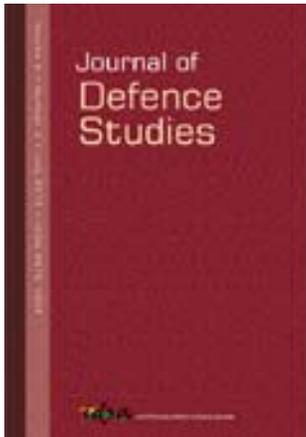


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The Stormy Parliamentary Debates of 1962

*Rup Narayan Das**

Excepting in a war-like situation when there is threat to national security, unity and integrity, parliamentarians neither have the time nor the inclination to discuss issues that do not have a direct bearing on their constituency or on electoral politics. Besides considering the sensitive and professional nature of the subject, parliamentarians tend to leave the foreign policy issues to the professional diplomats and the foreign policy establishment. But there have been exceptions to the rule in most democratic countries, including India. India–China relations and India’s policy towards China is one such illustration. In recent past, the Indo-United States (US) nuclear deal also dominated the discourse in Indian Parliament and almost brought the government to the brink of fall. This article has the limited objective of revisiting the debates in the Parliament, Lok Sabha in particular, both prior to the Chinese attack and after the attack, and putting the gist of the debate for wider dissemination. As some of the observations that Prime Minister Nehru made in the House, and for that matter of the other members, are often referred to by scholars, they are mentioned verbatim, instead of paraphrasing them, for accuracy and authenticity from the original debate. The criticism by the opposition is also mentioned in the article. Revisiting the stormy debates, the Parliament assumes salience this year which commemorates the fiftieth year of the India–China War of 1962. As George Santayana once said, ‘Those who can not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.’

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The Parliament's role in Sino-Indian relations pre-dates even the independence of the country and can be traced back to the provisional Parliament called the constituent assembly (legislative). Even before the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) was formally proclaimed on 1 October 1949, Professor N.G. Ranga of the Congress, regarded as the 'Father of the House', moving a cut motion in the Lok Sabha on 4 December 1947 relating to the demands for grants of Ministry of External Affairs, said,

China had become a sort of cockpit between the Soviet Russia and America. Are we going to keep mum about it, are we going to allow her to become an unfortunate victim of these powers as Republic Spain has become? Should we not take a positive stand in regard to this?¹

Another Congress member, Brajeswar Prasad, supporting the sentiment of Professor Ranga, said, 'India and China are destined to be leaders of Asia. Joined together they will be force to be reckoned with.'² He even went to the extent of proposing a federal union, saying, 'It is in common interest of both the states to evolve a federal plan of union.' India's nuanced approach to deal with China which India is pursuing today can be traced to Nehru's calibrated response to China during early years of India's independence. Nehru, in his inimitable candour and circumspection, was of the view that since the position in China was not fully crystallized, it was imprudent for India to get entangled in its internal problems or express an opinion which might prove embarrassing later. Articulating his views, he said,

...members may perhaps let themselves go about what should be done in China, Japan, Siam and Peru, but I fear it is a little difficult and it will be a little irresponsible for me to talk about these various matters. Naturally India is interested in Asian countries, even more than the rest of the world.³

When the PRC was proclaimed on 1 October 1949, India was the second non-communist country to accord recognition to it. The birth of the communist China found its echo and resonance in the provisional Parliament of India. Though the two countries followed different political paths—India, a democratic path and China, a communist and totalitarian path—the birth of the communist China was welcomed by the members of the provisional Parliament. Spelling out India's position with regard to the emergence of communist China, Nehru said in the Lok Sabha on 17 March 1950 that it was not a question of approving or disapproving; it

was a question of recognition a major event in history and of appreciating it and dealing with it.⁴ Articulating the policy of independent India in the Asian perspective, he said:

It affects us, because we are in Asia, it affects us because we are in a strategic part of Asia, set in the Centre of Indian Ocean with intimate connections with Western Asia, with South-east Asia and with Far Eastern Asia. We could not ignore it, even if we would, and we do not want to ignore it.⁵

It was just coincidence that when India recognized the birth of the PRC, around the same time, a crisis broke out in the Korean Peninsula. A special session of the Parliament was convened on 31 July 1950 to discuss the Korean crisis. Drawing the attention of the House, President Dr Rajendra Prasad said that Prime Minister Nehru had appealed to the Russian Prime Minister, Joseph Stalin, and to the Secretary of State of the US, Dean Acheson, that the authorities of these two great countries should be exerted to localize the arm struggle in Korea, and break the deadlock in the Security Council of the United Nations (UN) over the admission of the PRC, so that the present international tension might be eased and the way opened to the solution of the Korean problem by discussion in the UN Security Council.⁶

Intervening in a debate relating to the admission in the PRC to the UN on 3 August 1950, Nehru maintained that after having recognized the new regime, it would have been exceedingly unreasonable not to accept the logical consequences thereof. He said, 'Ever since we recognized the new People's Government of China, it naturally followed the consequence of such recognition should come.... It is none of our business to like or dislike governments, though we can do so of course....' Reiterating his plea for admission of China in the UN, he said:

As a result of China not being admitted into the United Nations, and the representative of the old Kuomintang regime being there, the House knows that the USSR and some of their friendly countries, more or less walked out of various organs of the United Nations, more essentially from the Security Council.⁷

The debate witnessed near unanimity of views with regard to China's admission to the UN. By and large, the members were supportive of the government's stand on the issue and there was overwhelming sentiments that the change in China would have to be recognized by the international community in course of time.

It was unfortunate, however, that in spite of India's friendly overtures and painstaking efforts to give China its due in the comity of nations, Chinese occupation of Tibet, which started in 1950, greatly strained the relationship between the two countries. Members of Parliament were concerned and agitated about Chinese actions in Tibet. The issue was discussed in Lok Sabha on 17 March 1950 during a discussion on external affairs, and members urged the government to delineate its border with Tibet. Participating in the debate, P.C. Barua, belonging to Congress, cautioned, 'The MacMahon line which was drawn up at a conference in Shimla is a very vague boundary. The line is more or less an imaginary one and that is the reason why our statesmanship in this particular area will be put great test in years to come.'⁸ Intervening in the debate, Mr Frank Anthony, a nominated member of the Anglo-Indian community, said:

I believe that it is not only self delusion but... dangerous self delusion either to hope or to believe, however, exemplary our motives in the international plane, however genuine our desire for neutrality... for friendship with all nation, that Communist will in the final analyses respect our neutrality and our loftiness of motives.⁹

While responding to a question raised by a member as to whether India had got any well-defined boundary with Tibet, Nehru, on 20 November 1950, said in the Lok Sabha, 'Our maps show that the McMahan Line is our boundary and that is our boundary—map or no map. That fact remains and we stand by that boundary and we will not allow anybody to come across its boundary.'¹⁰ A noteworthy aspect of the Parliament in the wake of Chinese occupation of Tibet was that if earlier there was near unanimity about India's relationship with China on a positive note, there was absolute unanimity in views among all sections of the political spectrum in criticizing the Chinese action in Tibet. Even members belonging to the Congress Party were critical of government's response to the emerging situation in Tibet.

The animated debate on the floor of the House reflected the anguish and pain of the members towards the communist dispensation in China. The veteran Congress member, Professor N.G. Ranga, expressed concern at the way the Tibetan question was being handled by the government. He cautioned the government against the threat of insecurity posed by China's military action in Tibet. J.B. Kripalani of the Socialist Party questioned India's wisdom in having pressed for China's admission to the UN at so early a stage. M.A. Ayyangar of the Congress was equally critical

of China's wanton invasion of Tibet. M.R. Masani of Swatantra Party, in a forceful speech, urged the government to reconsider its attitude towards China which had plainly shown its aggressive character in Tibet, Formosa (Taiwan) and Indochina. Yet another member, Brajeswar Prasad, pleaded for a Moscow–Delhi–Beijing axis, which he declared would promote peace and stability in Southeast Asia. He moved an amendment reiterating his demand for non-aggression pacts with the Soviet Union and China.¹¹

INDIA'S ADVOCACY FOR CHINA'S ADMISSION TO THE UN

At a time when India is making all efforts for a permanent membership of the UN Security Council, and China is reticent about its wholehearted support to India's candidature maintaining that it understands India's aspiration to play greater role in the world affairs without making any explicit commitment, it is only appropriate to recall how India extended its undiluted support to China's admission to the UN. In fact, India was the one of the first Asian countries to sponsor a resolution for the admission of China in the UN, and when a resolution was moved by the Soviet Union in the Security Council to unseat Kuomintang representative in favour of the PRC, India extended its full support. The government's advocacy of China's admission into the UN was generally supported by most political parties.

However, the issue of China's bid to become a member of the UN got entangled with the unfolding Korean crisis in 1950 as the war broke out in June 1950 in Korea. India voted for the UN resolution condemning North Korea's aggression on South Korea and calling for withdrawal of the Korean forces to the 38th Parallel, and also supported UN intervention to restore peace and security in the region. India was of the opinion that no settlement of East Asia imbroglio would be durable and permanent without China's concurrence.¹² Speaking in the Parliament on 3 August 1950, Nehru categorically expressed the view that China's entry into the UN might well have prevented the Korean crisis and also made it clear that while India had accepted the UN resolution, it completely disassociated itself from any American action with regard to Formosa.¹³

Although there were differences of opinion among the members in their understanding and approach to the Korean problem, they largely supported the government's advocacy of China's admission into the UN in order to stabilize the situation in the Korean Peninsula. Initiating a debate on international affairs on 6 December 1950, Nehru reiterated

the government's policy of advocating China's membership of the UN. Defending the government's decision for opposing the UN resolution on endorsing the crossing of the 38th Parallel, he argued that China viewed this as a grave danger to its own security and would resist it by all means at its disposal, thus enlarging the area of conflict. He said:

...we had perhaps rather special responsibility in regard to China, because we were one of the very few countries represented there, and we were the only country, apart from the countries of the Soviet bloc, which could find out...what the reactions of the Chinese Government were to developing events... I cannot conceive of a peaceful solution in the Far-East... even if there is war, any solution after the war, which does not take fully into consideration of this great country of China in regard to those, problems.¹⁴

Making a statement on foreign affairs on 12 February 1951, Nehru reiterated India's position that the PRC should be brought into the UN. He said:

The House is aware that for over a year, we have been firmly of the opinion that the People's Government of China should be brought to the United Nations. This, according to us, was not only a recognition of a patent fact but was necessary consequence of the whole scheme of the United Nations organization indeed, it may be said that if this unfortunate error of keeping out the new China from the UN had not been committed, much of the trouble that has subsequently occurred might have been avoided.¹⁵

INDIAN PARLIAMENT'S RESOLUTION ON CHINA

The outbreak of the war between India and China in October 1962 inflicted a serious jolt to the bilateral relationship between the two countries. Nehru was deeply anguished at the Chinese attack on India. It was certainly beyond his comprehension and was a setback to his idealism and optimism. The Members of the Parliament, irrespective of party affiliation, were equally pained and agonized. It was for the first time in the history of India that the Proclamation of Emergency was issued by the President of India on 26 of October 1962 under Clause (1) of Article 352. The Parliament witnessed a very heated debate when the resolution was taken up for discussion on 8 November 1962. The protracted debate and discussion on the resolution started with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru declining to accede to Dr L.M. Singhvi's request to convene a

secret session of the House to discuss the resolution. Giving reasons for this, he said that the issues before the House were of high interest to the whole country and that right at the beginning to ask for a secret session would have a bad effect on the country.

Moving the resolution, Nehru bemoaned that in spite of the uniform gestures of goodwill and friendship by India towards the PRC on the basis of recognition of each other's independence, non-aggression and non-interference and peaceful coexistence, China had betrayed the goodwill and friendship and the principles of *Panchsheel* which had been agreed to between the two countries and had committed aggression and initiated a massive invasion of India by her armed forces. He then put on record the high appreciation of the House of the valiant struggle of men and officers of the armed forces while defending the frontier.¹⁶

INDIA'S POSITION ON McMAHON LINE

Initiating the debate in the House, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru articulated India's position on the McMahon Line. Reiterating the earlier stance, he said:

...we have previously demonstrated by a mass of evidence that our boundary is what has been called the MacMahon Line, but the boundary was not laid down even by Mr. MacMahon, whoever is responsible for it. It was the recognition of the last standing frontier on the high ridge of the Himalayas, which divides the two countries at the waterside. To some extent, though indirectly accepted this, certainly they accepted the continuation of this line in Burma. But, apart from the constitutional or legal aspects, it is undoubted and cannot be challenged that no Chinese has ever been in that part on this side of the Line, excepting as the House knows, in a little border village called Longju.¹⁷

He further said:

Even the MacMahon Line, which the Chinese have called illegal, was laid down 48 years ago in 1914, and that was a confirmation of what was believed in then. Legal or not, it has been a part of India for a long number of years, and certainly let us say, for 50 years or so, apart from its previous history, which is also in our favour.... Even if the Chinese did not accept it, and I would like to say that the objection they raised in 1913 to this treaty was not based on their objection to the MacMahon Line; it was based on their objection to another

part of the treaty, which divided the Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet, the MacMahon Line did not come in that; however, it is a fact that they objected to the whole treaty because of that other objection....

Nehru further said that while prior to India's independence, the British did not develop a full-fledged administrative apparatus in the frontier, India in the post-independence period not only introduced administration there but also built schools, hospitals, roads, etc., and 'it is this, which the Chinese say, represents our occupying that'. Nehru also recalled his earlier conversation with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai (in fact, he couldn't remember the exact year), according to which Zhou Enlai 'gave me to understand that although the Chinese government considered the MacMahon Line an illegal and a British imperialist line, nevertheless, because of the large number of facts, because of their desire to be friendly with us, they would be prepared to do this.' That was the clearest impression that Nehru got. Zhou Enlai, however, denied it later.

INDIGENIZATION OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION

Participating in the discussion on the resolution and in reference to the question of indigenization of defence production, Nehru said:

...there is always a choice and there has been a choice for us to buy arms from abroad or to make them ourselves. Obviously, it is always better to make them ourselves, because that strengthens the country; industrially and otherwise and secondly you can not altogether rely on out side supplies; any moment they may fail you and economically, it is bad to get them from outside. So, our practice has been to try to build up our arms, the industry and the like in the country and we have done fairly well. We might have done better; I do not know. All kinds of difficulties arise, because development of one industry depends on the whole industrial background of the country....

Talking about difficulties, he said further:

A great deal was said about arms automatic riffles and the rest. For the last three or four years, we have been trying to make them and various difficulties arose about patents, this, that and the other about and some times about our own difficulties in finding enough foreign exchange. Ultimately we got over these difficulties and we started their manufacture....¹⁸

Emphasizing the priority of indigenization vis-à-vis importing arms from abroad, he added:

The only alternative was previously for us to get large number of those weapons from abroad. We hesitated; we wanted to make them ourselves. Undoubtedly, we could have got them, but remember this. If we have tried to get all those weapons from abroad in what might be called peace time, we will have to spend enormous sums of money. Our whole planning, etc. will have gone, because when you talk of weapons in terms of war, you talk in terms of thousands of crores. It is not a question of few crores, but thousand of crores and it would have smashed of our economy.

PLANNING AND AGRICULTURE

In his thought-provoking speech, Nehru also articulated his considered views on the planning process and the primacy of agriculture in India's economy. He said:

There is one other aspect which I should like to mention, which is not indirectly connected with this matter but directly connected, and that is our development plans and the Five Year Plan. Some people have said 'let us give up these Plans so that we may concentrate on war effort'. What is the war effort? People think of soldiers in the front, which is perfectly right. They are bearing the brunt on the heat and danger. But in this matter, in the kind of struggle that we are involved in, every peasant in the field is a soldier; every worker in the factory is a soldier. Our work, our war effort essentially, apart from the actual fighting done, is in ever greater production in the field and factory. We must remember that. It is an effort which depends greatly on our development. Today we are much more in a position to make that kind of effort in field and factory than, let us say, ten or twelve years ago; there is no doubt about that. We are still not adequately developed. I hope this very crisis will make us always to be remembered that an army today, a modern army, fights with modern weapons which it has to manufacture itself in that country.

Elaborating the point further, he said:

It is based on the development of industry, and that industry must have an agricultural base if it is to succeed. Therefore, we have to develop all rounds, apart from agriculture and industry, which are the basic things in our Five Year Plan.... So that, to talk of scrapping the Five Year Plan is not to understand the real springs of our strength. We have to carry the Five Year Plan and go beyond it in many respects. It may be, in some matters which are considered non-essential, we may tone down or leave them but in the major

things of Five Year Plan we have to make the fullest effort. Among the major things agriculture is highly important. How can a country fight when it is lacking in food?

Nehru's arguments, however, met with strong criticism even from the Congress Party. Late Professor N.G. Ranga, for example, said, 'But why do you have this Planning Commission any longer? Even ordinarily it was useless and now it becomes much more useless; indeed it can even be a nuisance....'

REITERATING PLEA FOR CHINA'S ADMISSION TO THE UN

Making a consistent plea for China's admission to the UN, which he had advocated earlier even during Chinese occupation of Tibet and when the Korean crisis broke out in 1950, he said:

Here, I may say, it has been unfortunate, in this as in so many other cases, that the present Government of China is not represented in the United Nations. Hon. Members are surprised when we have supported the Chinese representation—the representation of the People's government in China—in the United Nations. We have supported this in spite of this present invasion, because we have to look at it this way; it is not a question of likes or dislikes. It is a question which will facilitate Chinese aggression; it will facilitate its misbehavior in future. It will make disarmament impossible in the world. You might disarm the whole world and leave China, a great, powerful country, fully armed to the teeth. It is inconceivable. Therefore in spite of our great resentment at what they have done, the great irritation and anger, still, I am glad to say that we kept some perspective about things and supported that even now.¹⁹

Nehru was thus trying to make China a responsible stakeholder in the comity of nations by bringing it on board the UN. It was quite audacious on part of Nehru to stick to his position in the face of trenchant criticism both within the Parliament and outside. Elucidating his argument, he further said:

...the difficulty is one can not call them up before any tribunal or world court or anywhere. They are just wholly an irresponsible country, believing, I believe, in war as the only way of settling any thing, having no love for peace and stating almost that, and with great power at their disposal. That is the dangerous state of affairs not only for India but for the rest of the world....

Dr L.M. Singhvi, however, disagreeing with Nehru, moved a substitute resolution and pleaded that India should desist from supporting or endorsing any move for admission of the PRC to the UN and any other international organization. Some other members were also critical of Nehru's position in this regard.

FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES

As he himself had great empathy with the philosophy of communism and in deference to the socialist block, he further said, 'I am not going into the question of Communism or anti-Communism. I do not believe that that is a major issue in this matter or any other. Communism may help; but the major issue is expansionist, imperialist minded country deliberately invading in to a new country....' Here, Nehru had an insight into the national psyche of China. While Nehru's defence of the *non-aligned movement* (NAM) and the Panchsheel evoked some support from the Communist Party, members from his own party questioned the relevance and efficacy of these policies. Defending these policies, late Shri H.N. Mukherjee said that Panchsheel was something which would cure the world's ills. Turning to non-alignment, he said that it was an idea which had gripped us because it had been implicit in the best aspects of the country's history. He said, 'Non-alignment has been implicit in the way in which we conducted our struggle for freedom. Non-alignment has been implicit in the way in which after freedom we have been trying to build our country. Non-alignment is implicit in the way in which we are planning for a socialist society....'

Indian foreign policy was also subjected to intense debate during the discussion on the resolution. The Chinese attack evoked strong reaction among the members regarding the efficacy of India's foreign policy, particularly non-alignment, which India had espoused all those years. Critiquing the relevance of the NAM, Mr Frank Anthony, a nominated member of the House said that he had no quarrel with it. 'Even if the policy was conceived in heaven, and evolved on Earth, whatever name you give it, it must stand up, if it is worthwhile policy to the supreme test of ensuring the security of the country,' he added.²⁰

Professor N.G. Ranga, recalling the earlier statement of Acharya Kripalani that Panchsheel was born out of the rape of Tibet, said that Mao Zedong 'was clever enough to get these things incorporated in to the

India–China treaty over Tibet and leave our Prime Minister and various other people also under the impression that it was being presented to the world as a contribution of India's statesmanship. So *Panchsheel* has already gone.' Questioning India's non-alignment, he pondered, 'How are we to become strong if we hang on to this non-alignment policy... Non-alignment has not served us; does not serve any longer. The sooner we get rid of it, the better, the sooner we turn our back to it, the better...'. Making a plea to have a relook at our foreign policy, he said that he was glad '...the Prime Minister had told the House that all those democratic countries, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, France and so many other countries have been noble enough and decent enough and democratic enough to offer unconditional support in an unstinted manner.'²¹

Prime Minister Nehru, during the course of his speech, also mentioned the message which India had sent to the heads of state and government explaining the background of Chinese invasion and India's firm resolve to resist it. He further said that many replies have been received extending their sympathy and support. However, he could only make a mention of the message from President Nasser of the United Arab Emirate. Prime Minister Nehru said that President Nasser took the trouble to understand the facts and thereafter issued a communiqué in which he made certain proposals. These proposals were not exactly on the lines India had suggested, but were largely in conformity with it. President Nasser's proposal stressed on withdrawal of troops to their lines where they stood prior to the 8 September 1962. That fitted in with India's proposal, Nehru said. The Chinese, however, rejected President Nasser's proposal.

Many members were, however, not convinced of Nehru's defence of foreign policy postures and postulates. Pointing out the shortcomings in India's foreign policy, a member of the Communist Party, Kishen Pattnayak, urged the government to reorient the foreign policy on a more realistic and creative basis. Professor N.G. Ranga lamented that many countries in Africa and Southeast Asia 'in whose freedom we took so much interest' were not able to associate themselves or failed to line up with us and wanted to know reasons for this. Yet another member, Mr U.M. Trivedi, was critical of the response of the erstwhile *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* (USSR) with regard to Chinese attack on India. Drawing the attention of the House to the plea of the Russian newspaper, *Pravda*, to support the Chinese offer of negotiation, he questioned the

bona fide intent of the proposal. He further said, 'Russia is apathetic to us and decidedly sympathetic with China.' Mr Trivedi further said that in spite of India's differences of opinion with the Western countries on the question of Goa, Nagaland, *South East Asia Treaty Organization* (SEATO), Central America, the Suez, etc., these countries have rendered help to India; and he urged that these bonds of friendship should be continued.²²

THE RESOLUTION

After a marathon debate, the House resolutely passed the following resolution.

This House notes with deep regret that, in spite of the uniform gestures of goodwill and friendship by India towards the People's Government of China on the basis of recognition of each other's independence, non-aggression and non-interference and peaceful co-existence, China has betrayed this goodwill and friendship and the Principles of Panchsheel which had been agreed to between the two countries, and has committed aggression and initiated a massive invasion of India by her armed forces;

This House places on record its high appreciation of the valiant struggle of men and officers of our armed forces while defending our frontiers, and pays its respectful homage to the martyrs who have laid down their lives in defending the honour and integrity of our motherland;

This House also records its profound appreciation of the wonderful and spontaneous response of the people of India to the emergency and the crisis that has resulted from China's invasion of India;

It notes with deep gratitude this mighty upsurge amongst all sections of our people for harnessing all our resources towards the organization of an all-out effort to meet this grave national emergency. The flame of liberty and sacrifice has been kindled anew and a fresh dedication has taken place to the cause of India's freedom and integrity;

This House gratefully acknowledges the sympathy and the moral and material support received from a large number of friendly countries in this grim hour of our struggle against aggression and invasion;

With hope and faith, this House affirms the firm resolve of the Indian people to drive out the aggressor from the sacred soil of India, however long and hard the struggle may be.²³

There were members who demanded that until the Chinese invaders are driven out completely from Indian territory, there should be no negotiations by anybody for the settlement of the dispute. It was under parliamentary pressure that Defence Minister Krishna Menon had to step down for allegedly inapt handling of the war. Prime Minister Nehru himself was subjected to criticism by the members.

CONCLUSION

How does one assess the role of Indian Parliament in India–China relations? Has it hindered or promoted the relationship? As it can be discerned from the aforesaid study, there was a sense of goodwill towards China in the initial years of independence when Nehru crafted India's China policy. The attitude of members started hardening towards China when the relations between the two countries started deteriorating in the 1950s. Even members of the ruling party became critical of the government's China policy as articulated by Nehru. There seems to be a mixed opinion as to whether Nehru was stymied by the hostile Parliament or he himself suffered from unilateralism. According to K.P.S. Menon, India's first Ambassador to China and independent India's first Foreign Secretary, 'Nehru seemed personally disposed to negotiate on the frontier problem, but he gave up the idea and assumed an inflexible posture as a result of the opposition of some of his colleagues in the cabinet and criticism in Parliament.' He further wrote, 'The entire attitude adopted by Parliament during the crises was unhelpful. Brave talks that not an inch of Indian Territory should be surrendered and so on, left the Government with no room for maneuvering.' He concludes that 'This is what happens when the Legislature tries to usurp the functioning of the Executive.'²⁴

A careful reading of Prime Minister Nehru's speeches and interventions in the debates in the Parliament on China, from the very beginning and till the end, clearly suggests that he was consistent and coherent in his approach towards China in spite of China's virulent criticism and critical remarks by Members of the Parliament, including those from the ruling Congress Party. Nehru's articulation had been measured interspersed with circumspect and wisdom. His speech on 8 November suggests how mentally distraught he was. Although he did not express it in so many words on the floor of the House, fully knowing its repercussion both within and outside the House, the fact that on number of occasions

he was forgetting years in which particular incidents took place clearly reflected the mental trauma he was undergoing. It was an excruciating experience for him when his idealism and hopes were dashed.

Nehru himself being a committed parliamentarian, familiar with parliamentary customs, conventions, etiquettes and the procedural niceties, had the highest respect for the Parliament. Although foreign policy is the traditional domain of the executive, Nehru always took the Parliament into confidence on foreign policy issues, including India's relations with China. The fact that he laid the white papers on the floor of the House and informed the House of the developments at the earliest opportunity, conforming to established parliamentary customs, spoke of his respect and regards for the Parliament.

NOTES

1. Debates of Provisional Parliament, 4 December 1947, column 1263.
2. Ibid., column 1255.
3. *Constituent Assembly Debates*, 4 December 1947, column 1244.
4. Ibid., 1699.
5. Ibid., pp. 1696–7.
6. *Lok Sabha Debate*, 31 July 1950, column 10.
7. Ibid., columns 225–6.
8. Ibid., column 1734.
9. Ibid., column 1719.
10. Ibid., Vol. 5, Part 1, 1950, columns 155–6.
11. Jetly, Nancy, *India China Relations, 1947–1977: A Study of Parliament's Role in the Making of Foreign Policy*, New Delhi: Radiant, 1979, p. 22.
12. For details, see Dayal, Shiv, *India's Role in the Korean Question: A Study of the Settlement of International Disputes Under the United Nations*, Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1959.
13. *Lok Sabha Debate*, 3 August 1950, columns 218–28.
14. *Lok Sabha Debate*, 6 December 1950, column 1262.
15. *Lok Sabha Debate*, 12 February 1951, column 2699.
16. *Lok Sabha Debate*, 8 November 1962, column 106.
17. Ibid., column 112.
18. Ibid., column 124.
19. Ibid., columns 105–86.
20. Ibid., column 194.
21. Ibid., columns 159, 160.

22. Ibid., columns 185, 186.
23. Ibid., columns 107, 108.
24. Excerpted from K.P.S. Menon's *Twilight in China*, as reproduced in 'Prologue', in Ira Pande (ed.), *India China: Neighbours Stranger*, Harper Collins, 2010, pp. xv–xvi.