

November 14, 1954

**Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Note on Visit to China and
Indo-China'**

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Summary:

Nehru gives a detailed report on his visit to China and Indo-China. He first gives a summary of the issues and topics he covered in discussions in China with Zhou En-Lai and Mao, which covered a broad range of subjects including China's Five Year Plan, and various foreign policy issues. Nehru then describes his visit to Indochina, where he speaks with Ho Chi Minh (five days after he takes control of Hanoi) in North Vietnam, and also tours South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

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NOTE ON VISIT TO CHINA AND INDO-CHINA.

During my visit to China, I had a number of talks with the Chinese leaders. I had long talks with Premier Chou En-lai separately. I also had joint talks with Chairman Mao Tse-tung and his principal colleagues, viz., Vice-Chairman Chu Teh, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Peoples Congress Liu Shao-chi, Premier Chou En-lai, Vice-Chairman Soong Ching-ling (Madame Sun Yat-sen), Vice-Premier Chen Yen and the Chinese Ambassador in India. On our side in these joint talks, we had our Secretary General, N.R. Pillai, and our Ambassador in Peking, N. Raghavan. We both had interpreters with us.

2. I met separately the principal Ministers dealing with economic and financial policy and the Five Year Plan. Also Ministers dealing with land problem and flood control.

3. All these talks were through interpreters. Chairman Mao and most of his colleagues did not understand English at all. Premier Chou En-lai understood English a little and occasionally said a word or two in English, but his knowledge of English was limited. Madame Sun Yat-sen, of course, knew English well and I had a separate direct talk with her also.

4. I met large numbers of other leading personalities including the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and scientists, medical men, engineers, people connected with cultural affairs, some representatives of nationalities, educationists, actors and actresses. My talks with these groups were brief and usually took place in big receptions.

5. Our talks covered a large range of subjects. I was interested in the finances and economic implications of the Five Year Plan. I do not, however, propose to deal here with these talks regarding financial and economic matters as it was not possible for me to get a full grasp of these rather complicated subjects. I was promised a full note on these matters which I have not yet received. I might mention here that the Chinese budget for this year amounted to about: Revenue -- 4,500 million US dollars, and Expenditure -- over 5,000 million US dollars. There was thus a deficit of 700 million US dollars. I was told that during the two previous years there had been considerable surpluses and the present deficit was covered by them. The chief sources of income were the turn-over tax and profits from State undertakings. Income from land was inconsiderable. It should be remembered that China is very much a unitary and centralised State, so that the budget was for the whole of China.

6. My discussions about flood control and cultural matters were also interesting.

7. The real discussions were with Premier Chou En-lai and Chairman Mao and party. Although we talked about a large variety of subjects, I shall refer here only to some principal points that arose in the course of these discussions.

8. Chairman Mao referred to the age old association as well as to the new friendship between China and India. Both countries were struggling for peace. They had had more or less common experiences in recent history and both countries

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needed peace to reconstruct their economies as both were industrially backward. The Chairman considered that India was industrially somewhat more advanced. But both countries were in this respect backward and had large populations. Industrial development had to be achieved quickly in both. Given peace, it might take China about four Five Year Plans, i.e. 20 years or so, to become an industrial country with foundations laid for a socialist economy. China, therefore, was anxious for peace. But some countries, notably USA, were obstructing this process. USA was occupying, or helping in the occupation, not only of Formosa, but many islands very near the Chinese mainland. There was bombardment of the Chinese mainland from these islands and air-raids were frequently carried out. During the past two years, there had been air-dropping in the Chinese mainland not only of groups of men, but also of wireless transmitters and other equipment. Many of such groups had been rounded up and caught. Most of them consisted of Chinese Kuomintang agents, but there were some Americans also among them.

9. China was not a threat to any country and wished to live in peace with all other countries. But the USA did not permit her to do so and even brought pressure to bear upon England, France and other countries to prevent them from cooperating with China.

10. The question of Formosa or the other islands occupied by Formosan troops was not discussed by me. But it was made clear to me that great importance was attached by the Chinese Government to this issue of Taiwan and, even more so, to the islands of the mainland and the interference with normal coastal trade and attacks on the mainland.

11. Some reference was made to the Manila Treaty and Chairman Mao pointed out that this Treaty was the result of the American reaction to the Geneva Agreement. The American Government did not like that Agreement and wanted to come in the way of peaceful settlements.

12. Reference was also made to the five principles which had been included in the joint declarations issued by India and China and Burma and China. It was agreed that if these principles were agreed to by other countries and acted upon by all of them, this would go a long way in removing tensions and fears.

13. I agreed to this and pointed out that there was no doubt that there was a certain amount of fear in the minds of the smaller nations in Asia of China. That fear might have no basis, but the fact remained that there was that fear. Some of these countries were perhaps also afraid of India. It was essential, therefore, that this fear and suspicion should be removed. In the past both the Chinese and Indian peoples had spread out to countries in South East Asia and there were considerable populations of overseas Chinese and overseas Indians.

14. Chairman Mao agreed that these fears must be removed and nothing should be done which might cause apprehension to these countries.

15. In this connection reference was made, especially, to the Chinese overseas and to the question of their nationality.

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I was assured, what I had been told previously, that the Chinese Government wanted to settle this question in cooperation with the countries concerned. There were some difficulties in dealing with it as a whole. They proposed, therefore, to deal with it separately for each country. The Prime Minister of Burma, U Nu, would be visiting China soon and they would discuss this matter with him. Later they would discuss this with Indonesia. Their general approach was that the Chinese abroad should choose their nationality, that is, whether they would continue as Chinese nationals or become nationals of the country they lived in. There should be no dual nationality. It seemed to me that while this point was quite clear in the minds of the Chinese leaders, they had some apprehensions lest any step that they might take might be to the advantage of the Formosa Government. Hence this caution in approach and the separate approaches.

16. The Chinese leaders repeatedly assured me that they did not want war and that they were prepared to cooperate with every country and have diplomatic relations with it, even though that country was opposed to them. They mentioned, in this connection, particularly Thailand and the Philippines which, they pointed out, were completely under the influence of the USA. This itself was evidence of the Chinese desire to live at peace with other countries. These countries, I was told, accused China of thinking in terms of aggression, but did not respond to the Chinese offer to establish improved relations. China was prepared to issue joint statements on the basis of the five principles with other countries. This would rule out aggression as well as internal interference.

17. Reference was made by me especially to this internal interference through local Communist parties. I was assured that China did not wish to interfere in any way with local affairs.

18. Chairman Mao dealt at some length with the past two World Wars and their revolutionary consequences. He pointed out that China had no atom bombs or any equipment of the latest type. But the US and the USSR had both. Ultimately it was the people who would count and who would be the deciding factors. He pointed out that the experience of both the World Wars was that the countries who started the war were defeated and those who were on the defence won. Another consequence was revolutions in some countries and the freedom of some colonial countries. Thus, if unfortunately another World War took place, disastrous as it might be, it would lead to the defeat of the aggressors and possibly other revolutionary changes might take place. He was not afraid of a war if it came, but he did not want it because of its disastrous consequences to the world and because it would come in the way of developing their countries.

19. I was not fully in agreement with Chairman Mao's analysis, but I entirely agreed with him that war must be avoided and every step which might lead to war should also, therefore, be avoided.

20. My talks with Premier Chou En-lai covered larger ground. He referred also to the United States policy which came in the way of peace and created tense situations in the Far East. "Why", he asked, "was America so aggressive and what was her motive in carrying on these aggressive activities in the Far East?" I replied that I did not think that the

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American people wanted war but undoubtedly they were afraid of Communist aggression and wanted to take action to protect their interests. Premier Chou did not quite agree with me and said that America's policy was an expansionist policy. He referred to the military aid given to Pakistan which had nothing to fear from China or the Soviet Union. America, according to him, wanted to bully weaker nations and rule the world.

21. I pointed out to Premier Chou that this was exactly what some countries in the West said about Soviet Imperialism and Communism endangering the peace of Europe and the world. They said also that Communists did not want war because they thought they could get everything without war, that is, by infiltration and other tactics.

22. Premier Chou said that this was absurd. China had already made a declaration of five principles, and revolution could not be imported from outside. He referred to the Kuomintang forces on the Burmese borders and said that China would have been justified in attacking them as they were creating trouble on the Chinese side. But the Chinese Government realised the difficulties of the Government of Burma and wanted to be friendly to them. Therefore, they desisted from any activity against the Kuomintang troops there.

23. I referred to Chinese maps which still showed portions of Burma and even of India as if they were within Chinese territory. So far as India was concerned, I added, we were not much concerned about this matter because our boundaries were quite clear and were not a matter for argument. But many people took advantage of these old maps and argued that China had an aggressive intent or else why continue to use these maps. In Burma also this caused apprehension.

24. Premier Chou replied that these maps were old ones and China had not done any surveying to draw new maps. Their boundaries even with Mongolia and the Soviet Union were still not clearly demarcated and there were discrepancies. I pointed out that this might be so. So far as India was concerned, I repeated, there was no doubt about our boundaries and I was not worried about them. But I wondered how China would feel if a part of Tibet had been shown as part of India in our maps.

25. I referred also to the case of K.I. Singh, a Nepalese national, who had rebelled against his Government and who, according to reports, had been given encouragement in China. This kind of thing created apprehensions in the minds of Asian countries. Premier Chou replied that K.I. Singh crossed into Chinese territory with some other men in possession of rifles and ammunition. According to international custom, China disarmed them and gave them asylum. Nothing more was done. He referred in this connection to the intention of the Dalai Lama at one time to go to India. The Indian Ambassador had told the Chinese Government then that if the Dalai Lama came to India and sought asylum, they could not refuse this and they would treat him with courtesy but would not encourage any political activities on his part. As a matter of fact, the Dalai Lama did not go to India but some of his relatives did go there and had been given asylum. The Chinese Government did not mind this. In K.I. Singh's case, the Chinese Government had given him asylum and he would not be allowed to take part in any political activity against his country.

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26. Premier Chou asked me questions about Nepal and various other countries. He referred to his invitation to the Indonesian Prime Minister to come to China. The Indonesian Prime Minister had expressed the wish that Premier Chou should first go to Indonesia. This was not possible for some time as he was very busy with important work, more especially as he had been absent for a long time in Geneva and elsewhere. Premier Chou was particularly interested in foreign influences at work in various countries of Asia, more especially American influences. He referred especially to pressure brought upon them to join the so-called South-East Asia Defence Organisation. He referred to Thailand also and said that they were anxious to have normal relations with it.

27. Premier Chou also asked me about my visit to Indo-China and the position there.

28. Premier Chou referred to Korea. He was anxious that something should be done to settle the Korean problem. He thought that a Conference should be held soon to consider this and that the old Geneva Conference should be enlarged for this purpose by adding neutral Asian countries.

29. I said that I agreed that we must pursue methods to arrive at a settlement in Korea and a Conference for this purpose would be necessary. But such a Conference should be held at the right time when some ideas about a settlement were clearer. Merely to have a Conference without such ideas might lead again to a deadlock. Meanwhile, it was important that we should not allow the situation in Korea to deteriorate.

30. We discussed India — China relations and the exchange of technical personnel, books, periodicals etc. Also an agreement about air services. It was agreed that there should be a reciprocal arrangement for an Indian air service at a Chinese port, probably Canton. This matter was to be discussed further through diplomatic channels.

31. I referred to certain difficulties of pilgrims going to Tibet. Premier Chou agreed to look into this matter and to remove such difficulties. He also agreed to the supply of silk cocoons to Kashmir and suggested our sending an expert to select the varieties.

32. He informed me about the Chinese desire to have diplomatic relations with Nepal. I told him that the Nepalese Government had kept us informed of this. The King of Nepal had been ill and had gone to Switzerland for treatment. On his return, they would no doubt take up this matter. So far as we were concerned, we would welcome friendly relations between Nepal and China.

33. I gave him a brief outline of recent Nepalese history and how previously Nepal was far from independent, that is, before India became independent. There was no interference in internal matters, but otherwise the United Kingdom was the suzerain power. Independent India had accepted the full independence of Nepal and had not claimed some of the rights that Britain had exercised. But the two countries had agreed that their foreign policies should be coordinated. It was clear that India had a special position in Nepal and it became necessary, therefore, for their foreign policies to be in line with each other. India did not approve of foreign intervention in Nepal in any way. As for Nepal and China, it

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was desirable that they should settle such problems as existed in regard to Tibet. The question of diplomatic representation could probably be dealt with by the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi also being accredited to Kathmandu. I pointed out that Nepal was passing through grave internal difficulties and we wanted to help her to get over them and not add to these difficulties.

34. Premier Chou asked me about the Afro-Asian Conference. I told him that we had agreed on the principle of it but had not decided the details and that we were likely to meet soon at Djakarta to consider this matter. Premier Chou welcomed the idea and it was evident from his talk with me that he would like China to be invited to it.

35. I have given a brief summary of our talks. These talks both with Chairman Mao and Premier Chou were frank and friendly. We did not discuss the theories or ideology underlying our respective political and economic structures. We knew that they were different and yet there was much in common in the work of both the countries and many of our problems were similar. We entirely agreed that we should respect each other's viewpoints and without interference cooperate in dealing with our problems. More especially we should cooperate in the maintenance of peace in Asia and the world at large.

36. Essentially our problems were alike, that is vast countries and populations, chiefly agricultural with low standards of living, and the necessity to raise these standards by industrialisation and agricultural reform. Even in regard to floods, we had similar problems. Our approach to the solution of these problems was not the same and yet there was much in common with it and we could profit by each other's experience, provided always there was a friendly approach and no interference with each other.

37. I received an extraordinarily cordial welcome everywhere in China. This was not only an official welcome but a popular welcome also in which millions joined. I was greatly impressed by it. It was clear to me that this welcome represented something more than political exigency. It was almost an emotional upheaval representing the basic urges of the people for friendship with India.

38. I have no doubt at all that the Government and people of China desire peace and want to concentrate on building up their country during the next decade or two.

39. I saw many of the famous sights of Peking and elsewhere. I visited their steel plants in Manchuria to which a new addition had been made with Soviet help. This was a fine addition rapidly constructed. I also visited Dairen, their port and ship-building yard and various factories.

40. Chairman Mao told me that they lacked technicians and that they were receiving a great deal of help from Soviet technicians which he welcomed. These technicians came for limited periods, trained the Chinese and went away. There were no political or other strings attached. In their recent agreement with the Soviet Government, the Soviet had undertaken to put up 141 major enterprises in China as a part of the Five Year Plan.

41. I would add that I hardly saw the villages of China and my impressions were gathered entirely from the big cities.

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I visited Peking, Canton, Shanghai, Nanking, Hankow, Mukden, Anshan and Dairen. The major impression I got was of a country smoothly running with enormous potential strength which was being translated gradually into actual strength. The people I saw in the cities looked well-clad and well-fed, and I noticed no depression in face or demeanour. Young men and girls and children were particularly in evidence and they were a pleasant looking crowd, jolly and full of enthusiasm. Undoubtedly there is a great deal of regimentation as it is called. Their discipline was remarkable. But I would say that the Chinese have always been a more or less disciplined people. The shops appeared to be full of goods. There were thousands of small privately-owned shops. There were some big State-owned Department stores. These were also full of various kinds of goods, though luxury articles were not in evidence. These Department stores were crowded with literally thousands of persons.

42. Another impression that I gathered was of the essential Chineseness of almost everybody I met, from leaders to the public. Few persons know foreign languages. Everything is done in Chinese. Chinese art and cultural activities were encouraged and there was a great deal of pride in China's great past and cultural accomplishments. Chairman Mao, in the course of his talks with me, referred on two or three occasions to some lines of a Chinese poet of a thousand years ago.

43. I visited Chinese operas of the old style. I also saw a modern play of a propagandist nature.

44. I did not sense the presence of any fear among the Chinese. They had plenty of self-confidence and self-assurance.

45. It must be remembered that the Chinese passed through 40 years' of revolution, war-lords, civil war, Japanese invasion and the world war. During this period, they had no peace or security. The mere coming of peace and security is a tremendous blessing for the people now. The feeling that they are strong and united and playing an independent part in the world adds to their self-esteem.

46. I could not help feeling during my visit to China, even more than I have done before, how completely irrelevant was the idea that this great nation could be ignored or bypassed. The idea of not allowing them to function in the United Nations appeared fantastic. The time has passed when they can be injured much by this policy. It is the rest of world that is more likely to suffer from it.

INDO-CHINA

47. I paid brief visits to Vientiane in Laos, Hanoi and Saigon, and Phnom Penh in Cambodia. I also visited the famous ruins of Angkor vat. In all these places I met prominent personalities.

48. The person who impressed me most was Dr. Ho Chi-minh of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, who came to see me at Hanoi. Hanoi had passed into his hands just five days previous to my arrival. This was a peaceful and very disciplined transfer from the French to the Viet-Minh. Dr. Ho Chi-minh impressed me as an unusually frank, straightforward and likable person. Although he has been engaged in

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a war for seven years against the French, he was the very reverse of a war-like person. He struck me as a man of peace and goodwill. He did not say a word against the French to me. Indeed, he expressed his desire for cooperation with the French and even to be associated with the French Union, provided his country had complete independence. He mentioned the relationship of India with the Commonwealth and asked me for further particulars about it. It was evident that Viet-Minh was well-organised and disciplined.

49. South Viet-Nam produced a completely opposite effect on me. The whole place seemed to be at sixes and sevens with hardly any dominant authority. The Prime Minister and his Generals were opposed to each other. There were three private armies of some kind of semi-religious sects. Foreign Representatives apparently also pulled in different directions. It was generally estimated that if there was a vote now, 90 per cent or more of the population would vote for Viet-Minh. What would happen a year or two later, one could not say.

50. Laos also appeared to be a sleepy and rather depressing place. There was a good deal of French influence there still and the International Commission was facing rather difficult problems.

51. Cambodia was somewhat different. It could be considered more or less independent although there were one or two issues still to be settled with the French. The International Commission had completed the greater part of its labours and the Joint Commission of the two parties had finished its work. The young king is popular and is a bright and agreeable person. But it was said that he was in the hands of a palace clique. Some of his high-placed officers told me that unless the king got the support of some prominent leaders who stood for far-reaching political and economic reforms, the future was not happy.

52. Premier Chou En-lai asked me as to whether we were going to recognise these Indo-China states. I told him that for all practical purposes we were dealing with them, either through the International Commission or otherwise, as if we had recognised them. We intended sending Consuls-General to them. For the present, we did not intend going any further because of our delicate position as Chairman of the three International Commissions.

53. Since my talk with Premier Chou En-lai, I passed through Cambodia and I felt that the case of Cambodia was somewhat different from the others and we might perhaps go a little further in our relations with that State. We are considering this matter now.

J. Nehru
14.11.1954.

SECRET

NOTE ON VISIT TO CHINA AND INDO-CHINA

During my visit to China, I had a number of talks with the Chinese leaders. I had long talks with Premier Chou En-lai [Zhou Enlai] separately. I also had joint talks with Chairman Mao Tse-tung [Mao Zedong] and his principal colleagues, viz., Vice-Chairman Chu Teh, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Peoples Congress Liu Shao-chi [Liu Shaoqi], Premier Chou En-lai, Vice-Chairman Soong ching-ling [Song Qingling] (Madame Sun Yat-Sen), Vice-Premier Chen Yen and Chinese Ambassador in India. On our side in these joint talks, we had our Secretary General, N.R. Pillai, and our Ambassador in Peking, N.Reghavan. We both had interpreters with us.

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8. Chairman Mao referred to the age old association as well as the new friendship between China and India. Both countries were struggling for peace. They had had more or less common experiences in recent history and both countries needed peace to reconstruct their economies as both were industrially backward. The Chairman considered that India was industrially somewhat more advanced. But both countries were in this respect backward and had large populations. Industrial development had to be achieved quickly in both. Given peace, it might take China about four Five Year Plans, i.e. 20 years or so, to become an industrial country with foundations laid for a socialist economy. China, therefore, was anxious for peace. But some countries,

notably USA, were obstructing this process. USA was occupying, or helping in the occupation, not only of Formosa, but many islands very near the Chinese mainland. There was bombardment of the Chinese mainland from these islands and air-raids were frequently carried out. During the past two years, there had been air-dropping in the Chinese mainland not only of groups of men, but also of wireless transmitters and other equipment. Many of such groups had been rounded up and caught. Most of them consisted of Chinese Kuomintang agents, but there were some Americans also among them.

9. China was not a threat to any country and wished to live in peace with all other countries. But the USA did not permit her to do so and even brought pressure to bear upon England, France and other countries to prevent them from cooperating with China.

10. The question of Formosa or the other islands occupied by Formosan troops was not discussed by me. But it was made clear to me that great importance was attached by the Chinese Government

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14. Chairman Mao agreed that these fears must be removed and nothing should be done which might cause apprehension to these countries.

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24. Premier Chou replied that these maps were old ones and China had not done any surveying to draw new maps. Their boundaries even with Mongolia and the Soviet Union were still not clearly demarcated and there were discrepancies. I pointed out that this might be so. So far as India was concerned, I repeated, there was no doubt about our boundaries and I was not worried about them. But I wondered how China would feel if a part of Tibet had been shown as part of India in our maps.

25. I referred also to the case of K. I. Singh, a Nepalese national, who had rebelled against his Government and who, according to reports, had been given encouragement in China. This kind of thing created apprehensions in the minds of Asian countries. Premier Chou replied that K. I. Singh crossed into Chinese territory with some other men in possession of rifles and ammunition. According to international custom, China disarmed them and gave them asylum. Nothing more was done. He referred in this connection to the intention of the Dalai Lama at one time to go to India. The Indian Ambassador had told the Chinese Government then that if the Dalai Lama came to India and sought asylum, they could not refuse this and they would treat him with courtesy but would not encourage any political activities on his part. As a matter of fact, the Dalai Lama did not go to India but some of his relatives did go there and had been given asylum. The Chinese Government did not mind this. In K. I. Singh's case, the Chinese Government had given him asylum and he would not be allowed to take part in any political activity against his country.

26. Premier Chou asked me questions about Nepal and various other countries. He referred to his invitation to the Indonesian Prime Minister to come to China. The Indonesian Prime Minister had expressed the wish that Premier Chou should first go to Indonesia. This was not possible for some time as he was very busy with important work, more especially as he had been absent for a long time in Geneva and elsewhere. Premier Chou was particularly interested in foreign influences at work in various countries of Asia, more especially American influences. He referred especially to pressure brought upon them to join the so-called South-East Asia Defence Organisation. He referred to Thailand also and said that they were anxious to have normal relations with it.

27. Premier Chou also asked me about my visit to Indo-China and the position there.

28. Premier Chou referred to Korea. He was anxious that something should be done to settle the Korean problem. He thought that a Conference should be held soon to consider this and that the old Geneva Conference should be enlarged for this purpose by adding neutral Asian countries.

29. I said that I agreed that we must pursue methods to arrive at a settlement in Korea and a Conference for this purpose would be necessary. But such a Conference should be held at the right time when some ideas about a settlement were clearer. Merely to have a Conference without such ideas might lead again to a deadlock. Meanwhile, it was important that we should not allow the situation in Korea to deteriorate.

30. We discussed India—China relations and the exchange of technical personnel, books, periodicals etc. Also an agreement about air services. It was agreed that there should be a reciprocal arrangement for an Indian air service at a Chinese port, probably Canton. This matter was to be discussed further through diplomatic channels.

31. I referred to certain difficulties of pilgrims going to Tibet. Premier Chou agreed to look into this matter and to remove such difficulties. He also agreed to the supply of

silk cocoons to Kashmir and suggested our sending an expert to select the varieties.

32. He informed me about the Chinese desire to have diplomatic relations with Nepal. I told him that the Nepalese Government had kept us informed of this. The King of Nepal had been ill and had gone to Switzerland for treatment. On his return, they would no doubt take up this matter. So far as we were concerned, we would welcome friendly relations between Nepal and China.

33. I gave him a brief outline of recent Nepalese history and how previously Nepal was far from independent, that is, before India became independent. There was no interference in internal matters, but otherwise the United Kingdom was the suzerain power. Independent India had accepted the right that Britain had exercised. But the two countries had agreed that their foreign policies should be coordinated. It was clear that India had a special position in Nepal and it became necessary, therefore, for their foreign policies to be in line with each other. India did not approve of foreign intervention in Nepal in any way. As for Nepal and China, it was desirable that they should settle such problems as existed in regard to Tibet. The question of diplomatic representation could probably be dealt with by the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi also being accredited to Kathmandu. I pointed out that Nepal was passing through grave internal difficulties and we wanted to help her to get over them and not add to these difficulties.

34. Premier Chou asked me about the Afro-Asian Conference. I told him that we had agreed on the principle of it but had not decided the details and that we were likely to meet soon at Djakarta to consider this matter. Premier Chou welcomed the idea and it was evident from his talk with me that he would like China to be invited to it.

35. I have given a brief summary of our talks. These talks both with Chairman Mao and Premier Chou were frank and friendly. We did not discuss the theories or ideology underlying our respective political and economic structures. We knew that they were different and yet there was much in common in the work of both the countries and many of our problems were similar. We entirely agreed that we should respect each other's viewpoints and without interference cooperate in dealing with our problems. More especially we should cooperate in the maintenance of peace in Asia and the world at large.

36. Essentially our problems were alike, that is vast countries and populations, chiefly agricultural with low standards of living, and the necessity to raise these standards by industrialization and agricultural reform. Even in regard to floods, we had similar problems. Our approach to the solution of these problems was not the same and yet there was much in common with it and we could profit by each other's experience, provided always there was a friendly approach and no interference with each other.

37. I received an extraordinarily cordial welcome everywhere in China. This was not only an official welcome but a popular welcome also in which millions joined. I was greatly impressed by it. It was clear to me that this welcome represented something more than political expediency. It was almost an emotional upheaval representing the basic urges of the people for friendship with India.

38. I have no doubt at all that the Government and people of China desire peace and want to concentrate on building up their country during the next decade or two.

39. I saw many of the famous sights of Peking and elsewhere. I visited their steel plants in Manchuria to which a new addition had been made with Soviet help. This was a fine addition rapidly constructed. I also visited Dairen, their port and ship-building yard and various factories.

40. Chairman Mao told me that they lacked technicians and that they were receiving a great deal of help from Soviet technicians which he welcomed. These technicians came for limited periods, trained the Chinese and went away. There were no political or other strings attached. In their recent agreement with the Soviet Government, the Soviet had undertaken to put up 141 major enterprises in China as a part of the Five Year Plan.

41. I would add that I hardly saw the villages of China and my impressions were gathered entirely from the big cities. I visited Peking, Canton, Shanghai, Nanking, Hankow, Mukden, Anshan and Dairen. The major impression I got was of a country smoothly running with enormous potential strength which was being translated gradually into actual strength. The people I saw in the cities looked well-clad and well-fed, and I noticed no depression in face or demeanor. Young men and girls and children were particularly in evidence and they were a pleasant looking crowd, jolly and full of enthusiasm. Undoubtedly there is a great deal of regimentation as it is called. Their discipline was remarkable. But I would say that the Chinese have always been a more or less disciplined people. The shops appeared to be full of goods. There were some big State-owned Department stores. These were also full of various kinds of goods, though luxury articles were not in evidence. These Department stores were crowded with literally thousands of persons.

42. Another impression that I gathered was of the essential Chineseness of almost everybody I met, from leaders to the public. Few persons know foreign languages. Everything is done in Chinese. Chinese art and cultural activities were encouraged and there was a great deal of pride in China's great past and cultural accomplishments. Chairman Mao, in the course of his talks with me, referred on two or three occasions to some lines of a Chinese poet of a thousand years ago.

43. I visited Chinese operas of the old style. I also saw a modern play of a propagandist nature.

44. I did not sense the presence of any fear among the Chinese. They had plenty of self-confidence and self-assurance.

45. It must be remembered that the Chinese passed through 40 years' of revolution, war-lords, civil war, Japanese invasion and the world war. During this period, they had no peace or security. The mere coming of peace and security is a tremendous blessing for the people now. The feeling that they are strong and united and playing an independent part in the world adds to their self-esteem.

46. I could not help feeling during my visit to China, even more than I have done before, how completely irrelevant was the idea that this great nation could be ignored or bypassed. The idea of not allowing them to function in the United Nations appeared fantastic. The time has passed when they can be injured much by this policy. It is the rest of world that is more likely to suffer from it.

INDO-CHINA

47. I paid brief visits to Vientiane in Laos, Hanoi and Saigon, and Phnom Penh in Cambodia. I also visited the famous ruins of Angkor Wat. In all these places I met prominent personalities.

48. The person who impressed me most was Dr. Ho Chi-minh of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, who came to see me at Hanoi. Hanoi had passed into his hands just five days previous to my arrival. This was a peaceful and very disciplined transfer from the French to the Viet-Minh. Dr. Ho Chi-minh impressed me as an unusually frank, straight-forward and likable person. Although he has been engaged in a war for

seven years against the French, he was the very reverse of a war-like person. He struck me as a man of peace and goodwill. He did not say a word against the French to me. Indeed, he expressed his desire for cooperation with the French and even to be associated with the French Union, provided his country had complete independence. He mentioned the relationship of India with the Commonwealth and asked me for further particulars about it. It was evident that Viet-Minh was well-organized and disciplined.

49. South Viet-Nam produced a completely opposite effect on me. The whole place seemed to be at sixes and sevens with hardly any dominant authority. The Prime Minister and his Generals were opposed to each other. There were three private armies of some kind of semi-religious sects. Foreign Representatives apparently also pulled in different directions. It was generally estimated that if there was a vote now, 90 percent or more of the population would vote for Viet-Minh. What would happen a year or two later, one could not say.

50. Laos also appeared to be a sleepy and rather depressing place. There was a good deal of French influence there still and the International Commission was facing rather difficult problems.

51. Cambodia was somewhat different. It could be considered more or less independent although there were one or two issues still to be settled with the French. The International Commission had completed the greater part of its labors and the Joint Commission of the two parties had finished its work. The young king is popular and is a bright and agreeable person. But it was said that he was in the hands of a palace clique. Some of his high-placed officers told me that unless the king got the support of some prominent leaders who stood for far-reaching political and economic reforms, the future was not happy.

52. Premier Chou En-lai asked me as to whether we were going to recognize these Indo-China states. I told him that for all practical purposes we were dealing with them, either through the International Commission or otherwise, as if we had recognized them. We intended sending Consuls-General to them. For the present, we did not intend going any further because of our delicate position as Chairman of the three International Commissions.

53. Since my talk with Premier Chou En-lai, I passed through Cambodia and I felt that the case of Cambodia was somewhat different from the others and we might perhaps go a little further in our relations with that State. We are considering this matter now.

J. Nehru
14.11.54.