Chapter - 3

FORMULATION OF INDIA'S CHINA POLICY AND THE ROLE OF SARDAR K.M. PANIKKAR

In the last chapter Tibet’s real position vis-a-vis China and India has been traced and in the light of those facts it becomes necessary to examine to what extent the formulation of India’s China policy in the period between 1948-52 was on the right track, especially with the re-occupation of Tibet by People’s Republic of China. The defeat of India in 1962 war with China is attributed to a great extent to the wrong policies that were initiated by India following the occupation of Tibet by Communist China. To understand the Indian policy towards China during this period (1948-52) the role of Sardar K.M. Panikkar has to be analyzed as he was the Ambassador to both Nationalist China and to People’s Republic of China and was one of the principal advisers to Nehru on foreign policy matters. It was Sardar K.M. Panikkar who interpreted the emerging scene in Asia to suit the Indian interests in the formative years of independent India’s foreign policy.

But Panikkar’s interpretation of the development in Asia has been criticized in several quarters and it is alleged that his credulity and ignorance about Chinese intentions in Asia and his advice to Nehru were supposed to be the prime reasons for the permanent weakening of India’s strategic position vis-a-vis, China. Nehru’s special Assistant M.O. Mathai says “Seeds for the bedevilment of India-China relations were well and truly sown by Ambassador K.M. Panikkar”. ¹ Even before independence Nehru had thought about China and stated that, “China that mighty country with a mighty past, our neighbour, has been our friend through ages and that friendship will endure and grow.” ² Im-

---

1. M.O. Mathai, Reminiscences of Nehru Age (Delhi, 1978), p. 168
2. Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s Foreign Policy (Delhi 1971), p.3
mediately after independence, in the Indian Parliament then Constituent Assembly (Legislative) the would-be relations with the Chinese was discussed and some members were of the view that because of ideological, cultural, philosophical and political sympathy that existed from the ancient time between the two countries, the two could form a strong union to fight imperialism and one of the members even suggested, “India and China are destined to be leaders of Asia and joined together with they will be a force to reckon with.” Thus from the beginning itself China has been accepted as a friend and an attempt for establishing strong friendship with her was recognized by the Parliament. But Jawaharlal Nehru took a very cautious stand on China despite his emphasis on two thousand years old friendship. As the position in China had not fully crystallized as it would prove embarrassing later, if any kind of opinion was expressed on the situation. Nehru was congratulated for taking such a stand in a debate held on 8th March 1949 in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Nehru also made it clear that India’s independent foreign policy was against interference in the domestic affairs of any other country and the thrust of “our policy will continue to be not only to keep apart from power politics but trying to make friendly co-operation possible.

Following the proclamation of People’s Republic of China on 1st October 1949, India became the second non-communist country to recognize it. Indian public opinion too favoured an early recognition. Within a few months of recognition of People’s Republic of China, Tibet was invaded by China. As

4. Ibid
6. Ibid, pp. 1232 - 34
stated already the invasion of Tibet in 1950 by China was the beginning of strains in Sino-Indian relations and the main charge against Panikkar is that he did not understand the Chinese mind. Therefore he failed to realize the true nature of communism in China and the real character of a totalitarian regime and it was he who was responsible for changing the word suzerainty to sovereignty. 9 By the acceptance of sovereignty of the Chinese over Tibet it is claimed India was forced to surrender her treaty rights and privileges. Panikkar was asked to correct the word from sovereignty too suzerainty, to express India’s feeling on the matter but Panikkar, “had a nimble reactive and uncommitted mind...... and he was not successful in making China aware of the weight and force of India’s attitude on various question”. 10 Following Tibet’s invasion, Tibetan Government piteously approached the UN to rescue her from the clutches of Chinese Red Army. But India instead of sponsoring that plea in the Security Council, remained indifferent to the matter in the UN on the basis of the assurances given by Chou En-lai to Panikkar. 11 By accepting the Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, according to the critics, India was negating her own stand in 1947 at the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, in which Tibet attended as an independent country. 12 Indian Ambassador Sardar Panikkar was an useful instrument to serve the interests of Chinese Communists. 13 Then Secretary General of Ministry of External Affairs, Sri Girija Shankar Bajpai was much more harsh on Panikkar by alleging : “What interest the Ambassador thinks he may be serving by showing so much solicitude for the Chinese Government’s policy of false excuses and wanton high-handedness towards Tibet passes my understanding..... I feel it is my duty to observe that in han-

11. M.R. Masani, n. 9, p. 45
12. Hindustan Times, 6th December, 1963
13. M.R. Masani, n. 9 p.45
dling the Tibetan issue with the Chinese government, our Ambassador has allowed himself to be influenced more by the Chinese point of view, by Chinese claims, by Chinese maps and by regard for Chinese susceptibilities than by his instructions or by India’s interest.”  

Panikkar was considered to be a cynic and a great believer in realpolitik and he is held responsible for advising Nehru to switch sides even when the two armies in China (Communists and Kuomintang) were locked in a battle. Further Panikkar had started behaving even then as Ambassador to People's Republic of China led by Mao. Nehru’s brother-in-law and a champion of Tibetan independence accuses Panikkar of opportunism. George Patterson observes that “many of India’s later troubles with China would never have arisen, or certainly not in this generation had some one with more balanced judgement and less liability to erratic enthusiasm been sent as Indian Ambassador to China at this critical period.” Patterson was a self-styled missionary who worked in Tibet before the communist revolution in China. According to this missionary: “There is no doubt that Panikkar was personally sympathetic towards the Chinese Revolution, but his blind acceptance of what he was told by the Peking regime was inexcusable in his position as Ambassador of Indian interests and did incalculable harm both at the time and later.” This was because Panikkar was unable to understand the implications of the basic character of Red Chinese government. Consequently he developed a complacent attitude which created a superficial understanding of the People's Republic of China. President of

14. S. Gopal, n. 10, pp. 178 - 79
15. M.R. Masani, n. 9, p. 45
17. G. Patterson, Peking Versus Delhi (London, 1963), p. 66
18. Ibid
19. V.B. Karnik, Chinese Invasion, Background and Sequel (Bombay, 1966), pp. 120 - 22
India Rajendra Prasad too believed that the Prime-Minister was being misled by his Ambassador in Peking and felt "India's approach to China was riddled with weakness and proneness to wishful thinking". 20 Another protagonist of Tibetan independence accuses Sardar K.M. Panikkar of pro-Chinese reporting from Peking and unfortunately Nehru too attached much importance to his views. He further states that Panikkar being a man of considerable cleverness and erudition after lengthy analysis, reached the conclusion at about this time (1950-51) that Chinese Communism would never become doctrinally dogmatic. 21

Critics of India's China policy accuse Nehru and Panikkar on the issue of abandonment of India's historic rights in Tibet in October 1950 with the stepping of People's Liberation Army into Tibet and feel that Nehru had three courses open to him (a) to assert the legal right arising out of Treaty of 1914 and not to acknowledge Chinese suzerainty over Tibet (b) to decide the issue on its merits and (c) appeasement of China under pressure. But Nehru chose to appease the Chinese and justified India's giving up of its rights in Tibet as they were a symbol of British imperialism. 22

The protest notes given by Panikkar were very mild and these were not strong protests to China on the matter and it was not consistent with India's policy. No previous Government of India or any other Government in the past, has ever acknowledged the Chinese claim of sovereignty over Tibet. It is most astounding that the Government of India tamely gave up serious efforts to vindicate their rights secured to them by several treaties, failed to assert the falsity and untenability of Chinese claims and conceded Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. Thus liberty of a small nation was destroyed. 23

23. Ibid
Hugh Richardson who served as the officer in-charge of Indian Political Mission in Lhasa in 1947-49 accuses Panikkar of overlooking the independence of Tibet. Moreover Panikkar had evidence that China would use force against Tibet and he still convinced Indian Government that the Chinese would use only peaceful means. 24 According to another scholar, “on the conquest of Tibet by China, the versatile Ambassador came forward with a version which is almost Goebbelsian in distortion of facts. Tibet, Panikkar said had become a part of China, as early as the 8th century. The present Dalai Lama was actually appointed by the Chinese Government ..... when People’s Republic of China was established in 1949 representatives of Tibet were all present at all functions in Peking and took part in drawing up New China’s Economic Programme” 25. Panikkar in late 1951 when he came to India with the Chinese cultural delegation, glamorized Communist China in press and platform and described “Communist Revolution as a part of the great Asian Resurgence”. When it was pointed out to him about the presence of a huge army in Tibet, he saw no reason why India should worry about it. He did not think there was anything wrong if Chinese troops move about their own territory 26. India by not trying to keep Tibet as an independent country was jeopardizing her own security because Tibet could be used as a jumping board to India and during the Tibetan crisis Government of India not only failed to come to the rescue of Tibet but even rejected its request, at the behest of Panikkar, to plead its case against the Chinese invasion before the United Nations. 27

The Army too viewed the invasion of Tibet as very harmful. It was felt that Indian leaders acted without foresight and India’s inaction in the face of

Chinese aggression in Tibet was going to be very costly in the coming years. The invasion of Tibet clearly signalled the opening of India’s backdoor. The former Defence Secretary of India H.M. Patel in this regard stated:

Until 1950 when the Government of India gave formal recognition to People's Republic of China, no trouble was possible because Tibet existed as a buffer between India and China. With the invasion of Tibet this buffer zone disappeared and India’s refusal to plead Tibet’s case in UN does us little credit and it certainly showed that as a state we are curiously myopic.

Jayaprakash Narayan too felt that on Tibet it was a major mistake of our foreign policy. This mistake was two fold. The first was that we accepted an imperialist formula. The very idea that one country may have suzerain power over another is imperialist in conception. The second mistake was to believe that the powerful totalitarian state could be trusted to honour the autonomy of a weak state. The supporters of Tibetan independence feel that Chinese takeover of Tibet could have been prevented in order to provide confidence to other smaller states in the region and if India had taken initiative in this regard the Americans would have provided necessary support to India on the matter.

The champions of Tibetan independence argue that the independence of Tibet had a strong basis in history. Tibet was, except for a short period, never under Chinese rule, she was only under tenuous suzerainty. Even in the most unfavourable period of its long relations with China, Tibet had no Viceroy from Peking but only an agent known as Amban and in 1912 Tibetans had asserted their independence. Therefore from the point of India's own security and for

29. H.M. Patel, The Defence of India (Delhi, 1963), pp. 3 - 5
30. The Statesman, 1st June 1959
31. A.B. Shah, India’s Defence and Foreign Policies (Bombay, 1966), p. 87
instilling confidence in the smaller nations of the region and on grounds of
history Tibet’s independent status was unavoidable and India should have taken
up cudgels on behalf of Tibet at a time when China was involved in Korea. But
Nehru was led astray by his principal adviser K.M. Panikkar and Panikkar is
branded as a fellow traveller who instead of reflecting India’s interest abroad
was getting briefed by the Chinese on their matters. 33

Another important charge against Sardar K.M. Panikkar is that he acted
against the Indian interests on matters concerning India’s frontier with China.
Panikkar had left China in June 1952 feeling gratified that his efforts to bring
about peace in Korea were about to bear fruit and was also satisfied with the
developments in Tibet. But “he was too optimistic and had forgotten the most
important issue, the frontier which was not taken up by him” 34. Panikkar was
advised and instructed by his Secretary General, Ministry of External Affairs
Sir G.S. Bajpai to raise the border issue 35. Bajpai had warned Nehru that to
China, the McMahon line might be one of those scars left by Britain in the
course of her aggression; China may seek to heal or erase it on the basis of
frontier rectifications that might not be to our liking or to our interests. He
advised Nehru to tell Peking that we regard the McMahon line; IS
our
bounty and intend to treat it as such. The Chinese could then agree, disagree or by
silence indicate their acquiescence 36. Sardar Patel too had warned Nehru:

We can safely assume that they (China) will disown all stipulations which
Tibet had entered into with us in the past. That throws into the melting
pot all the frontier settlements with Tibet ......... In Peking we have an
Ambassador who is eminently suitable for putting across the friendly view
but even he seems to have failed and our Ambassador has been at great

33. S.R. Patel, Foreign Policy of India (Lucknow, 1960), pp. 268 - 269
34. B.N. Mulhick, My Years with Nehru - The Chinese Betrayal (Delhi, 1971), pp. 148 -
49
36. Ibid
pains to find an explanation of justification for Chinese policy and actions. 37

In January 1952 when Panikkar was in India he was shown the instructions drawn by Ministry of External Affairs and approved by Nehru but when Panikkar went back he did not stick to these instructions and confined his discussions to trade and cultural interests and when the Ambassador found that Chou En-lai was not anxious to discuss border issues, Panikkar fell in line with the Chinese Prime Minister and did not refer to the frontiers. 38 Bajpai who had by then left Ministry of External Affairs wrote to the new Secretary General on the matter saying that, “our attempt at being clever might over reach itself. I think it is better to be absolutely straight and frank.” Panikkar however convinced Nehru that the border as a closed issue. 39 Nehru certainly assumed that Tibet would inevitably come under Chinese rule but his strong belief was that with Asia freed from western imperialism, China and India could take Asia to new areas of enlightenment. This was a romantic aspiration which overlooked both the rigidity and ruthlessness of communism. However his Ambassador to China and advisor K.M. Panikkar too agreed with him as he was immensely impressed by the new China. Despite his close and frequent contacts with the Chinese Prime Minister he did not raise the question of frontier. On the other hand he was philosophizing on Sino-Indian friendship. 40 The question of the frontier was not taken up by the Government in consultation with the Ambassador and Panikkar had decided on a policy of “you need not raise it, but declare it openly.” 41 Panikkar’s position appeared to be justified when Chou

38. S. Gopal. n. 10 p. 178
39. Ibid, p. 179
41. W.F. VanEeelen, Indian Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute (The Hague, 1964), pp.173-74
En-lai never questioned it even after Nehru made the statement publicly that the "McMahon line is our boundary with the map or without the map." Nehru later admitted that he had a lingering doubt concerning the problem of frontier but he hoped that "lapse of time and events will confirm the frontier and by the time perhaps when the challenge to it came we would be in a much stronger position to face it." 42 Thus the decision taken on China by Nehru were not based on his "unrealistic assessment of China's strength and intent or his failure to attach importance to this issue but because he allowed his views and those of his senior advisers to be set aside by an Ambassador who rationalized a shirking of unpleasantness." 43

After a close look at the charges raised above in the light of the documents available and on the basis of existing reality at that time, it is difficult to conclude that K.M. Panikkar had misled his Prime Minister. His advises to Nehru were based on pragmatism and in such a situation that was the only approach India could take vis-a-vis China.

Panikkar has been accused of advising Nehru to switch over sides when civil war was waging in China. If by April 1949 Panikkar had asked Nehru to switch over sides it only proves Panikkar's capacity to judge the future course of political events in China based on deep knowledge of the developments in China, as also on his ability to assess on the spot the fluctuating political and social forces in China. In other words Panikkar was able to monitor the course of the civil war. When K.P.S Menon was appointed as the first Ambassador to China in 1947 Nehru gave him guidelines with specific remarks about China. In China, Nehru said,

the situation is difficult because of the civil war that is going on. I have

42. Ibid
43. S. Gopal, n. 10, p.181
been on very friendly terms with Chiang Kai-shek and we hold each other in esteem. I have been also friendly with some of the prominent communist leaders of North West though I have not met them. It would appear even from the American reports that neither party in the Chinese dispute is free from blame. If American statesmen say so in spite of their violent dislike to everything communistic then it seems clear that the Chinese communists have no bad case. Our Ambassador in China while maintaining close and friendly relations with Chiang-Kai-shek's government should not allow himself to be a partisan in the civil conflict. Nor should we say anything disparaging to either side. Some words I have used or written have been exploited by the Chinese government as against the North West communist government. I have regretted this. If our Ambassador in China has any opportunity, without causing ill-will to the Chinese government, to visit the North West areas he should seize it and explain to the leaders there our general policy of friendship and non-interference."

If this was the advice of Nehru to K.P.S Menon in 1947, in 1948 to Sardar K.M. Panikkar it would definitely not have been different.

It has been stated by the critics of Panikkar that it was on his advice that Nehru hurriedly extended the recognition to People’s Republic of China without prior conditions like seeking recognition of Tibetan independence from the Chinese before its recognition by India. The Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China was proclaimed in Peking on 1st October 1949 of which Mao Tse Tung was the Chairman and Chou En-lai was the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Chou En-lai immediately after the proclamation of People’s Republic of China, summoned foreign representative in Peking and handed to them a communication inviting the establishment of diplomatic relations. Nehru’s reply which arrived two days later, was couched in very friendly terms indicating that there would be an early recognition. Panikkar did not advise in favour immediate recognition of the new regime as Kuomintang was still in occupation not only of Canton but of vast areas in southeast including Szechuan, Yunnan and Sinkiang and the civil war was unlikely to end on the

44. K.P.S. Menon, Many Worlds (Bombay, 1971), p. 230
45. K.M. Panikkar, n. 7, p. 61
mainland for another two or three months. 46 The Government was definitely concerned about the question of recognition of People's Republic of China at that time, but according to Indian Ambassador in Peking:

While there was no difference of opinion as to the necessity of recognizing the new China, there was a difference among the leaders about its timing. The conservative members of the Congress leadership including C. Rajagopalachari, who was then Governor-General and Sardar Vallabhai Patel - Deputy Prime Minister - wanted to go slow on the matter. They were supported in this attitude by a powerful section of the civil service including I suspect some of the senior officials of the Foreign Office. My own view, to which I gave free expression, was that we should recognize the new regime when Kuomintang authority on the mainland China ceased to exist. 47

The difference of opinion between Patel and Nehru on the matter is evident from the correspondence between them on 6th December 1949. Patel in his letter wrote:

It seems your intention is to recognize China soon after the UN session ends, even if it means that others are not ready by then or are not prepared to do so. My own feeling is that we do not stand to gain anything substantial by giving a lead in the matter and that while recognition must come sooner or later, if we are in the company of others, it would be worthwhile delaying a bit. After all as members of the UNO, if we all act in mutual consent it is better to do so than to act alone or even with one or two other powers.

Patel further observes,

I have seen the Canadian reply to your message. They would also like to wait until the Colombo consultations are over. I feel myself that if we can do so without sacrificing any essential principle or point of our foreign policy we might as well do. In case however, you feel that we must recognize China earlier than others, I feel that we might have a discussion in the cabinet. 48

46. Ibid
47. Ibid
48. D. Das. n. 37, Vol-8, pp. 86 - 88
Nehru responded to Patel by stating:

The UN session ends within a week. There was no intention of recognizing the new regime in China immediately after session. But roughly the date given by us to the Commonwealth governments has been by Christmas time. In this matter UK Government is anxious to recognize China early and even before some of the Commonwealth countries. During all our discussion in London and elsewhere it was recognized by others that it might be desirable for India to accord recognition earlier than some of the others, but in consultation with them. Our advisers are of the opinion that it would definitely be harmful to recognize them after the Commonwealth countries have done so. It would mean that we have no policy of our own, but follow the dictates of other countries. If you like I shall put it up before the cabinet. But the date depends on so many factors that it will have to be left open. Most members of the cabinet have hardly followed these intricate conversations and consultations. But if you are interested I shall of course, consult you before taking action. 49

The reason for the delay in recognizing People's Republic of China has been explained by Krishna Menon, who was also close to Nehru in Foreign Affairs. He too states that India wanted Britain to recognize first because they told us that they would do so. Moreover India thought as a Commonwealth country with particular relations with UK and ruled by Labour government, India should be patient and act jointly. Ultimately Britain dragged its feet and India recognized China on 30th December 1949. Krishna Menon was also very clear that Panikkar did not play any role leading to the decision to recognize. 50

Thus recognition of People's Republic of China by India was done with full backing of the public opinion 51 and this act on the part of Nehru was an act of political maturity and not to do so would be going against the stubborn reality. (People's Republic of China was proclaimed on 1st October 1949 and on 2nd October 1949 USSR recognized it followed by communist states of

49. Ibid
51. N. Jetley, India China Relations, 1947 - 1977 (Delhi, 1979), p. 9
Europe and by the time India recognized it was more than three months.

Panikkar was held responsible for declaring India's stand accepting Chinese sovereignty over Tibet in October 1950 when Chinese army was moving into Tibet. The Secretary General of Ministry of External Affairs late Sir G.S. Bajpai even suspected Panikker to be a "Pro-communist" 52 But the fact is that the note sent by Ministry of External Affairs had out-of-cryptographic error used the word 'sovereignty' instead of 'suzerainty' regarding the status of Tibet. 53 The moment the error was noticed another note was sent to Indian Embassy in Peking asking Panikkar to correct the error. But Panikkar refused to amend the word and he wrote to Nehru why it should not be amended and Nehru was convinced by Panikkar's observations, on the matter. 54 The non-correction of Indian stand on China's suzerainty over Tibet instead of sovereignty led to sharp reaction in the Parliament on 7th December 1950. Nehru clarified the position in the following words, "that I used the word suzerainty not sovereignty. There is a slight difference though not much." 55 In the same speech he also justified it as a "historical fact" and felt that a country like India cannot talk about "sovereignty or suzerainty over an area outside its own immediate range." 56 Panikkar did not amend the word fearing that it would be detrimental to India's prestige and in the changed circumstances India would not gain by insisting on the difference. 57 In the words of Panikkar: "It would have been ridiculous." 58

52. T.N. Kaul, Diplomacy in Peace and War (Delhi, 1979), p. 28
53. S. Gopal, n. 10, p. 105
54. T.N. Kaul n. 52, p. 44
55. J. Nehru, n. 2, p. 302
56. Ibid, p. 303
57. T.N. Kaul, n. 52, p. 44
58. Ibid
The situation was also not conducive as the Chinese were knocking at the gates of Tibet and the press in India under the influence of western news agencies was talking about the Tibetan invasion. Under such circumstances the correction of the word 'sovereignty' on subtle legalistic grounds to 'suzerainty' would have heightened the tension between India and China when India was not prepared for it. 59 Panikkar himself clarifies the position on Tibet thus:

The only area where our interests overlapped was in Tibet and knowing the importance that every Chinese Government, including Kuomintang Government had stressed to the exclusive Chinese territory over the area, and even before I had started for Peking come to the conclusion that the British policy (which we were supposed to have inherited) of looking upon Tibet as an area in which we had special political interest could not be maintained. The Prime Minister had also in general agreed with this view. 60

The fact that Indian Prime-Minister attached too much of importance to Panikkar’s views is not surprising because, “Nehru encouraged independence of judgement”, which Panikkar had. 61 According to Nehru’s last foreign secretary Gundevia, “Nehru wanted strong and convincing arguments on his policies from his advisors”. 62 Nehru’s emphatic statement in Parliament on 7th December was that India did not have any political interest in Tibet and on the basis this stand Panikkar’s advice to Nehru not to replace the word sovereignty with suzerainty seems not to be inimical to Indian interest. 63

Linked to the controversy of suzerainty versus sovereignty was the question of independence of Tibet. It is generally believed that Panikkar was instrumental in removing this buffer zone between India and China mainly but this

59. Ibid, p. 45
60. K.M. Panikkar, n. 7, p. 102
61. A.P. Saxena, Nehru and Public Administration (Delhi, 1990), p. 140
62. Y.D. Gundevia, Outside the Archives (Hyderbad, 1984), p. 200
63. J. Nehru, n. 2, p. 302
accusation cannot be sustained because Nehru had told the Parliament on 7th December 1950 that it can only be a desire to have a buffer state. On the same issue Panikkar has been accused of preventing Nehru from giving asylum to Dalai Lama in November 1950, but the facts are contrary to these allegations.

Regarding the independence of Tibet, though Nehru had said it was a mere desire India did think in terms of a military option and the then Foreign Secretary K.P.S Menon in the early 1950s convened a meeting of Intelligence Bureau Chief, Ambassador to China and the Chief of the Army Staff to discuss this option. But the Army Chief General Cariappa ruled out such an option on grounds of paucity of men as well as Indian Army’s inability to fight the Chinese on high attitudes with their better equipment. In this meeting also Panikkar had strongly objected to any military action by India owing to its futility. The decision not to interfere with Tibet’s position was taken by Nehru even before India became independent. On 8th April 1947 the Government of India under Lord Mountbatten with Nehru as vice-chairman made the following policy decision in the matter of relationship between China and Tibet and India:

The condition in which India’s well being may be assured and full evolution be achieved of her inherent capacity to emerge as a potent but benevolent force in the world affairs, particularly in Asia, demand not merely the development of internal unity and strength but also the maintenance of friendly relations with her neighbours. To prejudice her relations with so important a neighbour as China with aggressive support of unqualified Tibetan independence is therefore a policy of few attractions. It follows that while the Government of India are glad to recognize and wish to see the Tibetan autonomy maintained they are not prepared to do more than encourage this in a friendly manner. We are certainly not disposed to take any initiative which might bring India into conflict with China on this issue. The attitude which India proposed to adopt may best be described

64. Ibid, p. 303
65. B.N. Mullick, n. 34, pp. 80 - 81
66. Ibid
as that of benevolent spectator ready at all times should the opportunity occur to use the good offices to further a mutually satisfactory settlement between China and Tibet. It should be added recollecting in particular the participation of Tibetan goodwill mission in the recent session of the Chinese National Assembly, that the Government of India would not for a moment consider objection to or interfere with any arrangement that Tibet might come to directly with China. 67

Thus Panikkar’s stand on Tibet’s status was correct and he was advocating a policy which was not to clash with India’s interest. This attitude was once again confirmed by Nehru in an address to the Parliament on 30th March 1959 when he said:

Our attitude and the position of all previous Governments in India and elsewhere had historically been the recognition of some kind of suzerainty or sovereignty of China over Tibet and the Tibetan autonomy. The measure of the autonomy has varied depending upon the relative strength and weakness of China and Tibet which have varied in the last hundred years.68

The supporters of Tibetan independence cite the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi held in March - April 1947 to prove their point when the Tibetan delegates attended the conference as an independent delegation under its own flag and were no way connected with the Chinese representative. 69 M.R. Masani too states that at the Asian Relations Conference Tibet was represented independently and at that time Nehru and his advisers did not have any doubt about Tibet “being a sovereign independent state.” 70 The fact is that the Chinese at that time also had protested to Nehru following which the map of Asia showing Tibet outside China was withdrawn. 71 The map was not only

68. J. Nehru, n. 2, pp. 313 - 17
69. Richardson, n. 24, p. 168
70. M.R. Masani, n. 9, pp. 44 - 45
71. Richardson, n. 24, p. 168
withdrawn but according to its organizer Professor Appadorai, the Secretary General of Indian Council of World Affairs, "It needed all the persuasive power of K.P.S Menon, who was then India's Agent General in China to convince the Chinese that no political conclusions could be drawn from the fact that a cultural organization like the Indian Council of World Affairs had sent a separate invitation to Tibet and to secure their participation in the conference. It was also agreed to use different term like representatives instead of delegates to describe persons from Tibet attending the conference." 72 The membership of Asian Relations Conference was thus not an indication of being a sovereign state. There were many delegates who were politically non-sovereign like the Central Asian Republics of Soviet Union Jews of Palestine and the Arab League observers.

Further another striking evidence of Tibetan independence was given in July 1949 when the Tibetan Government asked the whole of the Chinese official mission at Lhasa and some Chinese traders to leave Tibet 73. The Tibetan action was in July 1949 at a time when China was in the grip of civil war and as stated in the previous chapter the Tibetan position with China is always relative that is if China is weak Tibet asserts otherwise if China is strong Tibet is helpless. Even on 18th November 1949 the Chinese Ambassador to India of the Nationalist Government delivered a note to Ministry of External Affairs repudiating the Simla Convention of 1914 which is regarded as one of the strong basis for Tibetan independence. 74 Prior to this note the Kuomintang Government had sent four notes to the British embassy in China repudiating Simla convention of 1914 and the facts related to the boundary. 75

72. Appadorai, Contemporary India (Delhi, 1988), p. 235
73. Richardson, n. 24, p. 170
74. K. Gupta, Spotlight on Sino-Indian Relations (Calcutta, 1981), p. 40
75. Ibid
In the year 1910-12 period when Dalai Lama lived in India under the benevolence of British raj, he was not allowed to dabble in politics. But he still tried to involve the British in support of his cause against the Chinese. When he found there was no favourable response from the British, he made a secret approach to Tsar. And much to his embarrassment the Tsar answered his secret letter through the British Government. Thus whenever Dalai Lama has stayed in India he has tried anti-China manoeuvres. Panikkar sensing the danger involved in giving asylum to Dalai Lama at that stage advised Nehru against asylum to the Dalai Lama, because Dalai Lama’s stay at that moment could have poisoned the Sino-Indian relations which were then at a very nebulous stage and the prospects of peace in which India was interested would have got destroyed. Here it is important to note that in the subsequent years especially since 1959 the asylum given to Dalai Lama contributed to the worsening of Sino-Indian relations because Tibet was used as an instrument in the cold war with the support of vested interests so that Tibetan cause could be used for needling the communist regime in China. The BBC correspondent Chris Mullen in an article in Far Eastern Economic Review had given a thorough exposure of the continuing anti-China activities of the Tibetan rebels on the soil of India. They were indulging in China baiting apparently with complete impunity.

India’s Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel and the first Secretary general both had warned Nehru that not raising the frontier issue with the Chinese was going to be very harmful in the long run especially after the invasion of Tibet as “they can disown all the stipulations which Tibet had entered into with us in the past.” Bajpai wanted India to take advantage of the good relations with China in the beginning of 1950s and politically also India was in a good

76. Richardson, n. 24, pp. 177 - 79
position to put pressure on China to exchange the issue of frontier recognition with Tibet's recognition to our advantage. Nehru on the other hand went by Panikkar's advice that India should not take up the border question and accepted Panikkar's other advice on the matter, that is, to declare publicly that McMahon line is our boundary. Therefore on 20th November 1950 Nehru declared in Parliament that: "Our maps show that the McMahon line is our boundary. Map or no map. The fact remains that we stand by that boundary and we will not allow anybody to come across that boundary." This statement on the part of Nehru to a great extent was also due to Sardar Patel's letter dated 7th November 1950 in which Patel had stated that Chinese ambitions covered not only the Himalayan slopes on our side but Assam also. To assure the public further Nehru made the bold statement on 7th December 1950 in Parliament that China should be in no doubt that India would defend the Himalayan borders, "whether India had the necessary military resources or not, I would fight aggression whether it came from the mountain or the sea." On 6th December 1950 also he told the Parliament that the Himalayas formed India's traditional boundary in the north. This statement Nehru had already made in Parliament on 17th March 1950.

Nehru, though he indulged in rhetoric was against any kind of alienation with the Chinese because that would put India entirely on the wrong side of relationship with China. Nehru also knew that if India had insisted on giving up extra territorial rights in Tibet only in exchange for ratification of the McMahon line and Simla Convention it would have ended in disaster because in any case

79. S. Gopal, n. 10, p. 177
81. D.Das, n. 37, pp. 345 - 47
82. Hindustan Times, 8th December 1950
83. J. Nehru, n. 2, pp. 302 - 3
China would not have agreed to India’s continuance in Tibet and there was no way by which India could enforce them. The alternative to it was the use of force which India was not capable of.  

The deliberate silence by India on the frontier issue in the early 1950 becomes clear by Nehru’s statement in Rajya Sabha on 9th December 1959 and why it was not raised during the signing of 1954 treaty in April. Nehru’s biographer accuses Panikkar of deliberately skipping this aspect during his meeting with Chou En-lai in February 1952 “ignoring instructions of his Ministry and Prime Minister.” He further says that “Chinese had secured all they wanted and had given away little ..... But the chance of securing a clear and explicit recognition of India’s frontier at a time when India had something to offer in return had been lost.” This he says was due to an Ambassador, “who rationalized a shirking of unpleasantness” Nehru’s statement on 9th December 1959 in Rajya Sabha stated something contrary to these accusations as it states:

Right from 1950 or at any rate from 1951 when Chinese forces came into Tibet we had this problem before us ...... of two powerful states coming face with each other on a tremendous border. In those early years of the Chinese Republic Panikkar was our Ambassador there and I read through his notes on the subject and our notes to him and our decisions. From the very first day and all the time this problem came before us about our frontier ...... The question was whether we should raise it in an acute form at that stage. We decided not to, and still we do not see how we could have decided that otherwise ...... with all the material that was before us at the time we decided that we must make clear in every possible way that our frontier was in our opinion, clear in our maps, clear in our statements clear to China and to our own people of course, and hold by it stick by it. Why should we go about asking China to raise this question when we felt sure about it? Why invite discussion about a thing on which we had doubt .... we had declared it in Parliament and we declared it before the

84. B.N. Mullick, n. 10, p. 178
85. S. Gopal, n. 10, p. 178
86. Ibid, pp. 186 - 87
87. Ibid
Chinese Government and all that. 88

The Chinese Government did not challenge these statements or Indian maps thereby convincing India that in the absence of any reaction to India’s well known position it was acquiescence by China if not acceptance. Mao remarked to Panikkar’s successor that these two Asian countries should not have to fear from each other and China did not feel any kind of threat from her south west frontier. 89 It is not that the Government of India did not think of the possibility of linking the boundary issue with 1954 agreement but it was fully realized by the Government that quid pro quo was not possible. The Chinese were in Tibet and if India did not recognize it, would not have affected them. 90 Nehru had realized that a friendly neighbour was the best way to safeguard one’s frontier. Nehru and Panikkar had a better understanding of the situation because they were conscious of the fact that India would not be able to change them or frighten them by stressing on such conditions for a treaty. As in the later years it became very clear that any pre-condition would not have worked out and it would have led to breakdown of negotiations as happened in the 1960’s. Hence Nehru’s and Panikkar’s thinking was very pragmatic and if they had done otherwise as Nehru pointed out, ”the result would have been that they would have achieved their dominance over Tibet and the only thing is that we would have quarrelled with them we would have come to a breaking point with them and the trouble on the frontier would have come immediately not now but years back we would have to face it.” 91

Panikkar’s advice helped Nehru from the sheer imprudence of raising the question of the legality of McMahon line or the sacrosanct nature of Tibet’s

88. J. Nehru, n. 2, pp. 371 - 78
89. S. Gopal, n. 10, p. 179
90. J. Nehru, n. 2, pp. 371 - 88
91. Ibid
autonomy. Ultimatums would not have fitted into the facts of Asian life then. Moreover Panikkar was conscious of the fact that neither India nor China trusted each other. 92 He also further states that immediately after Chinese occupation he had advised Nehru to extend the area of administration to the McMahon line so that the area between Himalayan crest line and the foothills of Assam could be brought under effective jurisdiction of the Government of India before border talks were initiated with China. 93 The subsequent years prove that this advice turned out to be fruitful as far as the McMahon line was concerned.

The unsigned article of 2nd December 1963 in the Hindustan Times under the title of “Panikkar’s Role as Envoy in Peking” states that “G.S. Bajpai, the Secretary General of Ministry of External Affairs was of the opinion that the question of China’s sovereignty over Tibet could not be treated as an isolated subject and that number of other connected issues, also covered by several treaties and conventions culminating in the Simla convention of 1914 would also be required to be considered”. But the letter sent by the Ministry of External Affairs officials to China on 31st October 1950 is silent over the question that the Chinese sovereignty over Tibet is related or linked to several treaties and conventions culminating in the Simla convention. The fact is that the Chiang Kai-shek Government questioned the stipulations of the Simla convention of 1914 in respect of Indo - Tibetan frontier as well as Anglo - Tibetan trade regulation in several communications sent in 1947. 94 This could be the reason why Ministry of External Affairs officials refrained from making any specific reference to Simla conference and tried to justify the extra —territorial rights on the grounds of “usage and agreements”. Another instance of lack of

93. Ibid
94. K. Gupta n. 74, p. 40
clarity on the Indo-Tibetan trade agreement during the British time is evident in Aitchison's Treaties. For example the narrative relating to the Tibetan trade.

On page 19 of Aitchison's Treaties volume XIV (first printed in 1929 and reprinted in 1939) the original draft about the Tibetan trade agreement states: "The (1908) Regulations were subject to revision after 10 years; but though certain modifications were made as a result of the abortive Tripartite convention of 1914, they still remain the basis of Indo-Tibetan trade arrangements." But the same Aitchison's Treaties volume XIV on page 21 states: "A new set of trade regulations between Great Britain and Tibet was concluded under this (1914) Convention to replace the earlier regulations of 1893 and 1908". The detailed text of Anglo-Tibetan Trade Regulations were printed on pages 39-41 of Aitchison's Treaties volume XIV ignoring the statement made earlier in the narrative about the abortive nature of the convention of 1914. Thus the contradiction in the Aitchison's Treaty itself points out to the confusion it could create in the minds of Ministry of External Affairs officials. Sardar K.M. Panikkar probably could have been aware of this fact which may be the reason why he had advised Nehru to extend the administration and post the Army units to the McMahon line.

Moreover if India had sought the ratification of Simla convention of 1914 in exchange for abandoning of India's rights and privileges in Tibet, the Chinese would have rejected it outrightly for the simple reason that by ratifying the Simla convention China would have accepted the independence of Tibet and its right to enter into treaties, which would have been a negation of its claim over Tibet. It was this realization which made later on Nehru to admit on 9th December 1959 in Parliament while explaining the stand on India's policy with

95. K. Gupta, n. 67, p. 99
96. Ibid, pp. 99 - 101
China that the "quid pro quo" approach was of no use in getting the frontier recognized by China on the basis of 1914 convention held at Simla.

The critics of China policy fail to realize that any pre-condition would have been no use because Chou En-lai had told Panikkar on 24th September 1951 that he was "anxious to safeguard the commercial and cultural interests of India in Tibet" and the "stabilization of Tibetan frontier" was to be discussed and finalized by India, China and Nepal". Arguments could be based on high moral principles but these cannot and will not influence foreign policy matters, a fact which critics of India’s China policy failed to realize or understand. In this regard it should be accepted that the 1954 agreement between India and China was possible because India was willing to give up all that it inherited from the British and Nehru was against retaining all that stood for imperialism and he was fully conscious of the fact that preconditions would ruin the negotiation and in the subsequent years it was the pre-condition of asking China to vacate Aksai Chin which took the crisis to a point of no return. The India’s actual position on Tibet has been aptly stated by Krishna Menon: “India’s position in Tibet was rather peculiar. She was the only country represented at the Tibetan capital. But Indian representative was there in an undefined capacity and was more or less successor of the original British representative who strayed into Tibet and stayed there”.

But in India a strong group of officials, politicians and members of press were advocating that India continue the British imperial position on China and Tibet. The protagonists of Tibetan independence had the support of the west and USA which was equally particular about the independence of Tibet not in the interest of India but mainly to needle the communist Government in China

97. S. Gopal, n. 10, p. 177
98. The Hindu, 17th August 1950
and to check the combined power of communist movement of Sino-Soviet alliance. The Chinese were equally determined to consolidate their strength in Tibet to protect the infant Communist Government in China.

Panikkar being a keen observer of world politics advised Nehru against taking any adventurous step on the basis of the advice of pro-western officials in the Ministry of External Affairs. The publication of a few studies have proved how correct Panikkar was in his assessment. These studies (a) The Politics of Lying (1973) by Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks. (b) CIA and the Cult of Intelligence (1974) by Fletcher Prouty. (c) The Secret Team (1979) prove very convincingly how the western countries were keen on using Tibet to destabilize the Chinese communist government. But Panikkar's advice to Nehru on the matter invited the suspicion of then Secretary General of Ministry of External Affairs Sir G.S. Bajpai and the Secretary General sent T.N. Kaul (ICS) to China with the instruction, "to keep an eye on our ambassador Sardar K.M. Panikkar - who is inclined to take too much pro Chinese views" 99 T.N. Kaul on the other hand justifies Panikkar's stand and links the situation in Tibet to the situation India faced in Kashmir and Goa at least in principle that is "the right of a sovereign country to safeguard its sovereignty over all its parts and to ensure its territorial integrity." 100 The western powers especially America and UK wanted to create an uneasy atmosphere on the issue of Tibet. A concerted attempt was made by these countries out of their communist phobia, to create an impression among Indian public that it is in Indian interest to prevent the military occupation of Tibet. The commandant General of Defence Services Staff College in Wellington (Tamil Nadu) W.D.A Lentaigne condemned Indian leaders for their lack of foresight and inaction, in view of Chinese action in Tibet and the fact that Himalayas had become the boundary with a large

99. T.N. Kaul, n. 52, p. 28
100. Ibid
powerful and expansionist China. The attitude of the west is best defined by Walter Cronkite, in his study on Nehru:

The behaviour of the press, not only in India but especially in US, UK and other Western countries during the various Sino-Indian conflicts...... was an eye opener even to the diplomats familiar with the unreliability of much and unscrupulousness of some newspapers reporting.... The reporting in certain mass circulation newspapers in the USA and UK was worse than inaccurate it was often grossly fabricated...... The reporting by some diplomatic missions was not much better .... Too many of these reports copied untruthful newspapers or sent back to their Government what they knew their Governments would like to believe.

The attitude of the English press is reflected in an article in The Economist, dated 10th December, 1949, where it is argued that it was up to India to take the initiative in the matter of Tibet and if India decides to support the independence of Tibet as a buffer state between itself and China, Britain and USA would do well to extend the formal recognition to it. Nehru was conscious of this fact and his letter to Sardar Patel on 18th November 1950 states that: “It is interesting to note that UK and USA appears to be anxious to add to the unfriendliness of India and China towards each other. It is also interesting to find that USSR does not view with favour any friendship between India and China towards each other.” It was this understanding of USA, UK and USSR by Nehru which would have convinced him of Panikkar's views on the matter. Nehru was not all that naive to overlook some of the facts of reality just because Panikkar advised him so. The Americans and the other Western countries wanted India to pull “Tibetan chest nuts out of Chinese fire” and they would watch the fun from a distance. The western powers wanted to prevent India and China from coming close as friendly India and China would keep

101. J.P. Dalvi, n. 28, p. 15
102. Cited from K. Gupta, n. 74, pp. 37 - 38
103. D. Das, n. 37, pp. 342 - 47
104. T.N. Kaul, n. 52, p. 141
the cold war out of Asia and the absence of cold war in Asia would have been detrimental to their interest in world politics. The US consulate in Calcutta was used by the C.I.A to drive a wedge between India and China by making all kinds of promises to the Tibetan emissaries and the Kuomintang dropped leaflets and even arms and radio transmitters to their agents in Tibet. 105 Such actions from India naturally aroused suspicion in the minds of already suspicious Peking government though Indian government had no role in it. Panikkar was aware of this suspicion and states: “During that time India and China were on fairly good terms but it would not be correct to say that they trusted each other completely. It would be truer to say that each was vigilantly observing, the other. Although Mao, Chou and others were cordial to me ...... I could feel their distrust of our foreign policy. We too had our suspicions about their policy. In diplomacy this is not unusual .... However in our relations with China we had to be even more than unusually circumspect.” 106 The Chinese suspicion of India could have been due to the notes sent by India during and on the eve of Tibetan “liberation” to the Chinese, which had expressed undue concern in matters of Tibet especially after India had recognized China’s “Sovereignty” over Tibet. It was in this background Panikkar decided not to correct the error of using the word “Sovereignty” by the Indian Government due to an “oversight”. In the words of T.N. Kaul: “I have no doubt in my mind that Panikkar was right on moral, political and strategic consideration and in the short and long term interests of India. We had a hostile neighbour in Pakistan backed by the USA and the west especially on Kashmir question. The Soviet Unions relation with India were still in the process of formulation and had not yet become friendly.” 107

105. Ibid, pp. 44 - 45
106. K.M. Panikkar, n. 92, pp: 240 - 41
107. T.N. Kaul, n. 52, pp. 44 - 45
The Chinese strongly suspected that Tibet could be used by the Americans for sabotaging or destabilizing the nascent Communist Government in China. This suspicion was not without basis as a protagonist of Tibetan independence has stated: "There was certain amount of justification for suspicions regarding the American intentions vis-a-vis Tibet... There was Lovell Thomas's (American radio operator) much publicized visit in 1949. The following year a copy of booklet on Top Secret military briefing for American troops on Tibet was circulating in certain quarters in Kalimpong and its existence was undoubtedly known to the Chinese agents there. Finally the escape of Dalai Lama's brother Takster Rimpoche or Tubten Norby, to America in July 1951, was clearly a major factor in the alteration of China's policy in Tibet... with Takster Rimpoche in America, the possibility of American intervention may well have seemed imminent and when Dalai Lama was hastily installed in power in 1950 by the Tibetan Government, the Chinese must have decided that long-term peaceful measures were no longer practicable. It was necessarily to make preparations to forestall action by Tibetan exiles in India and bring Tibet quickly under complete Chinese control." 108 The anti-China activities of the Tibetan rebels in India was a dominant feature and it had the support of few pro-western Indian politicians. Thus the Tibetan rebels were indulging in China baiting with impunity. The west, especially America, was trying to trap India by alienating her from China so that pressure on account of this would make her succumb to the pressures of west on compromising in the Kashmir issue with Pakistan. The Anglo-American designs on the matter were clear in 1962 when Duncan Sandys and Dean Rusk came to India to assess India’s arms requirements against the Chinese attack. The Sandys-Rusk team tried to pressurize India to make concessions to Pakistan on Kashmir. 109 Therefore Nehru’s acceptance of Panikkar’s advise on the Sino-Indian relations vis-a-vis Tibet was the best

108 G. Patterson n. 17, p. 156
109 T.N. Kaul, n. 52, p. 117
policy which India could have adopted at that time. Nehru’s policy on China was on the right track and Panikkar did not push “Nehru into it” as generally assumed by the critics of India’s China Policy.

The divergence of opinion between Sardar K.M. Panikkar and some of the Ministry of External Affairs senior officials including the Secretary General G.S. Bajpai appears to be due to their different background. The senior officials of Ministry of External Affairs like Bajpai were products of British colonial administration, and would have thought and advised more or less on pro-western model. K.M. Panikkar on the other hand became one of the key advisors of Nehru because of his “glittering intellect” and he had caught the attention of Nehru way back in 1924. The Secretary General and other key officials of Ministry of External Affairs including Sri K.P.S. Menon would have been upset by the fact that Nehru as early as 1949 had said that he had confidence in, “only three of his diplomats, namely Krishna Menon, K.M. Panikkar and Dr. Radhakrishnan.” Nehru’s confidence in Panikkar was because he was a rare blend of scholar and man of affairs “and used his profound knowledge of history to the service of contemporary events.” Hence some of the Western Scholars have described Sardar K.M. Panikkar as a “keyman in world affairs, and “the ablest diplomat in the world.” Escort Reid on the other hand says that Panikkar” was an evil genius.” The critics of Panikkar have been harsh on him but Alan Campbell Johnson, Mountbatten’s press attache, has made the following observation which aptly proves why the allegations against Panikkar by his critics both in India and foreign are ill conceived. He said:

110. Ibid, 45
He is an historian, politician and journalist, a man of prodigious learning and profound judgement and no mean practitioner in the dying art of conversation ..... The more I see of Panikkar the more impressed I am by his intellectual power and political shrewdness. He is the rare blend of scholar and a man of affairs who can bring his profound knowledge of history to the service of contemporary events. He is one of above half-a-dozen men who may well have great influence in the shaping of Indian policy at home and abroad... He had his enemies and there are some who assert that he is ambitious and untrustworthy, but I suspect he suffers from the jealousy of those who resent being confronted with a superior intellect. It is the occupational risk of every clever man to be regarded as dangerous by their less gifted brethren. 114

The foundation for cordiality between two great powers of Asia was laid by Sardar K.M. Panikkar and if India was able to enhance its prestige as a mediator in world affairs it was because Panikkar cultivated the Chinese confidence in India by his genuine non-alignment-based advice to Nehru. But for these positions by India in its relations with China, Nehru would not have played the role of an "honest peace broker." Nehru's biographer says: "By the end of 1950 Nehru had become a world figure whose stature had little relation to his country's strength." 115 This would not have been possible if India had strained her relations with Chinese on the issue of Tibet, though Tibet did cast a dark shadow on India China relationship for a brief period before Panikkar restored the friendly relations. 116

The China policy considerations on realistic terms is defined by one of Panikkar's detractors and India's first Foreign Secretary K.P.S Menon who had accused Panikkar of "going to the other side." He says:

In 1950 Chinese troops invaded Tibet and critics of Government of India denounced its alleged inaction on that occasion. They even say that India gave away Tibet to China as if Tibet had been India's to be given away. The fact is that Tibet never enjoyed an independent status in international

114. A. Johnson Campbell, Mission with Mountbatten (Bombay, 1951), p. 80
115. S. Gopal, n. 10, p. 111
eyes. Even Great Britain which came nearest to the recognition of Tibet’s independence recognized it subject to Chinese sovereignty and USA always regarded Tibet as an integrated part of China until the Tibetan question became a convenient tool in the cold war.  

The thrust of India’s foreign policy in the immediate years after independence, with the nascent nation facing all kinds of problems was aptly described by Nehru’s sister Vijayalakshmi Pundit in an interview to an American newspaper - New York Herald Tribune on 1st January 1951 justifying Panikkar’s role in preventing war with China which was a greater threat to Indian than Communism in Asia.  

In the subsequent years if our relationship with China got deteriorated it was not due to the policies advised by Panikkar and adopted by Nehru but by certain attitudes which both China and India had taken on the frontier later and the 1959 revolt in Tibet coupled with the stay of Dalai Lama in India. To say that Sardar K.M. Panikkar misled Nehru on India’s China policy would be a misnomer because one of the Foreign Secretaries of Nehru in late 1950 and beginning of 1960 Subimal Dutt had denied these kind of allegations that he was relying too much on his senior advisers — a matter on which critics in his own party often complained. According to S.Dutt, “they (the critics) tended to attribute the responsibility for those policies which they disliked to his official advisers. Their suspicion was entirely groundless. Nehru would be the last man to accept dictation from anybody, and to surrender his judgement.” Therefore, Nehru had no hesitation in pointing out the wrongs, committed by his officials and if they still persisted in wrong doing he had no hesitation in removing them and tried other people in their place.  This truly explains

117. K.P.S. Menon, Twilight In China (Bombay, 1972), p. 258
118. K. Gupta n. 111, p. 58
120. S. Gopal, Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol. 6, (Delhi, 1972), p. 6
Nehru's views of the role of his office including his colleagues in the Government. Therefore if Nehru had judged that Panikkar was misleading him he would have definitely recalled him. Nehru had no reservation regarding Panikkar's style of functioning Panikkar too was only going by the existing reality and Nehru never gave him categorical orders on the matters related to China.

**Resume**

The above discussion clearly negates the statement that seeds for the bedevilment of India China relations were truly sown by the Ambassador Sardar K.M. Panikkar. The establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949 under the leadership of Mao caused a geopolitical shift in the world balance of power. The non-recognition of Communist China by USA and other western countries and refusal of USA to allow China to occupy her seat in the United Nation as a permanent member of the Security Council aggravated the cold war tension in Asia thereby threatening the peace and stability in the continent. It was in this situation that Sardar K.M. Panikkar advised Nehru to pursue a constructive policy with China so that a good beginning could be made on note of cordiality. It was this cordial relationship with China which enabled India, in a very short time, within achieving her independence to come to the forefront as spokesman of hundreds of millions of Asian people constituting half the world's population. In the subsequent years if this relationship was broken it was not due to the cordiality of early years but due to reasons explained in the subsequent chapters. Panikkar was able to read the existing situation to the best of India's interest especially in the context of nasty brickerings created by western oriented officials in the External Affairs Ministry as well as by misguided patriotism with his intellectual power political shrewdness and profound knowledge of history. Panikkar contributed to the service of contemporary events, which only a scholar and man of affairs could do.