes. It could equally be possible that empathetic capacities are issue specific and actors with different ideological affiliations or from different regime types could be more or less likely to empathise on different disputes.

A more integrated research agenda is also possible on trust-building between rivals, especially if there is greater definitional convergence amongst rationalist, constructivist, and psychology-based theorists of trust. The minimalist definition of strategic trust adopted in this thesis potentially offers one way to do so. I have defined strategic trust in line with the basic understanding of trust in the social science literature as an expectation of non-harm to one’s interest and well-being based on a belief of the subject’s trustworthiness, despite objective unknowability and attending uncertainty. This includes an assessment of the trustee’s benevolent intentions, willingness (commitment), and capability (competence). Building on this, I call this trust “strategic” because it is minimalist, based on mutual care for shared interests, and can coexist simultaneously with low levels of distrust. This definition can accommodate interest-based, identity-based, as well as knowledge-based explanations of trust. While I have chosen to analyse the social dimension of strategic trust in this thesis, it is clear that social factors do not

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<sup>1046</sup> Marcus Holmes and Nicholas Wheeler, “Social bonding in diplomacy. *International Theory*,” vol. 12, no. 1 (2020), pp. 133-161.

<sup>1047</sup> Brian C. Rathbun, “The ‘Magnificent Fraud’: Trust, International Cooperation, and the Hidden Domestic Politics of American Multilateralism after World War II,” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 1 (2011), pp. 1-21.

act exclusively and interact with psychological and material elements. For instance, it would be worth examining how social and psychological variables interact with each other when trust-building takes place through face-to-face diplomacy. Does the vividness of information make certain social variables more potent? Does the natural disposition (e.g. empathic capacity) of actors influence the type of social resources they draw on to make trusting choices? Rationalist insights on Bayesian updating, satisficing, and signalling can also be useful as they can help us better understand changes in belief systems and what type of signals are likely to reverse enemy images. For instance, there are connections between discrepant information and Bayesian theories that examine the role of surprise.<sup>1048</sup> Similarly, the potency of shared weakness as a source of trust seems to be linked to circumstances in which the offense-defence balance is tilted towards defence.

Finally, on trusting failure, while there has been scholarly focus on conflict and uncovering its roots, not enough attention has been devoted to diplomatic near misses or cases where rivals were on the verge of a breakthrough but could not prevail over mitigating circumstances. Not only will such cases and examining the causes of failure hold value in terms of elucidating the risks of entering trusting relationships for policymakers, it can also offer ways to refine and improve trust-building processes. Additionally, a longitudinal study could also bring forth the long-term consequences of trusting failure. It would be worth considering if repeated disappointment leads to fatigue and an unwillingness to pursue diplomatic engagement in rivalries as actors grow pessimistic about diplomatic outcomes. For example, after repeated cases of disappointment in India-Pakistan talks on the J&K dispute, there has been a noticeable shift in New Delhi's policies from seeking a status quo solution through talks and sustained composite dialogues to unilaterally assuming the status-quo as final and avoiding talks with Pakistan as far as possible.<sup>1049</sup> Similarly, one could examine the long-term consequences of

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<sup>1048</sup> Laurent Itti and Pierre Baldi, "Bayesian Surprise Attracts Human Attention," *Vision Research*, vol. 49, no. 10 (2009), pp. 1295-306.

<sup>1049</sup> Syed Abbas, "India refuses talks over Kashmir issue with Pakistan," *The Dawn*, August 25, 2016.

betrayal, which can often have unintended consequences if they serve as a powerful historical reminder of the risks of trusting a rival and hinder future negotiations. For instance, would barriers to trust-building with Iran be greater for the United States under President Joe Biden, after his predecessor President Donald Trump's scrapping of the nuclear deal in 2018, than was the case under President Obama regime when the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was signed in 2015? It would be noteworthy to examine ways in which a feeling of betrayal with respect to the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the previous agreement has made the trust-building process more challenging. Cases I have examined suggest that betrayal is the shadow side of empathy and can block actors from being able to perceive the behaviour of their adversaries as a reaction to their policies and conduct.

### **Strategic Trust for Policymakers**

This thesis has examined the trusting choices of rivals and also the circumstances in which trust can prove inadequate for the purposes of terminating rivalries. In this section, I attempt to distil the utility of these findings for policymakers. On trust, this thesis does not provide a predictive theory, and therefore, unlike rational choice theorists, cannot suggest a priori indicators of trustworthiness that actors can use to interpret the intentions of rivals. The burden ultimately falls on the political judgement of actors and what they deem to be credible signals of trustworthiness. Even social factors such as the personal reputations of actors and shared weaknesses, which are more credible because of the low probability of manipulation, cannot be blindly deployed for trust-building in the absence of subjective judgement. While actors do build reputations over long periods, a rival actor must be able to identify and relate the reputation of their counterpart to the relevant disputed issue. This can be challenging if reputations are socially contested. Similarly, shared weaknesses are not useful until actors are able to establish a relationship of mutual care and assure each other that they are motivated by the desire to address their weaknesses in a mutually beneficial manner. Once again, this involves interpretation and judgement on behalf of actors. But the cases examined in this thesis do demonstrate that actors make trusting choices on the basis of a subjective evaluation of risk, just

as they choose deterrence strategies or other options of power balancing. Therefore, trust-building is a legitimate response to the security dilemma, which is entirely reasonable. While most realist accounts use the overhang of future uncertainty to deny a wider repertoire of choices to policymakers, this thesis establishes trust as one practicable way to achieve the goal of security.

Relatedly, the thesis has also highlighted the usefulness of empathy as security dilemma sensibility for rivals. Even if actors choose not to opt for trusting choices, there is utility in substituting a disposition based on static enemy images for one attentive to the complexity of the military motivations of rivals. This may not lead to conflict termination necessarily, but it keeps the door open for such a possibility, and in the interim prevents the competitive excesses of security dilemma spirals—which often tend to take an ideological rather than pragmatic form—from escalating beyond control. I have also placed special emphasis on historical learning as an important site for the making of empathy entrepreneurs. Such learning is mediated by the subjective biases of individual actors, but there is wider potential for convergence on historical events that allow actors to draw lessons of empathy.

Insights in the trusting failure sections too are relevant for policymakers. Risks are not borne solely after the trusting choice is made. Domestic audience costs are attached to summitry with rivals and making the effort to achieve a breakthrough in the first place. Therefore, if leaders in a given trusting relationship are too weak to gather support for a compromise with relevant domestic stakeholders, the trust-building process is bound to end in disappointment. Disappointment and its recurrence can dissuade actors from re-entering the trust-building process, even if opportunities present themselves in the future. In the India-Pakistan case, repeated failures to sustain trusting relationships and their breakdown has deterred India's leadership from negotiating with their civilian counterparts in Pakistan. Three notable examples of high-level talks between Vajpayee-Sharif (1999), Vajpayee-Musharraf (2001), and Modi-Sharif (2014) were all blocked soon thereafter, either by Pakistani aggression against India or the

use of Pakistani soil by terrorist groups outfits to carry out attacks against India. The inability of the Pakistani leadership to isolate the bargaining process from external spoilers has entrenched a feeling of disappointment on the Indian side. As US-based analyst Ashley Tellis in a policy brief for Carnegie in 2017 asked: “Are India-Pakistan Peace Talks Worth a Damn?”<sup>1050</sup> In such cases, for trust-building to be useful, actors must enter a period of sustained de-securitisation and be able to enforce domestic stability and control. Or else, strategic trust may be insufficient to produce cooperative outcomes and each attempt can make the prognosis more hopeless.

Another risk for actors to consider when entering trusting relationships is of the trust being overridden and leading to betrayal. It is not sufficient for actors be confident of their rival counterpart’s willingness to defect. Actors must not lose sight of the fact that they remain political actors and thus expectations and risks must constantly be moderated to meet the force and uncertainty of circumstance. If India and China were realistic about what they expected and did not harbour ambitions of altering each other’s choices in the Cold War, perhaps the trusting relationship could have survived the shocks of the Tibetan revolution in 1959 and facilitated a resolution of the border dispute. However, Nehru erroneously assumed China would moderate its foreign policy after pledging peaceful coexistence and accept India’s claim to the McMahon Line prior to talks. Similarly, Zhou and the Chinese erred in assuming that Nehru could deny asylum to the Dalai Lama in the face of domestic considerations in India or that he could be co-opted into the socialist bloc. India and China needed to address the border issue in the initial trust-building phase, rather than presuppose one another’s approval of their preferred method of resolving the issue. The two states successfully built trust, but based on expectations of each other’s behaviour that were unrealistic. Some of these failings are also visible in the long arc of US-China relations after the end of the Cold War. The assumption in Washington D.C. that free trade and commerce would socialise China into a US-led liberal international order and mould it according to their likeness was a mistaken one. As Kurt

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<sup>1050</sup> Ashley J. Tellis, “Are India-Pakistan Peace Talks Worth a Damn?” (Washington: Carnegie, 2017).

Campbell and Ely Ratner wrote for *Foreign Affairs* in 2018, the “US has always had an outsize sense of its ability to determine China’s course”.<sup>1051</sup> Now there is a risk that betrayal, which stems from previous US emotional investment in its relationship with China, could exaggerate threat perceptions of Beijing in Washington.

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<sup>1051</sup> Kurt Campbell and Ely Ratner, “The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 97, no. 2, (Mar/Apr 2018), pp. 60-70.

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