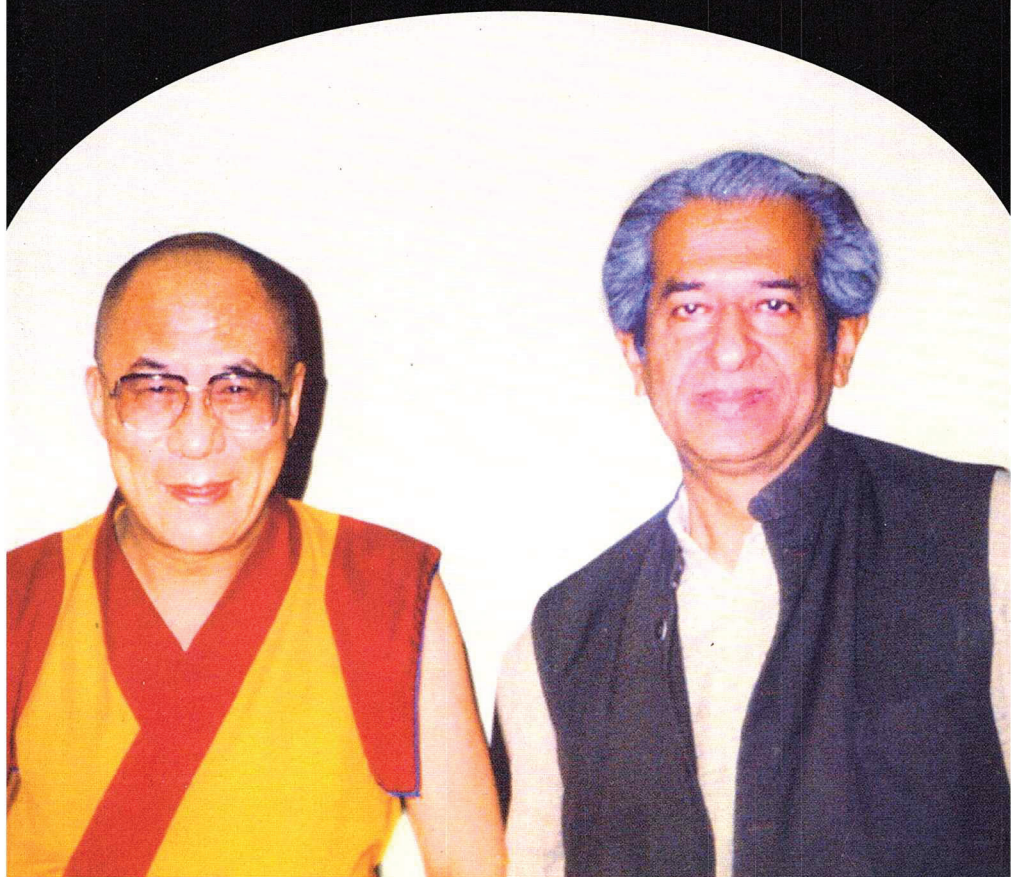


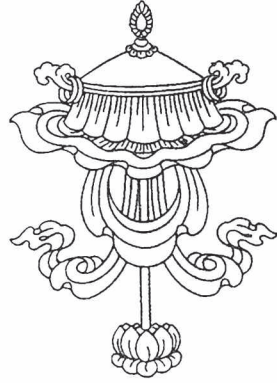
ML Sondhi
on Tibet
as the Fulcrum
of an Asian
Peace Order



With Reverend Uchida in Japan



With Shaykh Amin-Tarif, Mt. Carmel, Israel, 1989



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5 About ML Sondhi

Introduction

It was the year 1959 when Manohar Lal Sondhi, Cultural Attaché at the Indian embassy in Prague, got news over the ticker about the escape of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from PLA-occupied Tibet to the safety of Indian asylum. He had been acquainting himself with Tibetan culture and religion, partly with the help of Prague's Oriental Institute, and this, together with his deepening knowledge of the destructive impact of communism on social cohesion and cultural creativity deeply saddened him. He read the fall of Tibet to Communist China as a multiple disaster: it was intrinsically a human catastrophe with its immense loss of life, suffering, and denial of human dignity: it was a reassertion of imperialism by an Asian nation at a time when most Asians were celebrating the withdrawal of European imperialism from their part of the world: it was the loss of an important bastion of Indic culture to a crude and insensitive ideology, and it was the removal of an important strategic bulwark for India against hostile northern countries, especially China. It contained seeds of instability for India's Himalayan border.

The lack of compliance of his request for a posting to Lhasa strengthened his decision in early 1962 to resign from the Indian Foreign Service which he had entered as topper in the UPSC exam. A few months after his resignation, he joined the Indian School of International Studies and launched into public activity geared to influencing Indian policy towards Tibet and the northern frontier.

These activities in partnership with his wife, Madhuri S. Sondhi, included the founding of the Tibet Swaraj Committee on October 2nd 1962, publication of a fortnightly newsletter Young Tibet (modelled on Gandhi's Young India), street demonstrations and



mobilisation of public support through meetings, signature campaigns, newspaper articles and the like. These activities were directed towards three aims: recognition of the Tibetan government-in-exile, the right of Tibetan exiles to indulge in legitimate political activity for their homeland from Indian soil, and the right of the Dalai Lama to travel abroad. Signatories included eminent Tibet supporters of the time: editors S. Mulgaokar (Hindustan Times) and Frank Moraes (Times of India), Rukmini Arundale (Theosophical Society), Purushottam Trikamdass (senior jurist, member of the International Jurists Inquiry Commission on Tibet) Professor JBS Haldane et al. He liaised with people across the political spectrum, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Dr. Raghuvira, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Acharya Kripalani, Hem Barua, Nath Pai, HV Kamath and sympathisers within the Congress Party. Professor Sondhi led perhaps the first ever demonstration to the Chinese Embassy then at Jind House, Copernicus Marg, before the 1962 attack, breaking the taboos of the prevalent Hindi-Chini bhai-bhaism. It was a silent Gandhian-inspired demonstration, with marchers holding aloft placards carrying their slogans protesting the occupation of Tibet. This was followed by a multi-faith meeting on Tibet whose participants included representatives from the Aurobindo Ashram, Ladakh Bauddha Vihar, Arya Samaj, the Judah Hyam Synagogue and others. As public protests snowballed after the 1962 Chinese invasion, he became more active. The *Shakti Monthly Review* started by the Sondhis in December 1964 regularly carried articles and editorials on Tibet, and more seminars and meetings were organised.

In 1967 Professor Sondhi was elected to the Lok Sabha from the prestigious New Delhi constituency, and continued both within and outside Parliament to draw attention to the Tibetan predicament. In his maiden speech (April 4th 1967), within the context of '*restating national values*' he raised the question of the rights of the Tibetan people and demanded that the Indian government confront China on this issue.



‘... I feel that with China the present situation is unsatisfactory. What we need is a purposive diplomacy and a certain amount of political gamesmanship. Therefore, we must approach China and ask them about the rights of the Tibetan people. We must do this without fear or any expectation that we will offend the world because the world is waiting for India to express itself in a restrained, yet truly revolutionary language and idiom.’

His book *Non-Appeasement A New Direction for Indian Foreign Policy* published in 1971 recapitulated his views on the distortion of Sino-Indian relations through the occupation of Tibet.

After Nixon’s rapprochement with China the prospects for Tibetan freedom looked bleak, but Professor Sondhi remained undeterred. On a visit to Dharamsala in 1979, on the eve of the first visit by a Tibetan delegation to Tibet since their exodus in 1959, and at the time of His Holiness’ first ever visit to a foreign country, Professor Sondhi placed several suggestions before the Kashag, the Cabinet of the Tibetan Government-in-exile. The then Janata government which included several who as former opposition members had been supporters of Tibetan rights, removed the restrictions on His Holiness’ foreign travels, but unlike as with the PLO, did not recognise his government-in-exile and retained the bar on his receiving envoys from other governments willing to do so. Professor Sondhi proffered an ‘out of the box’ idea to purchase a ship to be registered abroad which would virtually become floating Tibetan territory on which His Holiness could officially receive diplomats from any country willing to recognise his government. (Today’s Munnabhais might be appreciative. If Gandhiji’s Salt March had remained just an idea, it would have been dismissed by the sophisticated as typical wool from the dhoti-clad eccentric. Fortunately he carried it out, and the rest is history). He also urged the foundation of a Tibetan Bank for strengthening the exiled community’s economic base, and a Tibetan presence in the Buddha Jayanti Park in Delhi, to remind Indians of their close



cultural and religious relationship with Tibet. Lastly he strongly advocated promoting the name of His Holiness for a Nobel Peace Prize. Today there is a gilded statue of the Lord Buddha within a Tibetan garden in Buddha Jayanti Park installed by His Holiness, and the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, for which Professor Sondhi had the honour to be the Indian nominator. He had written to the Chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee Egil A. Aarvik, "I wish to submit a proposal that the Nobel Peace Prize be awarded to H.H. the Dalai Lama of Tibet since His Holiness has interpreted the Buddhist mind of Tibet in such a manner as to provide basic principles for establishing stable peace in the world." Once the Peace Prize was announced Prof. Sondhi declared that "the Tibet issue has returned to world politics. Those of us who had the privilege of nominating His Holiness were all too well aware that this ... would bring to bear the full moral authority of the international community in support of this outstanding political and religious leader. It is necessary for the Indian people if they are true to their own democratic traditions to give all moral and practical help to the Tibetan cause." He attended the Prize giving ceremony in Oslo on 10 December.

After the 1987 Tibetan protests in Lhasa were put down with savage cruelty, and with increased infiltration into Tibet by the Chinese and tightening of their control in the Tibetan plateau, the Dalai Lama by his famous address to the European Parliament known as the Strasbourg Declaration of 1988 declared himself ready to forfeit complete Tibetan sovereignty for self-governing status within China. This stand has come to be known as the Middle Path approach, and caused a certain amount of consternation amongst the ranks of the Tibetans and their supporters. Professor Sondhi, a tenacious non-appeaser especially of dictatorships of all hues, communist, autocratic or imperialist, was disappointed, but continued to champion the essence of Tibetan rights while taking cognisance of the new situation, especially in the context of the renewed engagement policies of the Indian and Chinese



governments. The October 1985 issue of *Shakti International Review* carried his comment on Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's "anxiety to reach an accord with China". He urged New Delhi to 1) reiterate India's symbolic stake in the future of Tibet and link it to current cultural, religious, linguistic, economic, and political rights of the Tibetans; 2) involve the Dalai Lama's government diplomatically in the efforts to institutionalize a Sino-Indian détente (a faint but not exact glimmer of which is perhaps taking place today with the recently announced coordination between the MEA and Dharamsala); 3) refrain from according any legitimacy to the Chinese presence in Tibet till such time as a viable political Tibetan regime was installed in Lhasa; 4) create a momentum for the reduction and eventual elimination of Chinese military forces in Tibet; 5) articulate a set of rules for regional détente which should include a security system between India, China and Tibet; 6) bring Tibet within the purview of measures of decolonization which both India and China had supported at the international level; 7) resist superpower intervention by developing mutual confidence between India and China by treating Tibet as a zone of disengagement between the two Asian countries; 8) actively support the Dalai lama's demand for the removal of nuclear installations and nuclear weapons from the soil of Tibet and 9) develop a long-term view of Tibet's political and economic resurgence as the fundamental basis for deepening Sino-Indian relations.

Professor Sondhi visualised neutralised zones equivalent to that of the Scandinavian countries in Cold War Europe, which could include countries like Tibet and Mongolia to act as buffers between expanding Asian powers, mainly China, India and the USSR. Neutrality could be guaranteed for an independent Tibet along the lines of the Austrian Peace Treaty to address the security concerns of all neighbours including India and China.

In 1989, when the Chinese PLA under governmental orders ruthlessly crushed the massive pro-democracy student uprising in



the heart of the Chinese capital Beijing, poignantly captured on world television, the sufferings of the colonised Tibetans became internationally credible and Professor Sondhi was able to highlight the impact of Chinese rule in Tibet which had ruthlessly exploited the region and brought only devastation to the country and its people.

In the same year Professor Sondhi visited Israel as a special envoy of the Dalai Lama, met Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and obtained from him an invitation for His Holiness to visit Israel. He also established contact with the Druze community, a mystical sect some of whose early prophecies displayed an awareness of Tibet. He met with the revered Shaykh Amin Tarif and other political and spiritual Druze leaders who also extended an invitation to His Holiness to visit them. The visit took place in 1993 when Yitzhak Rabin was Prime Minister. Professor and Mrs. Sondhi accompanied His Holiness on his tour of Galilee and introduced him to the Druze elders, who made him warm welcome at their homes and places of worship.

The eighties and nineties were marked by rising international interest in Tibet, stimulated by the increased frequency of visits by His Holiness to numerous countries around the world. Hearings on Tibet in which Professor Sondhi participated as an Indian representative were held in Bonn (convened by Petra Kelly and the Green Party), London (British Parliamentarians for Tibet), Tokyo (Reverend Uchida of the Nihonji Temple) and, on his urging along with George Fernandes, in New Delhi. On his way back from the Nobel Prize-giving ceremony in Oslo in December 1989, he stopped in Prague, where the Velvet Revolution was under way, receiving an invitation from Vaclav Havel for His Holiness to visit Czechoslovakia, thereby establishing a linkage between these two great humanists.

Professor Sondhi as an educationist took a special interest in young Tibetan scholars, writers and researchers, and several of those



whom he was able to help in their work and careers included Dawa Norbu and Tsering Wangyal (both Editors of *Tibetan Review*, the former also Professor at JNU) Jamyang Norbu (author and propagandist for Tibet) and Lhasang Tsering of the Amnye Machen Institute. He persuaded the enlightened staff at Sardar Patel Vidyalyaya to admit two bright young Tibetan scholars to the school's higher classes. Always supportive of the projection and dissemination of Tibetan culture, he took keen interest in the propagation of Tibetan medicine by encouraging practitioners and reportage from the early seventies onwards. He was keenly supportive of His Holiness' attempts to introduce a democratic political culture amongst the Tibetan community, and encouraged young Tibetan political thinkers and activists including members of the Tibetan Youth Congress to work towards a multi-party system. At times of difficulty he would stand firm by the Indian Tibetan community, whether with legal or journalistic or mediatory assistance. On the occasion of Chinese Premier Li Peng's visit to India in December 1991 he filed a suit in the Delhi High Court protesting the arrest of some 70 Tibetan demonstrators. See also the report from *Tibetan Review* (appendices) about his mediation in the Dharamsala riots.

Throughout his life, Prof. Sondhi tenaciously continued to propagate the cause of the Tibetans, including their rights to essential political freedoms even as citizens under Chinese occupation. He organised several meetings in Delhi addressed by persons such as S. Nijalingappa, President Zail Singh, Farooq Abdullah and former Prime Minister S. Chandrashekhar. In 1992 he and Madhuri S. Sondhi gave testimony at the **Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Session on Tibet at Strasbourg**, with Prof. Sondhi stressing Tibet's position in the current geopolitical situation. In 1995 at The Hague he attended a conference of the **UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and People's Organisation)** on *Conflict Prevention: The post-Cold War Challenge*: in his address he combined his deep interest in peace and conflict with his abiding



concern for the fate of Tibet. Again in 2002 Professor Sondhi participated in The Harvard Project on Cold War Studies' conference on **The Cold War and Its Legacy in Tibet: Great-Power Politics and Regional Security**. In 2003 he organised a conference on **The Himalayas and National Security** under the banner of the Parliamentary Group of the Himalaya Bachao Andolan and one of his last actions was to mobilise support for persuading the Chinese to liberalise and improve the environs of Kailash Mansarovar, a sacred pilgrimage site for both Hindus and Tibetan Buddhists.

He had an abiding faith in the future of Tibetan Swaraj, founded in the strong social and religious culture and history of the Tibetan nation, and fully believed that the blatant deception of the Chinese occupation would one day inevitably succumb to 'imperial overreach'. After the nuclear tests at Pokhran and Chagai (Pakistan) which Professor Sondhi described as the advent of the Second Nuclear Age, he reconceptualised relations between China and India. In his last paper written in 2001, he ends with the following warnings:

‘India and China both wish not to remain in the animosities of the past, and both have taken initiatives to engage with each other. But for the present the Chinese are reluctant to begin a serious dialogue on security matters which can meet the goal of a new future between India, Tibet and China. Chinese leaders realise that India has regained its self-confidence which was undermined in 1962, and will actively resist the perpetration of Chinese hegemony in Asia-Pacific. Nuclear India commands more diplomatic leverage than before and in the time to come the international community will not condone China’s occupation of Tibet. China’s abrupt reversal of its policy towards dialogue with the Tibetan envoys with a view to pleasing USA does not address the underlying problems with India and Tibet. This can only be done by contributing to the stability, democracy and economic



development of Tibet which requires abandoning their ideological straightjacket. It was this that led to the over-extension of their military power into Tibet in the first instance. The Chinese have also to openly acknowledge the special relationship between India and Tibet which has been established on the fundamental basis of cultural and spiritual identity and common democratic and humanistic values. There is scope for optimism concerning the next phase of Sino-Indian relations based on the economic liberalisation policies of both the Asian states and their entrance into the global market.⁹



ML Sondhi on the Importance of Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations¹

by Arthur Waldron

When Jawaharlal Nehru (born 1889) died on May 27, 1964, Manohar Lal Sondhi (1933-2003), then just thirty one years old, was beginning to emerge as one of India's most thoughtful and perspicacious intellectuals. This essay, by an American student of China who had the privilege of meeting Professor Sondhi several times before his untimely death, examines his interest in China. This was only one of Professor Sondhi's many concerns. His writings on the topic nevertheless display a striking degree of insight into and prescience about China. Not that he was always right: he was not. But to reread the dozen or so essays he composed on the subject is to confront ideas that still make sense, sometimes even increased sense, often decades after they were written, and long after many of the works of the China specialists of the time will have lost all relevance.

In retrospect, perhaps Sondhi's convincing analysis of the importance of Tibet between China and India is most impressive. We will examine it more carefully below. Even today, however, the correctness and importance of Sondhi's analysis have not yet been fully grasped, either by the international scholarly or diplomatic communities – indeed, perhaps not even in India.

The reason is above all that independent India's China policy was set by Jawaharlal Nehru, a man who saw the world very differently

¹ To be published in the forthcoming Festschrift in honour of Professor ML Sondhi



from Sondhi, and who arguably did not understand the harsh and cruel side of China, and in particular of Chinese communism until very late in the day. Nehru's initial impressions of China, recorded in his autobiography, were favorable; indeed more than a little romanticized. In 1939 he visited wartime China where:

"I found, to my joy, that my desire that China and India should draw closer to each other was fully reciprocated by China's leaders, and more especially by that great man who has become the symbol of China's unity and her determination to be free. I met Marshall Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang many times and we discussed the present and the future of our respective countries. I returned to India an even greater admirer of China than I had been previously, and I could not imagine that any adverse fate could break the spirit of these ancient people, who had grown so young again."¹

Such sentiments were quite standard at the time, and will be found as well in the various accounts of war time China still to be seen in Mr. Nehru's library at Teen Murti House in Delhi. The sentiments represented more than simple good will, however. They grew from a conviction that India and China were, historically, ranged together as allies both against imperialism and fascism, and destined to march together into a future of independence, socialism, and democracy. As Nehru wrote:

"[I]n my mind the problem of India was tied up with other world problems. More and more I came to think that these separate problems, political or economic, in China, Abyssinia, Spain, Central Europe, India, or elsewhere, were facets of one and the same world problem. ... The challenge of fascism and Nazism was in essence the challenge of imperialism." So immediately relevant to India did China's struggle seem that the Congress organized "thousands of meetings and demonstrations all over the country in sympathy with the people of China" and other victims.²



The victory of Communism in China seemed not greatly to concern Nehru. When, with Chinese and Soviet backing, North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950 the Indian United Nations representative, B. N. Rau (1887-1953) voted to condemn the action. This elicited an alarmed message to Nehru from Krishna Menon (1897-1974) "urging no further support for what he considered a Western imperialist conspiracy against North Korea and China." Nehru ordered his representative not to commit India further and informed U.S. Ambassador Loy Henderson (1892-1986) that in accordance with New Delhi's policy of non-alignment, no Indian participation could be expected in the United Nations force.³

In October 1950, when China invaded Tibet, Nehru chose to do nothing, in spite of advice to the contrary from Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950), among others. We will see below how clearly Sondhi, who would have been seventeen at this time, came to recognize the paramount importance of Tibet in relations between China and India, something Nehru largely missed. Nehru did not yield completely, however. On November 20, 1950 he declared acceptance of the 1914 McMahon boundary with Tibet, not the one indicated on Chinese maps.

Instead, Mr. Nehru reposed confidence in a rather vague concept of friendship. As he put it on January 12, 1951:

"Great nations have arisen in Asia with long memories of the past they have lived through and with their eyes fixed on a future of promise ... China has taken a new shape and a new form. But whether we like that shape and form or not, we have to recognize that a great nation has been reborn and is conscious of her new strength. China in her new-found strength, has acted sometimes in a manner which I deeply regret. But we have to remember the background of China. ... We, in India, have had two thousand years of friendship with China. We have differences of opinion and even small conflicts but when we hark back to that long past



something of the wisdom of that past also helps us to understand each other"⁴

In 1954 Nehru and daughter Indira (1917-1984) visited Beijing. They met Mao Zedong (1893-1976) who, it transpired, was waiting for an invitation to visit New Delhi. Later Indira reflected that "If only we had called him, many things would have been different." [If by this she meant that war might have been averted, she was almost certainly mistaken]. Nehru was charmed by Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) "spending three hours on his last night in China talking alone with [Zhou], mistakenly believing then – indeed almost to the end of his own life – that 'Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai! (Indians and Chinese are brothers!)"⁵

Even after Beijing's full-scale military crushing of Tibet in 1959 and the flight of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (born 1935) to India, the Indian government legally acquiesced, by refusing to recognize Tibet's Dalai Lama as heading a "separate" government of Tibet functioning in India.

Tibet had been, until that time, effectively a separate country and certainly a civilization entirely distinct to that of China. Mountainous, sparsely populated, and poor, she provided an immense neutral zone, of more than 500,000 square miles, between westernmost China in Sichuan and the northern reaches of India on the southern slopes of the great Himalayan massif. Such a Tibet, posing no military threat either to India or to China, would seem to have been in both their interests. But unlike India, which (with some exceptions) was consolidated primarily by peaceful and democratic means, the People's Republic of China used force of arms to assert her control not only over Tibet, but also over Muslim East Turkestan, known in Chinese as Xinjiang ["New Dominion"].

A militarized Tibet of course poses a direct threat to India. Nehru's failure to understand this, and to forestall full Chinese occupation,



as he might have had he acted early, opened the way for further expansion of Chinese territory and influence over land, north of India, a process that has opened land routes now not only to Pakistan but also to Iran. This attempt to cut off India's overland connections to Asia to the north, coupled with China's attempts to bracket India to the East and West and at sea, by building bases in Pakistan and Myanmar, would seem to the strategist's eye to be a deliberate attempt to isolate India and render her subject to pressure and even intimidation. Professor Sondhi saw the outlines of this policy very early, when they were no more than a faint sketch. Now India is becoming aware of it, and beginning to take steps to secure herself.

Nehru died in 1964, but the Nehruvian view of China had in fact perished two years earlier in the death and mayhem of a war that left India humiliated and Nehru disillusioned. A friend of this author, one of Europe and America's most eminent China experts, visited his old acquaintance Pandit Nehru a short time before his death. "Tell me" Nehru asked my friend. "Why have the Chinese done this to me?" My informant, at that time an admirer of Mao Zedong, nevertheless withheld nothing in his response. "They have done this" he said, "to show you that you are dirt, that you are negligible, that they are all powerful and you are nothing" [words to that effect and of that power. My memory of this conversation is not photographic]. Nehru sighed, but evidently could not grasp the enormity of what he was being told.

The following year Sondhi was in print, albeit anonymously, already articulating his most important insight.. The essay, "Tibet at the United Nations – Fresh Strategies for Indian Diplomacy" makes discouraging reading today.⁶ It refers to a long-forgotten attempt by Ireland, Malaysia, Nicaragua, and the Philippines, to bring the plight of Tibet before the General Assembly, and highlights the multifarious interests India possesses in Tibet as a basis for New Delhi's involvement as well. Sondhi lays bare all the contradictions



of Indian policy, not least the way it contradicted the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) himself – “If I want freedom for my country, I would not be deserving of that freedom if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race, weak or strong, to the same freedom.” (Sondhi makes this his epigraph). The attempt to raise the issue failed, needless to say. But Sondhi’s points remain shrewd and insightful.

Particularly striking is Sondhi’s understanding that people do not lightly abandon their cultures or their rights or their nationhoods, even in the face of persistent oppression. First Sondhi stresses the impossibility of actually bringing Tibet under full Chinese control. This is a fact that Beijing still has not grasped. The sufferings of the Tibetans have been unspeakable – were they of white complexion, I have often reflected, many in the West would consider China guilty of crimes against humanity – and they have steadily gotten worse just as this essay is being prepared: through the systematic bulldozing of traditional Tibetan architecture, the forced mass immigration of Chinese, the extensive use of murder, torture, and imprisonment, attempts to co-opt the Tibetan religion – and finally the rail link from Beijing to Lhasa which threatens to make this proud country into something like a Walt Disney attraction.

But such a fate is in fact most unlikely. Sondhi regularly reveals his powerful historical and cultural sense – for example in his discussions of Europe with Klaus Mehnert to which we will turn presently. Unlike many at the time, bedazzled by grandiose historical theories, ideas of revolutionary change and transformation and so forth, Sondhi always understood that each people had its history, its self-awareness and self-respect, and that these were refractory qualities, impossible to melt away even in the white heat of the furnaces of Communism.

Bolstering this point is Sondhi’s understanding that India and China can never have true peace if China insists of making of Tibet



a forward military base. Sondhi notes that Tibet must not be converted into a “front line” of the Cold War, as American assistance to the Tibetan freedom-fighters was doing. Rather, he showed a far more subtle sense – one that may have been unique at the time – that what was needed was to recapture Tibet’s traditional role as a country – even a buffer state if you will – whose own civilization is interpenetrated by the civilizations of both China and India – and a state that, handled with respect, poses no threat whatsoever to either. The genuine restoration of Tibet to her historic role would mark a major and perhaps indispensable step in Sino-Indian reconciliation.

Reality, tragically, had already veered far away from the track that Sondhi envisioned, and that still remains the wisest approach to the issue. China adopted a narrowly tactical and military approach to a complex cultural issue. The war with India had been prompted on China’s side by the tactical need to secure control of a land route to Tibet, lest the Tibetans should once again assert themselves. This was a purely tactical consideration, yet China has paid a terrible strategic price for it. Indeed, I rank it as one of China’s three greatest international mistakes since 1949. I would argue that price is no less than the alienation of India and that country’s acquisition of nuclear weapons, a reality that renders China, whatever she may do, threatened with a second front. (The other two mistakes, I would argue, were the refusal of the Chinese Communists to send an envoy to American Ambassador Leighton Stuart (1876-1962) in Nanjing after President Harry Truman (1884-1972) had forbidden Stuart to travel, as he had hoped, to Beijing – which began decades of mutual isolation between America and China, and most recently, Beijing’s constant lecturing and provocation of Japan – which I suspect will turn that once devoutly pacifist state, sooner rather than later, into a nuclear power, the worst conceivable outcome for China).



August 1965 saw a new Kashmir crisis, followed in January of 1966 by a conference at Tashkent between Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers, with Soviet Premier Kosygin (1904-1980) presiding. They agreed to withdraw to the lines of August 1965 but without a settlement.

December of the same year finds Sondhi again stressing the importance of Tibet⁷. Lal Bahadur Shastri (1904-1966) had succeeded Nehru as Indian Prime Minister in June of 1964. His brief premiership would end abruptly with his death, the day after signing the Tashkent Declaration in January 1966, which brought to an end a war with Pakistan, involving Kutch, Kashmir, and Punjab, in which India did well enough for the short-lived Prime Minister to emerge as a bit of a hero.

But as Sondhi saw it, at the bureaucratic level Indian foreign policy continued to grind along in the same old ruts. The significance of the war, which is dual, had been entirely missed. First, Pakistan and China are clearly attempting to pressure India. Second, by her success, India had demonstrated that her seemingly cumbersome democratic system is in fact capable of acting as "those states which have autocratic decision-making systems." As for the international strategic picture, no rethinking of the scope for which Prime Minister Shastri had led some to hope was in sight. The "break-up of monolithic international communism" has not been rigorously assessed. The Middle East, and particularly the clear permanence of Israel, has not been properly considered. China's possible motives for "the establishment of hegemony in Asia" had not been investigated.

Indeed the special governmental unit for the study of China has been established for only three years and is heavily influenced by British scholars such as G. F. Hudson of St. Antony's College, Oxford, who "gives the impression that after all the Chinese are



not so wicked and there is no reason why India should want to negotiate from strength or should introduce a Theory of Deterrence into her defence planning against China." "Mr. Swaran Singh's (1907-1994) nuclear doctrine is a fairly simple one, namely that once India has signed the Moscow Test Ban Treaty [1963], there is precious little that remains to be done." To Sondhi, "These are the same weaknesses evident in the old Pancha Sheel attitude to China in which India was committed to continuously appease Chinese intransigence."⁸

This of course refers to the "Three Agreements and Five Principles Between India and China" that Swaran Singh had concluded in 1954.

Yet even Hudson agreed that, as of the early 1960s, "Tibet does not as yet belong to the Chinese motherland." According to Sondhi, however, India's government, has, in practice at least, "recognize[d] Chinese rule over Tibet" [India's official adoption of the Chinese language of sovereignty came only in 2003, as part of the price for a visit to Beijing by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1924-)] As a strategic thinker capable of reading maps, Sondhi finds this "criminal negligence." Would not Tibet be an ideal location from which to threaten India with nuclear missiles? Should not India re-examine the whole issue of Tibet as it relates to her national security and her relations with China, rather than following discredited ideas from the past? Would not this be an appropriate area for international inspection and supervision? The questions are on the mark, but received no answer at the time.⁹

A broader idea of Sondhi's thinking at this time may be gained from the transcript of a discussion with Klaus Mehnert, the German author and international commentator (1906-1964).¹⁰ The discussion begins with the changes in the Soviet bloc after Stalin's death in 1953. Mehnert takes an approach that in effect concedes the permanence of communism,



but seeks to distinguish its various strands: for him the point is that now that Moscow is no longer solely in charge “there are as many opinions as there are communist parties.” Sondhi’s reaction is quite remarkable, especially given the time. “The changes in Eastern Europe, and there are quite a lot of them, are so far reaching that one really has to revise most of one’s concepts of the past. Take a country like Czechoslovakia. *It is more or less going back into its own previous history, and even when a communist leader in that country discusses the party line, he does not speak in terms of what Professor Mehnert calls ideology.*”¹¹ Later he observes that “a kind of modernization is spreading over this area, and that is why it is nonsense to speak of a fulfillment of Marxist prophecies.”

Almost a quarter century before the fact, Sondhi has sketched the historical processes that, starting in 1989, swept away the communism that had been imposed from outside on these historically European states. He had rightly foreseen that the threat from the East to Western Europe would not materialize. All this was a bit much for the West German Mehnert, intimately familiar with the Berlin Wall and the hideous regime of the German Democratic Republic. “[A]s I am not an Asiatic” he responded to Sondhi’s seeming complacency, “I am not so much relaxed.” But then he launches into a discussion of the importance of reestablishing cultural contacts with the East, stressing historic commonalities and continuities (“The Poles are as Catholic as the Italians”) and the need to develop them, with which Sondhi can only wholeheartedly agree.¹²

As the discussion proceeds, it becomes clear that Sondhi has a very deep confidence in the perdurance of history and culture, while Mehnert is more inclined to accept the realities of the ostensibly irreversible political “revolutions” of the post – World War II period. “With these countries [of Eastern Europe] there will always be a continuing impression from the past and this cannot be removed. People will dwell upon their experiences, which were altogether



unique. There was in the Stalin era totalitarian control of all the ideas and the rulers claimed that they were not only establishing a new social system but creating a new communist human being. Now all of this has been rejected, but still these experiences have left behind certain attitudes. Thus the facts of the Hungarian upheaval in 1956 will not be forgotten, nor the way in which Gomulka came into power." For Sondhi these are not epochal and definitive events, but simply a few more pieces in the already complex historical mosaics of these countries. Hence, Western Europe need not be overly alarmed. She can do good, provided her approach is not too intense, "[T]he West can be very relaxed over this area."¹³

But almost immediately the two sensibilities clash again, one historical, patient, and long-term, the other informed by political theory and focused on the present. Is the world not heading to the emergence of ever larger units? of a United States of Europe? Mehnert says "yes," with enthusiasm. Sondhi's reaction is again fascinating – and prescient. "I believe that two big conglomerations of nations will not grow very old. It is something like a business firm which becomes too large." Mehnert shows some heat: "Do you propose to break the Republic of India open to arrive at the same result?" But of course India's history is rather different. Then Mehnert raises de Gaulle, (1890-1970) whom he opposes because the General rejects the idea of a United States of Europe. Sondhi is more sympathetic, recalling the amicable visit of Andre Malraux to (1901-1976) to India in 1958,, and suggesting the United States (and Mehnert, presumably) can take a more relaxed attitude to the French president.¹⁴

Of course the questions of federations and larger political units are not resolved to this day. As Professor Sondhi's son Shivaji Lal Sondhi (also a professor, at Princeton) has remarked, "the European Union and India are the two greatest federal experiments of the present day." For the moment India would seem



to be doing better. Perhaps that is because the shared sense of Indianness is stronger than any common European consciousness. Mehnert challenges Sondhi as to whether he, as a northerner, would favor a secessionist movement in South India. Sondhi's disarming reply: "To tell you a personal secret, I am from north India and my wife comes from Madras and I am in favor of that kind of integration."¹⁵

Finally the two pundits turn briefly to China. Once again the fundamental issue between them is the same: just how permanent and enduring are recent changes? Here there is a degree of agreement. Mehnert believes that "China" – which he clearly thinks of in unitary terms – "will be more coexistable in fifteen years" – which, in 1980, certainly seemed to be the case, though China's subsequent arms build up and diplomatic course are now raising questions. Sondhi turns again to history. His China is not some model or unit but a historical civilization in which "some inevitable processes are going on." [This is of course written during the brief and seemingly normal period months before the Cultural Revolution broke out in full force]. Furthermore, understanding is lacking. "Up till now" Sondhi notes, "we have not yet had a really good analysis of the sources of Chinese behaviour" [the same could be said today] and without that little can be fully grasped. But "Tibet will in fact be the test case." Finally, Sondhi points out the larger pattern of international relations: "It is India's political strength and will-power along with that of countries like Japan that will largely determine the possibilities of controlling the recklessness of Chinese leaders and ensuring peace in Asia and the world."¹⁶

If anything these last two statements are even truer now than they were a quarter century ago. How China treats Tibet will be the touchstone of her own political future. And as American power diminishes, Japan, India, and other regional states will have more and more responsibility for dealing with China.



In 1966 Indira Gandhi took over as Prime Minister, and made visits to Washington, London, and Moscow. (Beijing was of course in the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. The following year a mob burned the British embassy to the ground). A year later, in 1968, tensions rose with Pakistan and China over their support for Naga and Mizo rebels.

Three years later Beijing was admitted to the United Nations and Taipei expelled. Sondhi returned to the crucial importance of Tibet.¹⁷ Doing this always took great intellectual confidence and courage. What cause, after all, could be more totally and completely lost than that of Tibet? Since the 1950s Beijing has systematically obliterated all but a handful of the thousands of monasteries that were once the centers of Tibetan culture, tortured and murdered Tibetan people (of whom perhaps only half live in the current official autonomous region), ravaged traditional cityscapes, and maintained both occupying troops and a policy of forced immigration. It is a tragedy, to be sure, many foreign diplomats will tell you, as they shed crocodile tears. But Tibet is finished. Yet even at the moment of one of Beijing's greatest foreign policy triumphs: namely, her entry into the United Nations, Sondhi not only talked about Tibet, but did so using recklessly undiplomatic language, such as "China's genocidal policies." How could a man of his intelligence prove so "wrongheaded"?

Perhaps the answer is to be found in his sense of history, which we have already encountered, applied with astonishing prescience to Eastern Europe. Few took the possibility of such change seriously at all. Think, for example, of the Baltic States. As the Soviet Union annexed them in 1940 they placed their gold reserves in the most trustworthy hands they could think of: those of the Bank of England. In 1968 Prime Minister Harold Wilson (1916-1995), eager to cozy up to the USSR handed that gold over to Moscow. After all, it would have been universally agreed, no independent Estonian government was likely to claim it anytime soon. But lo!



In 1991 an envoy from just such a government turned up in Threadneedle Street, to be told a deeply embarrassing story. (In the end, the British paid up.)

This jaw-dropping outcome was of course not the product solely of the small stolid bands of Estonians and other peoples under occupation, who maintained legations wherever possible, sustained governments in exile, and ceaselessly spoke of their history and rights – regardless of the pity and amusement of the better informed students of foreign policy. The fact was that the Soviet Union collapsed – not surprisingly, as it was a dysfunctional and lawless state – and in its death rattle coughed up many of the sovereign peoples it had swallowed in more vigorous times.

Now consider Tibet. Tibetans know who they are. They have a long, proud, and sophisticated culture and a rich history. It is simply impossible that they will, after decades and decades of propaganda and oppression be somehow transformed into Chinese – no more likely than Dutch will become Germans or Poles become Russians. We are dealing here with the kind of human unit, memory, and consciousness that Sondhi spoke of to Klaus Mehnert (at a time, it may be observed, when some Soviets were expecting the *sliianie* or amalgamation and homogenization into a single people of the Eastern Europeans and Russians). That did not happen.

So what *will* happen to Tibet? One possibility is that oppression, cultural indoctrination, Chinese migration, and ever more complete linkage to China – by rail, pipeline, and so forth – will weld Tibet inseparably to the People's Republic of China. Such processes, after all, seemed for a good century to have extinguished Poland and linked most of Central Europe either to Germany or to Russia. German migration, especially to the cities, made locals into an uneducated rural class. Yet the situation did not last. Changes in the large countries – Russia and Germany – provided an opening for long concealed cultural and national forces to make themselves felt.



The chief reason that change in Eastern Europe was not anticipated – the assumption upon which Harold Wilson handed over the Estonian gold – was that most observers, in the thrall of social science theories that saw Marxist rule as an irreversible change, determined if not over-determined by History. They were of course wrong. So now the social scientists are much more cautious about China. It is an immense state, to be sure, with vast military forces, mountains of foreign reserves, breathtaking growth rates – and also without any fixed governing structures, even as it faces problems of every sort, from poverty to unemployment to energy and water shortage to grave environmental pollution.

China is bound to change, though no one can say precisely how. Sondhi always knew this, because he understood history and how states and economies work. When China begins to change, we may be absolutely certain that Tibet will suddenly become a live issue. India should be preparing for this day, though she seems not to be. Sondhi's 1972 article makes some excellent points about how that consideration might proceed.

First, the world community must never forget – as it may seem to have – the atrocities committed in Tibet by China. "This question must remain on the agenda of bilateral negotiations with Peking and should also be underscored and assigned high priority after the initiation of the Chinese Communists in the United Nations system." As of 2006, we score zero for that, but the recommendation is sound and its time will come.

"Second, a substantive element of constructive negotiations must be the recognition of the Dalai Lama's right to speak for his own people whose interest should not be sacrificed in the interests of new Sino-Indian understanding." Here we score a black mark. We will see below Sondhi warning that the United States may offer "unrealistic accommodations" to secure relations with Beijing in the 1970s, that will harm Indian interests. One could equally say



that the Indian accommodations offered to Beijing about Tibet in order to secure a visit by the then prime minister also sacrificed Indian and Chinese interests (in a genuinely stable peace) while reflecting a lack of imagination about the future worthy of Harold Wilson.

Finally, "India must reaffirm with firmness and strength her conviction that the area of Tibet should not be used for creating a hostile military presence and she should seek an explicit recognition of her interest in the demilitarized orientation of Tibet."¹⁸

It all seems so unrealistic. Yet what is the alternative? A perpetually restive Tibet, filled with Chinese soldiers, exporting wretched refugees, with violence and terrorism perhaps gaining a real foothold, all looming over the northern frontiers of a strong and democratic India? Can one imagine real peace or trust or understanding between the two countries under such conditions? The answer is no. "Peace" if that is the word only so long as democratic India sets aside her own ideals, turns a blind eye to the horrors in the north, and acquiesces in Chinese behavior that should land her in the Court of International Justice in The Hague. That in fact has been a major component of Indian policy.

But Sondhi does not argue that the war drums should be beaten – although he does lament New Delhi's failure to act in the early 1950s, when some support for Tibet could have induced the Chinese to negotiate. "In a very real sense, from October 1950 to September 1951, India would not have found it difficult to exert her influence on behalf of a policy of military restraint by Peking if she had organized a deterrence posture based on the supply of conventional arms to the Tibetans and strengthened their bargaining power with the Chinese Communists, *India's commitment to a peaceful solution was not strengthened by curtailing the right of the Tibetans to improve their military posture.* India also failed to offer a



meaningful alternative when the matter was raised in the United Nations and the Indian representative's approach lacked any sophistication ..."¹⁹.

Instead, he advocates a highly constructive policy and diplomacy that "must lay the groundwork for a moderate and reasonable settlement which will lead to stabilization of the internal politics and external relations of Tibet."²⁰ If this recommendation has a fault, it is one that it shares with many other of Professor Sondhi's ideas and insights: it is simply too far ahead of its time ever to win the dubious status of conventional wisdom

A year before in 1971 India intervened in civil war between East and West Pakistan. Bangladesh was proclaimed on December 15. In August of the same year, Indira Gandhi had signed the Twenty Year Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation with the USSR. And in the following year was signed the Simla agreement between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto renouncing the use of force and pledging respect for cease fire lines.

But the big news internationally was the rapprochement between China and the United States, culminating in Richard Nixon's (1913-1994) visit to Beijing in 1972.

A year later Sondhi published another major essay concerning India and China.²¹

Sondhi began with the just-completed war with Pakistan over Bangladesh which, far more than the China developments, he sees as "marking a turning point in the traditional conception of India's role in attaining her own security interests."²² This highlights another important aspect of his thought. Most observers rarely look at India alone. Rather, she is to them a factor in some multi-sided balance. But Sondhi tends to begin with India and systematically work his way abroad. His questioning starts with



the basics: what are India's security interests? And how shall they be secured?

The first problem Sondhi identifies is, interestingly, not geopolitical at all. Rather it is technological. In the world at the time rapid strides were being made in an entirely new generation of weapons, notably precision guided munitions [PGMs] which the United States had begun to introduce in the final stages of the Vietnam War. India at the time had some indigenous weapons production capability, but relied heavily on imports, notably from the Soviet Union. Sondhi notes that the sorts of weapons now emerging will require higher technological levels than India currently possesses, and longer lead times between the determination that a weapon is needed and its actual initial operational capability. Therefore he urges a more "technology oriented" approach, as opposed to a "product oriented" approach, and a major national effort to upgrade indigenous capabilities.²³

Just as Sondhi's initial focus on attaining a far higher degree of self-sufficiency in the production of high technology weapons may surprise the outsider, so too will the geopolitical assessment to which he turns to support it. For most of the period after 1947 India had not really thought of herself as having positively defined foreign interests. She was "non-aligned" (with Moscow, one might add) and her concern, drawing perhaps on memories of colonialism and alarmist Communist rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s, to avoid becoming drawn into world tensions of the time.

By the time Sondhi wrote, however, that approach was being replaced by more concrete analyses. How is India to insulate herself from "the machinations of the Big Powers"? Should India develop a force projection capability, in particular to deal with regional contingencies? How should she view China's nuclear weapons (which at that time were rather limited and of a deterrent character)? Should she seek alliances for the protection of the Indian Ocean?



Finally came a question very much of its time. Given "U.S.-Soviet convergence" how should India assure that she not lose "political flexibility" – a reference, one would think, to the situation in which, with Moscow and Washington seemingly drawing closer – Moscow's fatal expansion after the American loss in Vietnam, leading to Soviet defeat in Afghanistan is not yet in view – the tactic of moving between the two powers and playing one off against another, might be losing its potency.²⁴

The impulse for these considerations is the war in Bangladesh. India, as Sondhi sees it, should have an the ability for "an unfettered role in a wide range of actions." The Indo-Soviet Treaty concluded by Mrs. Gandhi avoided squarely addressing this requirement. Yet the half-hearted American attempt to intimidate India and support Pakistan (then a crucial player in Washington's China diplomacy) by moving the Seventh Fleet through the Straits of Malacca to the Bay of Bengal – and then, of course, doing no more – nevertheless reminded India that she still faced the threat of "gunboat diplomacy." The corollary to this is that greater emphasis should be placed on developing Indian naval capabilities.²⁵

At this time, moreover, China's now nearly decade long possession of nuclear weapons and some missiles was increasingly appearing as potentially a greater long-term problem for India than, perhaps, even American carrier battle groups. The tendency to make "enigmatic statements about "utilising nuclear energy for peaceful purposes"" was giving way to a more straightforward willingness to speak directly of the problem. Nuclear propulsion for submarines was also an area demanding examination. In any case, if the great powers were to be prevented from interfering in Indian politics, then, Sondhi concluded, nuclearization was the *sine qua non*.

This conclusion was not, in the first instance, a response to China or any other power. It was precipitated by Bangladesh, and a



growing sense of Indian “Manifest Destiny” not unlike the American of the nineteenth century. The difference is that the subcontinent is already populated. India’s “destiny” is to prevent “neo-colonialist” Great Power interventions – this author might label that an Indian “Monroe Doctrine” and – prescient words – “horrible genocidal massacres.”²⁶

Here, of course, Sondhi is to some extent advocating. But to an equal degree he is simply identifying a major shift. The well-established and “rigid” thinking of the past, that had excluded any Indian need for power projection capabilities, and led India to carry the flag for general disarmament at international meetings, has now encountered – above all in Bangladesh – events that have significantly altered the debate in the direction of realistic and responsible thinking about security needs.²⁷

Having outlined the fundamental military desiderata for a truly independent India: namely, the ability to intervene in her own neighborhood and to be sufficiently strong so as not to be liable to constraints or threats from other military powers, Sondhi turns to the American-Chinese diplomacy then so current.

Sondhi displays a clear-eyed understanding when he expresses concern that “The United States may offer unrealistic accommodations which may inevitably close options for peaceful settlement between New Delhi and Peking.”²⁸

U.S. diplomacy at the time rested on the premise that Mao’s China was established and permanent: an ancient civilization had at last found her appropriate modern form, and that therefore the time was right to place long term bets. The grim situation in Vietnam, contrasted with unrealistically rosy appraisals of the USSR, China, and North Vietnam had led many Americans to despair of democracy and freedom for the non-northern European peoples of the world, and to a search by the hard headed realists (as they



imagined themselves) such as Henry Kissinger (1923-) and Richard Nixon to search for a stable great power with which to “divide the world” – rather as Britain had with Japan in the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902. But even Japan, the greatest economy in Asia (even today, by a factor of three) was not told of American plans. India was considered not at all.

Americans negotiated in an amateurish and poorly prepared fashion. The more reasonable proposals of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance (1917-2002) were bypassed bureaucratically by the extreme position of Zbigniew Brzezinski (1928-), which were motivated more by anti-Soviet animus than any consideration of Asia. American allies were unpleasantly surprised, with one, Taiwan, escaping American plans for her absorption by China only by democratizing and thus re-legitimizing herself.

As for India, Sondhi’s concerns were thoroughly born out. The American-Chinese relationship was never easy at all – how could it have been, given that the United States is a relatively free and transparent country, while China is a lawless dictatorship? – yet it was always given highest priority. Any concern by any other country that might irritate the Chinese government would worry Washington, which would seek to silence it. Abruptly a whole series of unresolved issues were swept from the negotiating table: Tibet was an integral part of China and Tibetans as Chinese as the oldest family in Shanghai – an absurdity. The Turks who had been forcibly incorporated into China by the Qing became a problem – today the United States agrees with Beijing that they are “terrorists” – like, one presumes, the authors of independence of state after state around the world. As for India’s border dispute, the line was: “Tough luck. The Indians are just going to have to settle for what China offers.” Indian-American relations in those days were often suspicious and mutually condescending, and therefore rather difficult. Still, from an American point of view, it would have made good sense not to tilt all the way to China, and to hedge positions on issues still requiring resolution.



One reason for the difficulty was the widespread contempt for India felt, to varying degrees, in both China and the United States. This was not helped by India's self-presentation as a virtuous teacher-country, morally superior to her wealthier colleagues.

But the most important reasons for the problem Sondhi puts his finger on precisely. How could China take seriously a country that professed pacifism, had shown up poorly in 1962, equivocated self-righteously about "peaceful uses of nuclear energy" and so forth – but never showed her muscle? A nuclear India would be more likely to be able to maintain real peace with China than a non-nuclear one, because both her power and her political independence would be unmistakable.²⁹

Sondhi then returns to his theme of sea-power. Here India possesses, potentially, a highly advantageous position, with long coasts, good harbors, offshore islands, and above all the Andaman and Nicobar territories that are key to the Straits of Malacca. Even as Sondhi was writing, some thirty years ago, however, China was seeking to negate these advantages. She supported Pakistan and managed to lead the United States to do the same. Today she has created a network of naval bases – a "string of pearls" as she puts it – intended to hem in India to the east and to the west, while developing overland connections to Iran designed to exclude India from Central Asia, and a railway to Lhasa that is intended to imbed Tibet in the matrix of the People's Republic. Clearly the intention is to bypass and thus isolate India, and to make use of both her land and sea lines of communication subject to Chinese acquiescence of interference – precisely the danger Sondhi pointed out at the beginning of his essay

As at the outset, Sondhi is concerned with any threat to Indian autonomy in the region. He mentions the concern felt that Moscow's growing navy might turn the Indian Ocean into "a Soviet lake" as well as worry about the Anglo-American presence at Diego Garcia.



But his conclusion is upbeat: in the 1970s India is at last beginning to adopt a realistic attitude toward the need for defense, and this simple fact is changing the way other powers view her.³⁰

In May of 1974 India exploded her first nuclear device. In September of the following year Sondhi adopted a somewhat new tack in an essay, "China's coercive diplomacy."³¹ As he did so often, Sondhi took as his point of departure the closest and most immediate Sino-Indian issue: namely, Tibet. China had just completed a nuclear missile testing range, capable of firing intercontinental ballistic missiles some 9,600 kilometers over Indian national territory, and this in precisely the region for the neutralization of which Sondhi had so persistently called. China's latest action seemed a bad omen: "[It] can scarcely be regarded as a gesture of reconciliation to India" he observed with more than a hint of irony.

One must always remember that states have alternatives and make choices. Nothing was foreordained about the new facility in Tibet. Chinese security did not somehow mechanistically "require" it nor had Indian actions somehow "elicited" it as a Chinese reaction. For whatever reason, it was Beijing's free choice. She could easily have developed her missiles elsewhere. To New Delhi, the choice was like nothing so much as a finger thrust into the eye. It raised in a more pressing way the fact Sondhi had mentioned in passing to Klaus Mehnert: that "Up till now we have not yet had a really good analysis of the sources of Chinese behaviour."³²

At this time, most outsiders held a particularly benign view of China. Beijing was opening up to outside visitors and investment in a way unheard of since Mao Zedong had taken power twenty six years before. The Americans who would participate in the grandiosely titled "Polo I" visit four years earlier to smooth the way for Nixon had studied, we know from Henry Kissinger's memoirs, books almost exclusively favorable to China and highly unrealistic. A few years later the American eagerness to embrace China would



lead President Jimmy Carter (1924-) to make just the sorts of “unrealistic accommodations” against which Sondhi had warned in 1973. Why? The basic reason was that the Americans had adopted an understanding of Chinese foreign policy that is today usually called “the response school.” According to this, China is by nature a rather pacific and commercially minded state, but when faced with provocations or insults, above all from “imperialist” states such as Britain or the U.S. she has little choice but to respond. Such an interpretation was even made of China’s war with India by the British fellow-traveler Neville Maxwell (who, in a conversation with this author in China, spoke bitterly of how meager had been China’s reciprocation for the great favor he did them by writing *India’s China War*.³³

One odd thing about this approach is that it denies any substantial Chinese role in China’s own foreign policy. Far from planning – as Chinese history suggests regimes in that country have been known to do – by the “response theory” actually the Chinese are reduced to an entirely passive role, slumbering pacifically until some foreigner makes a misstep (why foreigners are capable of action while Chinese are not is never explained) and they must move. Needless to say the theory is implausible and has now been pretty thoroughly demolished, interestingly not by a native-born American but by the Chinese-born Professor Chen Jian of Cornell University³⁴ and other émigré Chinese scholars. But until they did their work, it was the conventional wisdom.

Sondhi, not surprisingly, will have none of it. Nineteen years before the first of Chen’s important books appeared, he sketched a picture of an active and not entirely benign China. Broadly, China claims a major world role; more narrowly, she “claims a right to impose its will on India by making verbose statements putting forward propositions amounting to interference in India’s domestic affairs. ... This hostile and war-like attitude ... has led China to adopt an offensive posture towards India which is characterized by an effort



to sow the seeds of violence through Indian extremists and to sow the seeds of disruption and dismemberment by supporting so-called Naga and Mizo separatist demands. This 'coercive' conception of international relations militates against practical diplomacy which could help to extend détente to the Asian continent."³⁵

Although he does not make it explicit, Sondhi evidently understands the close linkage (stressed by Professor Chen and others as well) between the demands of China's internal politics – she is, after all, a dictatorship whose subjects have effectively no freedoms – and her often belligerent foreign policy. "The grandeur of Maoism" stands at the center, as the emperor once did, far more excellent than what any neighbor possesses, and thus "[t]he history of Chinese foreign policy shows ... that Peking's rulers do not accept the wider and deeper community of Asian countries which could bargain as equals."

American failure in Vietnam had simply given more scope to this approach. "China is seeking a re-definition of goals and objectives through which it can use its politico-military power to generate pressures in its immediate geographical environment. It is not adopting a strategy of conflict resolution but is seeking interlocking agreements as a so-called champion of the Third World which will actually enable it to maximize Chinese coercive power and exploit the vulnerability of political societies whose problems of national integration are particularly intractable."³⁶

Such language almost certainly sounded extreme at the time to many of Sondhi's Indian colleagues and certainly to all but a handful of western China specialists. But to Singaporeans, Malays, Indonesians, and other Southeast Asians it would have rung true even then. Today, with China tightly involved in Africa and Latin America, attempting to bracket India between Burma and Pakistan, and supporting Iran and North Korea as outposts, Sondhi's analysis is largely vindicated.



Of course one way of attempting to marginalize Sondhi's common sense insights would be to object that he was not a credentialed China specialist, and for this reason could not hope to comprehend the Arcana of the Middle Kingdom. Yet a year before Mao Zedong's death on September 9, 1976, Sondhi was speculating on a post-Mao future with far greater imagination and rigor than many of his credentialed colleagues.

Informed opinion was nearly unanimous that after his death Mao would continue to rule from beyond the grave. He had, after all, invented and codified both the theory and practice of Chinese communism which, as visitors were assured by every Chinese they met, they loved and would never abandon. Harvard's Professor John King Fairbank (1907-1991) then the reigning authority, evoked for his students a China in which, faced with a problem, officials would loyally rummage through Mao's abundant writings, asking themselves no more than "What would the Great Helmsman have done."³⁷ (Needless to say believers in this approach were caught utterly unprepared by the flood of change released with in a month of Mao's death that has by today submerged Mao's thought and even obliterated the physical traces of his China. Everything looks different – though the party dictatorship remains little changed).

Sondhi seems to have understood this intuitively. When the king dies and the prince takes over, change is inevitable. In October 1975 he published a short speculation concerning "the disintegrative elements which are leading to the inexorable dismantling of the structure and balance of power which Mao as the idolized leader could reinforce with revolutionary ardour."³⁸ Without Mao, this source of cohesion would vanish. As for Deng Xiaoping, Sondhi recognized that he was "singularly unqualified to play the leadership role of dissent-management in the party." Or as Deng himself put it, "not to have discussions is one of my great discoveries."³⁹ The final proof of Sondhi's correctness was Deng's ordering of the Tiananmen massacre in June 1989.



In the course of his analysis Sondhi makes a number of points that would do real credit to a professional China watcher. He notes that Mao's introduction of anarchy into Maoism (with his theory that social contradictions continue even after the victory of socialism) "has been a major obstacle to the institutionalization of political behaviour" – a point that subsequent events have shown to be correct. Nor, according to Sondhi, does the Maoist elite "possess a set of normative rules for the resolution of factional conflicts." Again, a defect that has been becoming clearer and clearer over the years – and not only in China. Soviet sociologists of the Brezhnev era were already concerned that contradictions were increasing under communism, as modernization rendered society ever more complex (not simpler, as Marx had imagine when he envisioned the emergence of a homogenous and undifferentiated proletariat sharing identical interests.)⁴⁰ Sondhi expected, incorrectly, that the post-Mao era might witness an exacerbation in tensions between Moscow and Beijing. But he did get the charge just right:

"Indian decision-makers must set themselves the task of discerning the basic features of the post-Mao era. There is an important and continuous relationship between domestic and foreign policy. There is no simple formula for tackling the outstanding issues between New Delhi and Peking. India must keep in mind the chronology of Peking's coercive actions against the Tibetans and the infringement of friendly relations with India. At the same time India must make every effort to discover Chinese motives and intentions to discover the scope for further developments towards peace."⁴¹

Less than a month after the post-Mao era began on September 9, 1976, Sondhi made just such an attempt.⁴² The occasion was the first exchange of ambassadors between China and India since the crisis of 1961. On July 7, Indian Ambassador to China Kocheril Raman Narayanan (1921-2005) arrived in Beijing. On Sept. 10, China's new Ambassador to India Chen Zhaoyuan (1918-) arrived in New Delhi.



Sondhi observes that India was thus a bit slow in the then world-wide game of “normalizing” relations with China, but notes that New Delhi needed time to assess how the new U.S.-Chinese relationship would affect her – while also pointing out that diplomatic ties had in fact never been broken, so too much should not be made of this event. Ever the realist, Sondhi insists that whatever the new Sino-Indian relationship might be it must feature concrete linkages between rhetoric and proclaimed policy and actual progress. Generally Sondhi took an uncharacteristically sanguine tone, perhaps reflecting the atmosphere at the time, which was filled with optimism and hope, far greater than what has been achieved to this day.

Sondhi noted that China and Russia appear still to be at odds, but judges that China will not fear Indo-Soviet collusion. He also notes that China’s non-intervention in Bangladesh was propitious for relations with India. He is even a bit skeptical about China’s denunciation of India’s first nuclear test, on May 18, 1974, arguing that rhetoric aside, Beijing seems not overly upset. He considers the degree to which Indian border policy is intended to maintain stability and deter further Chinese actions, but by implication, not militarily irredentist – though he stresses at the outset that the issues of the Sino-Indian War of 1962 still remain unresolved.

This was for China and the world generally an “era of good feeling.” The massacre at Tiananmen Square was still thirteen years into the future as was the collapse of the Soviet Union, which meant the disconcerting disappearance of the state with which India was non-aligned, and which China still viewed with concern. China’s most rapid economic growth began a few years later, as did her comprehensive military buildup. So optimism was quite general.

Sondhi does not predict the end of communism. Scarcely anybody did. Nor does he grasp the full implications for China of India’s



becoming a nuclear power. He makes an excellent list of Chinese and Indian concerns. Among these, for the Chinese, he includes "Strategic importance of India on China's Southern Flank."

I have already suggested that the impetus Chinese policy gave to India's development of nuclear weapons must rank as one of Beijing's three most catastrophic foreign policy mistakes. Beijing provided impetus in two ways: first, by absolutely refusing any meaningful settlement of border issues, the assumption being that India would have no choice but to accept China's position, and the second being China's extensive aid – not a strong enough word – to Pakistan's nuclear program. In the decade after India's first nuclear test, both countries strained to develop their nuclear capabilities as fast as possible. India did so pretty much on her own; Pakistan was extensively assisted by China. In May 1998 both countries carried out tests that made clear they were poised to become fully capable nuclear powers.

Pakistan may have been reacting to India but India, I am told by senior sources, was above all concerned with China, where a robust military buildup was well in evidence by 1998. A nuclear Pakistan poses a variety of imponderable risks. Her relations with India have their ups and downs, and having a nuclear deterrent may keep away an Indian attack. She is an ally of China, and with nuclear weapons, a more impressive and imposing one. But most importantly, Pakistan is a Muslim country, in a Muslim world where conflict is increasing and jihadism is on the rise. I have been told that the present Pakistani government would be willing to share its nuclear weapons with a threatened Muslim state. I also worry that if Pakistan's political posture should change, and she were to join the Muslim states of Central Asia – surely where she belongs – that would pose a serious threat to Russia, China, and India. China seems not to have thought this problem through with sufficient imagination and rigor.



But Chinese miscalculation with respect to Pakistan pales by comparison with her faulty assessment of India. An armed, democratic, and increasingly prosperous India, having modern fleets, armies, and air forces, as well as nuclear weapons, is a strategic nightmare for China. How can they have let it happen? All that was required was a bit more courtesy to Mr. Nehru. But now India has learned her lesson and is set on a course of appropriate military development from which, one suspects, she will not be swayed. This development upsets utterly China's calculations about Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, her sea lines of communication – and even her freedom to pursue hostilities, say with Korea or Japan or Taiwan, without worrying about a second front.

The only explanation I can find is that China expected the United States somehow to discipline India and force her to give up nuclear weapons (as she did in the cases of South Korea, and Taiwan, twice with the latter). Some credibility is lent to this interpretation by the difficulties the current U.S.-Indian nuclear cooperation agreement have been having in the United States. But that would add grievous misappraisal of the United States to deep misunderstanding of India. That little phrase of Sondhi's about "Strategic importance of India to China's Southern Flank" turns out to have named something far larger and more loaded with policy implications than even he imagined at the time.

Had the Chinese been reading Sondhi, however, they could have understood, ten years before the major Indian nuclear tests, the directions of sentiment. In 1988 Sondhi published a short piece that laid out clearly the facts of China's immense military buildup, which in those days was still being dismissed by the experts.⁴³ This is one of Sondhi's most hard-hitting pieces, and also one of those that lays out with brilliant clarity issues that the world will not seriously note for another decade or two. He documents China's



huge military, her enormous military nuclear research establishment, as well as her sales of critical weapons to Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, North Korea and Pakistan among others. He mentions often overlooked instances – as with South China Sea islands – where China shows no qualms about strong-arming a weaker state. He also documents the tightening of relations with Pakistan, now accessible from Chinese-occupied East Turkestan (Xinjiang) via the Karakoram Highway and the Kunjerab Pass, to Gilgit. China is steadily militarizing Tibet. “China” writes Sondhi “is a belligerent expansionist power that will not hesitate to use any means at its disposal to threaten its enemies, especially those in its immediate neighbourhood.”⁴⁴ All true then, all even truer and more worrying today.

At the time the article was written, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi seemed determined to pay a visit to Beijing in spite of all these difficulties, which he did in October 1988. In the course of this trip Gandhi signed a statement accepting Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. Having failed to dissuade Mr. Gandhi, Sondhi excoriated the deed, with good reason, as a “poorly prepared undertaking [that] did not take into account the new strategic and political realities on the international and regional scene” and seemed, in many respects to be a mismanaged throwback to the naïve diplomacy of the prime minister’s grandfather.⁴⁵

Three years later Sondhi was again speaking out about Tibet. In December 1991 the Chinese premier Li Peng (1928-) visited New Delhi to meet Narasimha Rao (1921-2004) and discuss a variety of issues, including Tibet. The *New York Times* of December 15 reported that the talks “seemed to favor China” with India making major concessions on the sovereignty of Tibet and “getting little in return.” Sondhi most emphatically shared that view, explaining how India’s weakness on Tibet and other issues such as Pakistan would have the opposite of the pacifying effect intended, rather leading or misleading China into underestimating India. This



article was followed a little more than a year later by another, "Tibet Holds the key to Beijing"⁴⁶

One might think that after thirty years of continual disappointment at his government's failure to follow his preferred policy on Tibet that Sondhi, now in late middle age, was simply railing in frustration. But that, as we have suggested above, would be to underestimate his analytical skills. What Sondhi understands, although few others, Chinese included, grasp the fact, is that regardless of whether India stands up for Tibet or betrays her, China still has a serious, indeed intractable, problem in Tibet. For a decade longer than M.L. Sondhi had been writing about Tibet, China had been suppressing it with unstinting and brutal application of the iron fist. Beijing had never held back. The People's Liberation Army destroyed all but a handful of the three thousand lamaseries of Tibet during the Cultural Revolution. The first foreign visitors to return in the 1970s were simply stunned: they could not imagine such measures. (Mosques in East Turkestan were also destroyed – not a wise policy when dealing with a restive Muslim population). Forty years of application of the iron fist without results – Tibetans still know who they are and remain loyal to the Dalai Lama – can only mean that the iron fist will *never* work. No matter what India does, for China Tibet is a quagmire, a "strait-jacket" as Sondhi puts it. At some point the real issues will have to be resolved. Until then, they will poison and distort Chinese politics.

M. L. Sondhi died, far too young, in 2003. At that time Tibet remained occupied and unfree. But one suspects that one of these days the inescapable logic of his common sense analysis will dawn on someone in authority in China. Changes will begin ... and then who knows what will happen? The pattern in other empires and communist states has been that long-oppressed minorities finally get their own state, or at least their civic rights.



In the short run, however, the problem for India is growing more acute, as China increasingly develops Tibet as a military staging area. In the last year of his life M. L. Sondhi wrote four short articles and the draft of a fifth, several in collaboration with Ashok Kapur. Three of these spell out Sondhi's final geopolitical analysis of where China was headed while two address Indian policy.

Sondhi and Kapur are clearly alarmed by the increasing threat posed by China to India, and frustrated by the seemingly muddled way in which New Delhi responds. Any sensible Indian would and should be. But running through all three is a single theme, similar in many ways to the analysis of Tibet to which Sondhi regularly reverted. This is summed up in the title of one, evidently never published, "The Caged Dragon."⁴⁷

Essentially the argument is that China's actions will inevitably elicit reactions, and that these, unlike those Isaac Newton discussed, will not be possible to predict. But a variety of developments, from Korea to Japan to Taiwan to Southeast Asia and to Russia, in each of which China has a stake and plays a role, but none of which she controls completely, are likely to begin to intersect, combine, and reinforce one another in a way that will gradually constrain China, first here, then there – and finally, in general. As her ambitions are realized and her interests are multiplied, so too are her problems. In classic "realist" style Sondhi and Kapur explain how counterbalancing coalitions can emerge – or to put it another way, how China is building her own cage.

Even as Beijing was cultivating a moderate and peaceful image, the momentum was shifting. India's nuclear tests in 1998 "shattered Beijing's smug over confidence." Then North Korea tested a missile over Japan, the effect of which was to awaken Tokyo to a threat, that could conveniently be termed "North Korean" but was in fact Chinese, and set in motion what looks to be a steady Japanese rearmament. With the end of the Cold War, China lost her



strategic leverage over the United States as a possible counterweight to the USSR, which freed the United States to strengthen ties with natural friends like democratic Taiwan. Then came the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, 2001 and the renewed American focus on Middle Eastern countries and on Pakistan. To be sure, Russian supplies of weapons continued, for reasons known only to the Russians. But China was coming to face a position where she was potentially stretched economically and militarily beyond what was possible. She could not fight Japan. She could not fight India. War with the United States would be insanity. Pakistan was increasingly a wild card. Furthermore, as China grew better educated and wealthier, her own social order came under stress, from new aspirations and new grievances. India's robust constitution has survived wars, communal violence, and assassination. One reason for that is that it is democratic and resides, ultimately, in the people. In China, conflict, whether domestic or external, has regularly led to the collapse or substantial remodeling of her jerry-built autocratic governments.

Sooner or later China seems bound to encounter some sort of systemic crisis – as the American Gordon G. Chang argues persuasively in his important book, *The Coming Collapse of China* (New York: Random House, 2001). This is a very Sondhian view, so it should be no surprise that few American China specialists share it. A task force of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York held hearings at which expert after expert insisted that China was stable and would not change ... unless of course she did.⁴⁸

Which brings us to the final question. If and when China begins to change in unexpected ways, what should the rest of the world do? Should it try to save the regime it knows, in the name of "stability"? Or should it somehow accept the change, working to keep its direction positive? This question is important because many Chinese dissidents believe that without some outside pressure, China will be able to continue as a militarized



dictatorship for a longer period than otherwise. Beijing's vast trade surpluses are likened, by one former high Communist official, to constant blood transfusions, that can maintain a spurious glow of health on the face of a patient already almost a corpse.

The world, like India, currently acts chiefly in ways that support China economically. Politically, a strong lobby still exists that argues China is misunderstood, that it is alarmist to speak of threats, and that actions against China's interests are in any case likely to lead to trouble. M. L. Sondhi's final two China essays, both written with Ashok Kapur, address these questions by looking – as Sondhi did in his very earliest essays – first at India.⁴⁹

The immediate occasion was the visit of Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1924-) to China in June 2003. The authors see the trip as pointless or counter-productive. On Tibet, the Prime Minister continued to make Nehruvian errors. Elsewhere, China conceded nothing but India agreed to open a trade route through Sikkim. Reciprocity was absent. Talk there was to be sure of economic cooperation. But in fact India and China are very similar economically and few in India seem to “pine for the China market.” In any case, “the core issues” between the two countries are strategic, not economic, and they are made more difficult by the fact that one state is a democracy and the other a dictatorship. Sondhi and Kapur make a number of suggestions for measuring progress, setting time limits for the achievement of goals, and so forth.

But writing in 2003, they cannot but admit the tremendous appeal and power of Chinese money and Chinese profits not just to India, or to the United States, but to the world. Business seems in the driver's seat. The China Lobby in the United States is strong. The China Lobby in India is strong. As long as “the lure of the China market continues to entice Indians, the core strategic issues can be sidelined by soft words.”⁵⁰



That was very true three years ago. Sadly, M. L. Sondhi is no longer with us to savor the tricks he understood so well, played on us by the cunning of history. For if he and Ashok Kapur are right about the power of the China Lobby, the implication is that business interests and economic decisions are overriding all others in dealings with China. To take this one step further, it has often been observed that business is in fact the *only* reliable lobby China possesses anywhere. Communist parties are no longer what they were, even “patriotic” overseas Chinese cost money and won’t stay bought. No great labor unions or parliamentary caucuses or powerful communications media or influential commentators and intellectuals can be relied upon always to support Beijing’s line. Business is all China has.

Yet although profits are still being made, business is souring on China. Intellectual property theft is a huge problem. So is corruption and violence. So is the lack of property law or any other kind of law. So is protectionism, currency manipulation, and general mercantilism. Doing business in China is beginning to have a visible down side that people actually talk about.

Still, business goes on, just as Chinese rule in Tibet does. But what Sondhi so remarkably recognized about Tibet is also true for business. For China it is a potential problem. The current system, even of something as simple as patents, does not work. One can keep on improvising, but not forever. One of these days soft or upbeat words will prove no longer enough to maintain confidence. Then, as with Tibet, no choice will exist but to address the real problems. As China struggles with overproduction and bad loans, and as the world’s willingness to absorb limitless exports from China diminishes, even as the Communist party depends more and more on economic success to hold on to power, what many had extolled as an economic miracle is beginning to look like one of the Beijing government’s most pressing and intractable problems. It may bring everything down.



It strikes this author that the situation is rife with the sort of complex intellectual contradictions and ironies, worked out over time through a series of gradually reversing steps, that eludes just about everyone – but that M. L. Sondhi understood almost instinctively, and, one suspects, sometimes enjoyed.

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Footnotes

- ¹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989) P. 608.
- ² Nehru, p. 601.
- ³ Stanley Wolpert, *Nehru: A Tryst with Destiny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), P. 461.
- ⁴ *Across the Himalayan Gap: An Indian Quest for Understanding China* Ed. Tan Chung (Delhi: Gyan Books, 1998), p. 7.
- ⁵ Wolpert, p. 465.
- ⁶ *Shakti* July 1965.
- ⁷ Vishnugupta, "Tibet: The Real Challenge to Indian Foreign Policy" *Shakti* December 1965.
- ⁸ P. 4.
- ⁹ Pp. 1, 3-6.
- ¹⁰ "Polycentrism-European Unity-The Chinese Threat: a debate on three current issues." *Shakti*, December 1965,
- ¹¹ Pp. 1-2 Emphasis supplied.
- ¹² P. 2.
- ¹³ Pp. 2-3.
- ¹⁴
- ¹⁵ Author's conversation with Professor Shivaji Sondhi; P. 6.
- ¹⁶ P. 7.



- ¹⁷ "Tibet: Priority for Indian Foreign Policy," *Tibetan Review* VII (June-July 1972), No. 6-7.
- ¹⁸ All three quotations are from page 1.
- ¹⁹ P. 3.
- ²⁰ P. 2.
- ²¹ "India and Nuclear China" *Pacific Community (Japan)* January 1973. Reprinted in *Military Review* (Kansas, USA September 1973, III.9)
- ²² P. 1
- ²³ Pp. 1-2.
- ²⁴ P. 3.
- ²⁵ P. 3.
- ²⁶ P. 5
- ²⁷ P. 6
- ²⁸ P. 6.
- ²⁹ P. 7
- ³⁰ Pp. 8-9.Pp. 4-6.
- ³¹ INFA, New Delhi, 3 September 1975.
- ³² See above, note 12.
- ³³ New York: Pantheon, 1970.
- ³⁴ Beginning with "*Mao's China and the Cold War*" (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001),
- ³⁵ P. 1.
- ³⁶ P. 2.
- ³⁷ The author was present at one such lecture.
- ³⁸ "Creeping End of the Mao Era," *Nagpur Times*, 14 October; *The Mail*, 17 October, Nahvind, 19 October 1975.
- ³⁹ Deng Xiaoping, "Zai Wuchang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shanghai Dengdi de Tanhua Yaodian (Key Talking Points at Wuchang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shanghai, and Other Areas" (also known as the "Deng Xiaoping Nanxinjiang Hua", or "Deng Xiaoping Speeches On Southern Travels", presented from 18 January - 23 February, 1992).
- ⁴⁰ Alfred B. Evans, Jr. *Soviet Marxism-Leninism: The Decline of an Ideology* (Westport, CT.: Praeger, 1993)



⁴¹ "Creeping End" p. 3.

⁴² "Peace and Diplomacy Between India and China," *Pacific Community* October 1976.

⁴³ "Should the Prime Minister visit China ? China's Military Build-up – a threat to India and World Peace." *Organiser*, October 9, 1988.

⁴⁴ P. 4.

⁴⁵ "India Should Insist on Demilitarisation of Tibet" *Organiser* January 15, 1989.

⁴⁶ *The Telegraph*, 2 January 1992.

⁴⁷ The other two are "China: The Emerging Hegemon in Asia" dated 14 April 2003, and "China's Security and the Tibet Question" which bears no date.

⁴⁸ The author was a member of this task force.

⁴⁹ The essays are "Soft Words on Hard Issues" *Times of India* 11 June 2003, and "China-India Talks: More Smoke and Mirrors" 26 June 2003.

⁵⁰ "Soft Words on Hard Issues," p. 2.



Selected Writings

In his public career spanning a period of nearly four decades, Professor Sondhi wrote profusely on the Tibet issue. The following is a selection of some of his writings. Some of the themes that receive constant attention include the Tibetan struggle, the plight of the refugees and the strategic significance of Tibet for Indian diplomacy and strategy while working for a stable Sino-Indian relationship.

Tibet Swaraj Committee: *A New Tibet Policy* (1962)

In the course of his long commitment to the cause of Tibetan freedom, Professor Sondhi's activities displayed an understanding of the importance of organisation to do justice to the cause of Tibet which could only be achieved by the formation of pressure groups to effectively influence decision and policy making. He was associated with different Tibet forums throughout his active life, the first and most enduring being Tibet Swaraj Committee which he founded significantly on October 2nd 1962. This symbolized the convergence of Gandhism and Tibetan Buddhism and was essentially a non-political association. The committee sought to spread information about the Tibetan people's struggle, draw attention to the plight of Tibetan refugees in India and also expose the excesses committed by the Chinese authorities on Tibetan soil. The organisation brought together all shades of opinion on the issue of Tibet and also conducted signature campaigns for the restoration of Tibetan freedom. Professor Sondhi integrated his activism with considerations of Indian foreign policy as articulated in his vision of Non-Appeasement.

*In one of the first pamphlets brought out by this committee, *A New Tibet Policy*, Professor Sondhi emphasised the need for pragmatism in our dealings with China, particularly on the issue of Tibet. This pragmatism wholly directed towards protection of the national interest calibrated*



within a world perspective. However this pragmatism did not find favour with the decision-making of the times which was guided largely by idealist considerations. Prof. Sondhi had warned against the possibility of a slide into a Cold War with China - which became a reality in the post-1962 period reflecting his foresight. His warning is significant because even though he kept the focus on Tibet, he did not want a solution at the cost of India-China relations.

Even though the case for Tibetan independence fitted perfectly within the normative framework of the Indian foreign policy, India failed to give it the kind of attention it deserved. Hence Professor Sondhi called upon the Indian government to recognise the Tibetan government-in-exile to give it some political legitimacy and thus open avenues for receiving cooperation from other members of the international community.

Prof. Sondhi also floated the idea of securing an internationally recognised neutral status for Tibet. The larger concern behind this proposal was to prevent the Tibetan soil from becoming a pawn in great power politics and also to preserve the distinct culture and life style of Tibet.

A New Strategy Towards Tibet

“Let India be and remain the hope of all the exploited races of the earth, whether in Asia, Africa or in any part of the world”

Mahatma Gandhi (Delhi Diary: P.31)

“If I want that freedom for my country, I would not be deserving of that freedom if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race, weak of strong, to the same freedom”

Mahatma Gandhi (Young India 1.10.31)

In defining our “national purpose” generally and in particular our orientation towards the Chinese people and their Government, we must remember that the roots of our political purpose and hence our guide to action are to be found in a long range purpose which



is superior to the isms which are engaged in the interplay of power in the world today. While we should respond actively to moves on the political chessboard yet we must not evaluate moves and counter-moves in a manner which may lay us bare to the accusation that we are subject to the same doctrinal or ideological compulsions as are the Chinese. In our struggle against them we must not become shaped in their image, we must not lose our own view of the historical process. There must not be any total commitment to violence, or to retaliation or to witch-hunting or to inviolability of sovereignty, for the simple reason that none of these is the "image of our future". There should be a constant search for efficacious methods which would combine protection of national interests but which would also keep in view a world-perspective. It is doubtful if a purely "nationalist" solution can lead us anywhere. We will be placing ourselves in great jeopardy. Our opponents will exploit our "nationalistically oriented policies" by accusing us of "empire building".

It is not difficult to argue that the present stage of socio-economic development of the world gives us assurance of the following: reduction of reliance on naked force; loosening of ideological ties between the members of the two world blocs; the dichotomy between the political-isms and the problem of human survival; technological developments which are leading to the erosion of ideology in the nineteenth century and first-half-of the-twentieth century sense.

If by our action we can carry conviction to the governing elite of China and to the rest of the world that the collective will of 450 million Indians will be united in unmasking the crude camouflage under which an out-of-date and technologically backward 14th Century type militant nationalist doctrine is claiming the Tibetan people as a victim, then although it may take a very long time, each passing day would carry growing danger to the Chinese power. We would then make it worthwhile for the new ruling elite in China



to reverse the present Chinese policy. The argument therefore is a simple one: We must make every effort not to enter into a *cold war* with China on the pattern of the US–USSR conflict. Our national purpose as defined earlier has a powerful potential appeal. We must take care not to dissipate it by adopting policies which talk only in terms of strategic interests, geography and bloc-building.

We must frankly ask ourselves the question. Why have the Chinese behaved in this manner towards us? What is the *cause* of the *effect* which is the most unfortunate experience in our short history of foreign relations? Any evaluation must take into consideration the fact of the unnecessary sacrifice of Tibet which we now realise was the fruit of a mistaken view of expediency. The crucial point in the turn into aggressiveness of Chinese policy was our action in subordinating international relations to “narrow national interests” during 1949–54. Instead of being paralysed by the fear of China and its military strength, we should face the dilemma squarely by constructing a new policy which frankly recognises the defect in our old position, and makes it worthwhile, by promoting “international relations” which would be symbolised by recognising a government in exile, for the Chinese to modify the attitude of finality with which they have faced the Tibetan problem.

Regarding Soviet interests, it could be determined by a careful and logical study of their action in agreeing to the neutralisation of Austria and their preparedness to negotiate over the “German Democratic Republic” up to 1956, that the operative criterion in their construction of policy is not the finality of territorial acquisition. The USSR does not make any secret of the fact that it would welcome the downfall of the regimes in non-Communist countries but political events do not show that the Soviet leaders have authoritatively laid down what part of the world should be coloured red. The important lesson to learn from the Hungarian revolution is not that the Soviets intervened militarily but that they were prepared to reject old concepts of their own domination over



Hungary. In any case one could have been fairly optimistic about Soviet reactions in the event that the British and the French had not embarked on the Suez operations.

It seems fair to note that in case the Russians are assured about the long range prospects for a neutral Tibet and the USSR herself is given the opportunity to establish a legitimate relationship, diplomatic and ideological with Tibet (which is denied by China at present in spite of historical Russian ties with the Tibetan people); there is every reason to hope that USSR will be prepared to take upon itself the strain which would occur in its relationship with China, if it acquiesced in India's recognition of Tibetan independence. To put it quite bluntly, our analysis leads us to the point that it is worthwhile exploiting the "polycentrism" of the Communist bloc by securing a certain measure of regulated so-called satellite-isation of Tibet at the hands of the USSR, if that can get it out of the Chinese grip. It will not be a case of "out of the Chinese saucepan into the Russian fire or the Indian fire" for the simple reason that this would be accompanied by continuing efforts to develop international opinion against any and every sort of primitive militant nationalism.

Our proper response today should be one of evolving an imaginative policy which will accomplish a new strategy. The most important steps towards such an advance from our present unsatisfactory position are indicated below:

1. Indian Foreign Policy is confronted with a crisis of unprecedented magnitude. The public has responded by recognising first of all that the habit of smooth platitudinous and sentimental talk must be ended as far as the sphere of foreign relations is concerned.
2. The challenge which our foreign policy faces is unmistakably from China whose government is at present pursuing a militant



expansionist policy in which the "humanistic" content of Leninism-Marxism has been near completely submerged by the torrential flow of the muddy waters of Han Chauvinism.

3. An attitude of vigilance among our people must be cultivated. This does not mean, however, that the definition of national purpose should be attempted in a mood of prejudice and fear. In appealing to our people to come together to combat this crisis we must not appeal to motives which may lead to anxiety, panic and mass hysteria.
4. We should not try to demonstrate that in our anxiety to block the advance of Chinese aggression we have to jettison all the principles which the world has come to believe are basic to our foreign policy. We must not start decrying all the achievements of our foreign policy to date. But we must bring to bear our creative insight to develop a strategy which will be based less on improvisation and more on courage and determination to reawaken the faith of our people in the vitality of our historic struggle for freedom and anti-colonialism.
5. The main elements of a new strategy should be concerned with directing our attention to the weakest flank of the Chinese position. What are our relations with Tibet? Are we prepared to give effective support to a country fighting for its existence? Do we realise that despite a partial defeat, Tibet still retains its entity and can win its freedom and independence? Are we capable and tough-minded enough to utilise for our benefit the dynamic changes that are taking place in Soviet foreign policy? Can we ask the Russians to take a new look at the Tibet issue, and to see its relevance towards a long term perspective in which Chinese territorial appetite may be whetted and directed against Outer Mongolia?
6. It is of course important that we realise what we are up against in implementing this new strategy. Our adversary is not weak in terms of military powers and has resources of manpower



and warheads and is in a position to inflict considerable damage on us. There is no evidence, however, that China is prepared to resort to war on "a go it alone basis". The consequences of the strategy outlined above will be: first, the USSR would continue to restrain China from resorting to full scale war even if Indian policy on Tibet were to undergo change (for the reason given in the next point). Second, the USSR having prided itself all along in having combined dynamic economic growth with preservation of the national status of different nationality groups could not in its present anti-Stalin phase, allow China to invoke Soviet support to wage war against India for subjugating Tibet. Nor would the Soviet Union be willing to take part in an arms race to strengthen China against India, for these arms would not make sense in the context of the break down of confidence between China and USSR which has resulted in a political division which it will take several generations to heal, if at all; third, we could provide a way towards a political settlement if we press forward for an agreement for guaranteeing the neutrality and disengagement of Tibet as part of a goal of coexistence of India, China and Tibet.

7. We have beheld a terrible spectacle in Tibet. It is a spectacle of wanton destruction and endless violence. To prevent the conflagration from spreading in which the entire Tibetan nation may perish, we must act without delay to provide a rational alternative to the annihilation a whole people.
8. There are grounds for optimism. A single dramatic step like the recognition of a government in exile might well reverse the present dismal pattern of events. Such an act could well cry halt to the unrestrained violence that is being enacted on the Tibetan homeland. Our move may have a salutary reaction on our adversary. The Chinese would not give up their hostility towards us or towards the Tibetans. The Chinese have however a basic interest which they are unlikely to ignore. They would



not willingly agree to their engaging in a protracted war with the Tibetan people which would resemble the conflict which the Communist Chinese waged against the nationalists with the roles reversed. Such a war would have disastrous effects on their plans for economic progress.

9. We can help the Chinese to discern their self-interest by encouraging the government in exile to express immediately its readiness to enter into negotiations with the Chinese and to safeguard by an international treaty the legitimate national interests of China. We should try to secure Soviet support for an internationally recognised neutral status for Tibet.
10. We should take a stand in favour of an imaginative policy on the India-China border question and also impress on the government-in-exile when it is set up, the advisability of accepting the recognised procedures of negotiation. We should keep the United Nations informed of developments.
11. One of the crucial questions for Indian foreign policy will be whether we can give assistance to the government in exile and if so of what nature. Would it include military aid? It will not help in clear thinking on this vital question if we mechanically lump together all cases of military assistance and condemn them. We must consider the different contexts in which military aid operates. Once the government in exile is recognised it will freely enjoy the right to obtain material and moral support from friendly countries, including India.
12. We must declare from the highest possible level that our ultimate interest is in ensuring peaceful coexistence between India, Tibet and China. The government in exile must declare authoritatively that it accepts a neutral status and is prepared to participate in an international conference to declare its neutral status as legally binding. While expressing our preparedness to establish friendly relations with China of which our preparedness to negotiate a settlement between



India, China and a free Tibet would be a clear proof we should offer economic and military help to the government in exile in order for it to have the minimum capacity necessary to establish relations with various members of the world community and undertake meaningful negotiations with the present adversary of the Tibetan people.

13. India would have to take steps to denounce its 1954 treaty with China on the grounds that the real roots of Indo-Chinese and Sino-Tibetan conflict cannot be really settled on its basis. The world community including USSR can be expected to support India in this action.

In the long run we shall avoid violence and bloodshed if we as a nation firmly and solemnly declare our brotherhood and comradely ties with the Tibetan people and act speedily to take their struggle for freedom to a victorious conclusion.

A New Policy for Tibet

In October 1965 the UN General Assembly had inscribed Tibet on the agenda for its annual session. Professor Sondhi argued that the Indian government had not played a constructive role in this regard. While it had sacrificed Tibetan interests in the 1950s, it also had obstructed the issue from being raised in the world body. Yet, he also suggested a corrective course of action for Indian diplomacy at the UN. Another effort to initiate some new thinking took the form of a roundtable organised in October 1965 under the auspices of the Tibet Swaraj Committee in New Delhi titled, "A New Policy for Tibet". The immediate context for this was also provided by India's frank description of the Chinese military presence in Tibet as an invasion. Hence the seminarists decided to reexamine the positions held so far on the Tibet issue and chalk out a new course of action. Some of the resolutions passed by this roundtable were related to the recognition of the Tibetan government in exile, India's sponsorship of the Tibet issue at the



UN, according travel and broadcasting facilities to His Holiness the Dalai Lama etc.

Professor Sondhi in his speech at the Roundtable hinted at the possibility of exploiting the vulnerabilities of China as well as divisions within the Communist bloc for the advantage of Tibet. The crucial question of preserving the cultural identity of Tibet again came to the fore, but this time it was laced with a sense of optimism as the Chinese themselves were debating the rationale of such a policy. Professor Sondhi drove home the point that in order for their struggle to be successful, Tibetans should organise themselves and their cultural heritage to counter the Chinese onslaughts. (See Appendices)

Tibet and Indian Foreign Policy

Given the ideologically motivated moral high ground adopted by Indian foreign policy makers and thinkers in the 1950s and 1960s, it was inevitable that the Tibet issue should receive Procrustean treatment and be fitted into their prevalent value framework. Also, the passing of Jawaharlal Nehru from the political scene acted as a catalyst for initiating new thinking on Tibet and other issues. Indeed Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's new pragmatism was an attempt to evolve a firm basis for national security. It is widely believed that he was on the verge of according diplomatic recognition to the Dalai Lama's government-in-exile before he met with an untimely death. However the status-quoist foreign policy establishment preferred to quash such departures from received positions. Professor Sondhi's own experience of the Indian Foreign Service in the 1950s made him sympathetic to Shastri's predicament.

Pointing to the significance of the Tibetan struggle for Indian foreign policy and diplomacy, he emphasised the strategic significance of Tibet which remains relevant till today. Writing under the name of pseudonym of Vishmugupta in Shakti (December 1965), Prof. Sondhi warned of the threat from Chinese nuclear missile emplacements in Tibet which had grave implications for Indian security. He minced no words in pointing



to the parallel between Chinese missiles in Tibet and Soviet missiles in Cuba. Apart from obvious environmental consequences, such Chinese activities in Tibet also threatened the status quo in the neighbourhood.

TIBET: The Real Challenge to Indian Foreign Policy

The emphasis on *caution* in the Foreign Minister's reply to the debate on Foreign Affairs in the Indian Parliament is hardly the result of a preoccupation with a careful study of the aims and methods of preserving our national security which is being gravely threatened by China and Pakistan. Indeed Prime Minister Shastri's pronouncements have led the public to expect a fundamental rethinking on the requirements of an adequate strategy which it was further hoped would lead to a central role for the concept of Deterrence. The personal popularity of the Prime Minister expressed in the rousing receptions he has received in all the states of India he has visited is not due to any belated discovery that India could inflict a military defeat on Pakistan. The confidence of the Indian public in Mr. Shastri is related to the feeling that as the chief decision-maker he is capable of flexible and independent initiatives on behalf of Asia's largest democracy which has to compete with states which have autocratic decision-making systems. His predecessor Mr. Nehru came under increasing public criticism for his handling of foreign affairs with a rigid and dogmatic international outlook. The Ministry of External Affairs, with the exception of a few competent individual officers, has a tarnished public image chiefly because it has persistently advocated a static view of world affairs when even those with no more than a nodding acquaintance with the profiles of personalities and policies of world powers could see that new power centres were emerging. The Foreign Office failed to take account of the far reaching change in the global situation following the emergence of the nuclear stalemate. Then again the break-up of the monolithic unity of International Communism was not analysed in a scientifically rigorous manner and no definite policy conclusions emerged. The naiveté of the foreign office policy makers was particularly evident



in the cliché-ridden Indian policy towards the Middle East where on no occasion did India correctly estimate the unity and contradiction in the Arab world and no efforts were made to explore the possibilities of a mutually beneficial dialogue with Israel. There is, however, rarely so foolish a policy produced by a foreign office as that which led India to recognise Chinese rule over Tibet. It is only criminal negligence of India's security interest which can explain the failure to examine the role which Tibet could play in future Chinese nuclear strategy. It was known that Communist China was developing an indigenous nuclear capacity and it did not require imagination to consider that China would also one day develop ballistic missiles for which Tibet would be an ideal base. The foreign office does not deem to have identified any motives in Chinese policy for the establishment of Chinese hegemony in Asia and it was not till 1962 that it saw it fit to establish specialised research on China. All these facts are well known and even within the Ministry of External Affairs the more sober and intelligent officers have been pressing for radical reforms. Many of the senior officials were personally involved in construction of policies which had led to the sacrifice of India's national interests, and they had naturally grave fears that if any radical reforms were undertaken unpleasant facts might come to light which would imperil their careers. This theme explains the status-quo mindedness of the Ministry of External Affairs.

Prime Minister Shastri's new pragmatism has not won the allegiance of the Ministry of External Affairs. And recently it would seem as if the dogmatic approach to foreign affairs has staged a come-back with renewed vigour. The Foreign Minister is in no mood to cut the dead wood so that new ideas may sprout and help Mr. Shastri to build the morale of the nation on the firm basis of National Security. When faced with a grave crisis outstanding foreign Ministers are able to respond with new initiatives which can exploit the weaknesses of the countries enemies. But it almost spells failure when a Foreign Minister starts harping on sticking to hallowed



policies. Mr. Swaran Singh's recent behaviour is strongly reminiscent of the attitude of the late John Foster Dulles in the United States of America. The inanities of the Dullesian diplomacy were best expressed by the cliché: *Better dead than red*. It required the courage of a Kennedy backed by an able adviser like Dean Rusk to breathe optimism into the body politic of American foreign relations by the prescription: We shall be neither dead nor red. Indeed Mr. Shastri has himself shown a way out of the despair and diffidence of the earlier regime. In dealing with the aggression from Pakistan, Mr. Shastri rejected the foreign office outlook and returned to the traditional Gandhian decision-making. He revealed his independent powers of decision and the public endorsed his argument that India must decide freely where and in what form it should hit back against an aggressor. The domestic response of national unity and voluntary mobilisation of resources was directly the result of a widely shared conviction that Mr. Shastri would after the bitter experience of the Kutch affair (equivalent to Kennedy's Bay of Pigs) improve the strategic posture of India by refusing piecemeal concessions. The public in India still associates Non-Appeasement as the essence of the Shastri outlook, although naturally enough the Prime Minister has to frame his arrangements in a language which emphasises continuity rather than change in Indian Foreign Policy.

The Foreign Minister's refusal to modify India's existing stand on the political aspects of the Tibet issue is a clear example of his failure to understand the mood of the country in the Shastri era. It also reflects his failure to keep himself informed of the changing perspective of China's involvement in Tibet. Even those die-hards among the China specialists – notably the British Sinologists – who thought that Tibet has vanished from the world arena once and for all are now beginning to have second thoughts. To quote G.F. Hudson, Director of the Centre of Far Eastern Studies at St. Anthony's College Oxford:



“Tibet has been so far the thorniest problem of all (for Communist China) for the reconquest in 1950 was not an end of the matter. Chinese settlement in Kham produced a revolt which finally spread to central Tibet and led to the flight of the Dalai Lama into India in 1959. Since the episode coincided with the beginnings of the dispute between India and China over their common frontier, the Tibetan question became to some extent an international issue – which Indian policy had prevented from becoming in 1950. The political asylum granted to the Dalai Lama and his followers greatly angered the Chinese; on the other hand, India refrained, even after the aggravation of the border conflict from actively aiding the Tibetan rebels by the supplies of arms, doubtless because it was feared in Delhi that China, if provoked too far, would retaliate against one or more of India’s more vulnerable fronts – Kashmir, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan or Nagaland. It remains a possibility, however, that in the event of a renewal of Sino-Indian hostilities India may decide to sponsor the cause of Tibetan independence; certainly supplies of suitable equipment would enormously increase the capacity of Tibetan guerrillas to harass an army of occupation dependent on long lines of communication through wild mountain areas. As against this potential threat the Chinese have made great efforts since the suppression of the rising in Lhasa to conciliate the Tibetan people, and Mr. Stuart Gelder has recently brought back a glowing account of benevolent Chinese empire builders behaving as the more enlightened colonial powers used to behave to natives after pacifying them. It is too early to judge how much success the current Chinese policy will have, but the odds are against it; the Tibetans are a separate nation with a culture of their own and traditions of independence, and it is likely to be a long time before they come to regard China as their “motherland”.

The above extract reveals the dilemmas of the British school of thought which has greatly influenced our Anglophile Ministry of External Affairs and brings out the contradictions which result



from the heavy camouflage of Britain's betrayal of Tibet. Geoffrey Hudson and other British Sinologists have no one to blame but themselves for being unable to judge how much success current Chinese policy has had in Tibet. The brash manner in which statements of the Dalai Lama's Headquarters at Dharamsala or the informed judgements of his principal advisers have been ignored by British scholars contrasts with the constructive attitude of Western research projects on Soviet Union and East European countries. Mr. Stuart Gelder's frivolous account shows how much of British emotionalism is pro-Chinese. It is therefore all the more significant that Hudson should feel compelled to reflect seriously on two realistic possibilities:

1. Supply of arms by India to Tibetan rebels.
2. India's sponsorship of Tibetan independence.

The British analyst's blind spots are nowhere more evident than when he speculates on India's fear of Chinese retaliation against one or more of India's more vulnerable fronts. He gives the impression that after all the Chinese are not so wicked and there is no reason why India should want to negotiate from strength or should introduce a Theory of Deterrence in her defence planning against China. These are the same weaknesses evident in the old Panch Sheel attitude to China in which India was committed to continuously appease Chinese intransigence. Nevertheless Hudson's belated acknowledgement that Tibet does not as yet belong to the Chinese motherland and that it is China's thorniest problem is quite enlightening. The Government of India experts might do well to initiate detailed studies on the basis of the hints available in the Hudson article.

The Prime Minister has made it clear that he is fully aware of the nuclear threat from China and has adopted certain formulations in which observers have detected a certain degree of new strategic



thinking. The Foreign Minister's thinking, however, remains fairly backward and there is particularly no indication that he understands the serious consequences for India if the Chinese are successful in emplacing missiles with nuclear warheads in Tibet. He has failed to comprehend the possibilities for nuclear blackmail by China. Even the most casual observer could detect the parallel between the security threat to the United States from nuclear missiles in Cuba and that which will arise for India from Chinese missiles in Tibet. In fact the likelihood of a Cuban-type situation arising in Tibet is a very real one. As far as one can make out Mr. Swaran Singh's nuclear doctrine is a fairly simple one, namely that once India has signed the Moscow Test Ban Treaty, there is precious little that remains to be done. This is altogether a dangerous and irresponsible view from the perspective of our national security. As a matter of fact, Article IV of the Moscow Test Ban Treaty itself underlines the importance of safeguarding national security. The Article reads:

"... Each Party shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this Treaty, have jeopardised the supreme interests of its country. It shall give notice of such withdrawal to all other Parties to the Treaty three months in advance".

This is, however, not the only action possible and India facing "extraordinary events" which have "jeopardised the supreme interests" of our country – in as much as the nuclear developments in China pose the gravest threat to our national security, – can take action under Art. II of the Moscow Treaty part I which reads:

"Any party may propose amendments to this Treaty. The text of any proposed amendment shall be submitted to the Depository Governments which shall circulate it to all Parties to this Treaty. Thereafter if requested to do so by one-third or more of the Parties,



the Depository Governments shall convene a conference, to which they shall invite all the Parties, to consider such amendment.”

Clearly the Chinese nuclear explosions have caused very great concern in our country and the very basis on which we adhered to the Moscow Test Ban treaty has been affected. We should have no hesitation in proposing amendments to the existing treaty which should be aimed at placing obstacles in the way of China executing her aggressive nuclear strategy against us. In this connection it is of the essence to appreciate the key role of Tibet. To quote Oscar Morgenstern: “Tests might be made secretly ... in Tibet, where the prevalence of earthquakes makes a distinction between these and secret tests entirely impossible.” The Government of India would be within its right to demand that the Moscow Test Ban treaty be amended by providing for denuclearisation of Tibet. Even if Communist China has not been admitted to the UN, this need not prevent the Moscow Treaty members from taking the necessary action because apart from the registration of the treaty under Art. 102 of the Charter, the United Nations has no involvement in the operation of the Treaty.

A new Indian policy for Tibet is urgently needed and this should extend to political and military aspects. The Foreign Minister has cleverly sidetracked these issues by playing up the Human Rights issue in relation to Tibet. Some hard thinking is necessary and of that the foreign Minister and Ministry of External Affairs have provided no evidence in the recent Parliamentary debate on Foreign Affairs.

There is nothing unreasonable about India demanding international inspection of Tibet for possible nuclear missile sites and for atomic tests. But it is clear that such actions will sound hollow unless India revises its stand on the political aspects of the Tibet problem. The popular demand in India for the recognition of the Government of the Dalai Lama as the Government of Tibet in exile is by no means



unrealistic. If the Africans can contemplate action against the usurper government of Ian Smith in Rhodesia there is good reason why India should reopen the question of the legitimate authority in Lhasa. The Soviet Union is aware that the chief objective of the Chinese is to exercise hegemony over large extra territorial areas. The Soviet Union cannot be expected to initiate action on the Tibetan issue, but there are enough indications to suggest that the Soviets strongly dislike the Chinese presence in Tibet and would encourage any move which injures Chinese interests in Central Asia. The United States under the influence of the United Kingdom has been rather indifferent to the political rights of the Tibetans, but it is clear that once India takes up the Tibetan issue in right earnest public opinion in the United States would compel the government to extend support to a political move which would directly impinge upon the professed public philosophy of the American people.

The possibilities of political action by India on the Tibet question are quite promising but the Foreign Minister is badly misinformed if he thinks by supporting the human rights issue in Tibet he has worked out a rational Tibet policy. It is problems of military strategy and overall political considerations which the Foreign Minister needs to take into account. If Mr. Shastri is not to always pull the chestnuts of the fire for the Foreign Minister, then he must urge the latter to undertake in his Ministry a strategic political study of Tibet and give up the present practice of guess-work and "muddling through".

Tibet-84: 25 Years of Struggle and Reconstruction (1984)

To mark 25 years of Tibetan struggle for independence and reclaim their heritage, the Tibet-84 Committee was formed which again brought to the fore the Tibet issue on the international agenda. Here, in this particular piece, Prof. Sondhi once again highlights the centrality of the Tibet issue in the India-China bilateral relationship. This writing comes at a time when both nations were considering rapprochement after more than two decades of subdued tensions.



“The reliance on coercive techniques by China in its relations with Tibet has decisively shaped Chinese interests in and perceptions of Himalayan region. New Delhi and Peking have a common interest in conducting a peace diplomacy towards each other and avoiding any military escalation of their border conflict which has not been solved since 1962. The sensitive geo-political position of Tibet can not be ignored in any serious analysis which aims to interpret accurately the political motivations and military ambitions of China...The strategic importance of Tibet and Chinese military potential in Tibet must figure in any serious negotiations affecting Sino-Indian relations.”

What comes out distinctly in this piece is the suggestion of Professor Sondhi in using Tibet issue to bring about India-China peace diplomacy, while stressing the need to preserve the distinct cultural identity of Tibet.

“The proposition that India can achieve a border settlement with China over the heads of the Tibetans is fallacious. Peaceful co-existence between India and China cannot flourish on the basis of militarism and repression in Tibet ... Both China and India can obtain real political leverage and ability to cope with a wide range of threats if they can come together to enhance the political stability of Tibet.”

Role of the Dalai Lama

Writing in the Professor Sondhi laid down a policy framework for a Tibetan forward thrust in the then prevailing era of peace diplomacy. These suggestions are also important because in a fundamental sense they provided an opportunity for combining the knowledge and wisdom of His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the prevailing international environment characterised by a worldwide resurgence of suppressed people under dictatorial regimes.



China, The Dalai Lama and the Future of Tibet

No firm progress is in sight in Sino-Indian Relations unless the framework of inquiry provides a central role to the high politics embedded in New Delhi's commitment to the Dalai Lama of Tibet. The sceptical stance of high Chinese officials and of some of their clients among Indian politicians is self-deceptive. India's relations with the Dalai Lama are clearly of vital importance and have been decisively reaffirmed by each successive Indian Prime Minister. India cannot abandon the Dalai Lama, and the Chinese will pay dearly for making the mistaken assumption that the Indian side can strike a deal that would impose unacceptable costs on him. In spite of Peking's attacks and enticements, the Dalai Lama has shown increasing confidence in projecting the international personality of himself and his people in the last three decades. Although India has not been a radical force in helping the Tibetan struggle against Chinese exploitation, yet it is an integral part of Indian political realism to refuse to subscribe to any Chinese formula of unconditional surrender. A more prevalent feature of Indian politics in the 1980s is a growing disposition to sanction moral and political support to the Dalai Lama in projecting his diplomatic power and capability on the international scene. The Indian commitment to the Dalai Lama is on a broader range of subjects today than it was when he took shelter on Indian soil: Human Rights, International Peace, Buddhist Culture, Himalayan Ecology, Disarmament and Confidence Building in Sino-Tibetan relations.

In seeking a peace diplomacy with China, India is taking advantage of the present changes in the world situation. The rulers in Peking have given close attention to the Moscow-New Delhi relationship, and the new Chinese leadership under Teng Hsiao-ping has a clearer picture of the complex domestic political reality that exists in India. On its part India with its bitter memories of 1962 will demand proof that China-India rapprochement will not result in the intensification of Chinese hegemonic power in Tibet. All major



Indian initiatives for a better relationship between China and India will inevitably require a direct involvement of the Tibetans in exile led by the Dalai Lama if the frustration and bitterness of earlier decades of Sino-Indian relations are to be avoided. Since both India and China have now powerful military forces at their disposal, and India enjoys a special relationship with the Soviet Union, Peking would be foolish to hope that the Chinese can in the foreseeable future compel Indians to abandon their commitment to the Dalai Lama. Realistically, time is on the Dalai Lama's side, since China can gain little and lose much by adopting a sterner position towards Dharamsala. Teng cannot adopt any acceptable posture towards India which provokes sharp criticism by the Dalai Lama and the overwhelming majority of Members of the Indian Parliament who feel that Peking's ability to improve its image in India is directly related to the Tibetan judgment on Han behaviour in Tibet.

The despatch of the Tibetan delegations to improve relations between Dharamsala and Peking have helped in the overall process of reality-testing and although both sides have presented varying interpretations, a new perspective has undoubtedly opened in which it has been revealed that there is a broad range of interests which are important to both sides. It has been clearly shown that in China's efforts to stabilise its international environment, the Dalai Lama occupies a very high priority. The Dalai Lama's diplomatic efforts have disclosed a new direction for moving towards options acceptable to the Tibetan people through a step-by-step programme.

What is the likelihood of success through the channel of communication which appears to have been discovered by an Indian Member of Parliament in his talks with the Chinese Vice-Premier Mr. Wan Li? There is nothing very subtle conveyed by the words: "We want the Dalai Lama back but we can do without him too." The rulers in Peking know fully well that it is impossible



through this type of manoeuvring to produce a real thaw in Sino-India relations.

Both New Delhi and Peking have by now a reasonably good idea of what constitutes a constructive movement in their relations. Neither of them, nor Dharamsala, have any dearth of preliminary contacts and explorations, and they certainly do not need S. Swamy's "Peace Hoax" to reassess policy postures. A careful reading of materials from Peking and Dharamsala would dispel the myth that atmospherics with minimum content like those in the Wan Li interview to the Indian MP are needed to emphasise the emergence of a substantive Sino-Tibetan (Dharamsala) relationship. The style and vocabulary of the Dalai Lama's statements have correctly underlined Dharamsala's positive response to Peking's overtures, and if the dialogue is to be made more feasible interlopers like S. Swamy can only produce cognitive dissonance.

Dharamsala would do well to develop a more elaborate approach towards understanding the basic facts concerning the internal situation in China, including the different groups in the leadership of the Communist Party.

Political succession in Peking is likely to lead to further institutional rearrangements and there is no reason why the Dalai Lama should not be able to utilise the political-institutional developments to elicit support from elements within the rather anarchic power structure of China. There is a school of China experts which regards Chinese strategic calculations as having some sort of final decisional power. More important perhaps is the fact that new messages from the Dalai Lama have given rise to various 'theses' about neutralising the influence of reactionary groups. Dharamsala can draw satisfaction from the fact that it has been able to generate pressures which may be beneficial to Tibetans in Tibet.



Dharamsala can also follow the course of events in Taiwan and Hong Kong with the greatest attention. The more Dharamsala condemns the past crimes of the Chinese communists in Tibet, the more it shifts the onus on the Peking rulers to show that they are people with good intentions who can be trusted. Dharamsala should have no hesitation in initiating private talks with both Hong Kong (British) and Taiwan and compare notes for detecting opportunities for constructive movement in negotiations with Peking.

The crucial decisions of the Dalai Lama's visit to Lhasa should not be related to the amelioration of the Chinese attitude to Buddhist religion. It does not lie in the power of the Chinese to adversely affect the religious position of the Dalai Lama as indeed the Soviets have not been able to adversely affect the role of the papacy at the international level. By his visit to Lhasa the Dalai Lama can take advantage of the great prospects for structural change in the international and regional relationships flowing from the Chinese involvement in Tibet. The Dalai Lama's Lhasa visit can include elements of both conflict and cooperation if it is made part of a larger strategy to take Tibet out of the international power struggle. On no condition should the Dalai Lama give a diplomatic victory to Peking by undertaking a 'solitary' journey to Tibet. Dharamsala should inform both the audience in Tibet and the international audience that the Dalai Lama will visit Tibet in 1985 as part of a unique occasion to bring people from all over the world for an International Peace Conference at Lhasa. Dharamsala should show its readiness to become involved with Peking in the necessary preparatory phases of the IPCL (International Peace Conference in Lhasa). The Chinese are unlikely to give a final approval to the proposal without rather extensive probing. Even if there are some hostile interactions to begin with, Dharamsala can try to identify the norms and rules which would legitimise an international peace movement in Lhasa in the eyes of the present Chinese rulers.



In some ways Dharamsala could handle adverse reactions by the Chinese by tracing the course of events in Sino-Soviet strategic interactions and pointing to the intensive pressures that Moscow could apply in Tibet when the chips are down. The active Soviet role in India about which the Tibetans have first-hand knowledge is also not without policy relevance for Peking. A close examination of the web of relations between India, China, Tibet and the Soviet Union can help the Chinese policy makers to take into account the long term factors which make the Dalai Lama's international position very competitive.

Dharamsala should be looking at what is happening in Poland in the context of the unilateral moves made by the Vatican. Friendly conversations with the Chinese leaders cannot harm the cause of the Tibetans provided the Dalai Lama focuses on the holistic understanding of the Communist crisis in Tibet. He must ask Peking in no uncertain terms to restore interpersonal relations among Tibetans. He must also refuse to close the Tibet Chapter and set the final seal on the Chinese armed intervention in Tibet. Like in the case of the Pope, the influence of a single personality in Dharamsala is a symbol of the rights and dignity of not only the Tibetans but millions in Asia and in the world. What the Dalai Lama says in Lhasa should not be a culture-bound activity; it should amplify for the mass media the same universal message which the Dalai Lama should continue to give from Dharamsala.

The directions of accommodation with Peking may lead the Dalai Lama to any one or more of the following models: (a) the Vatican model (b) the Taiwan model (c) the Hong Kong model and (d) a sui generis Tibetan confederal model. At an international conference in Lhasa, the Dalai Lama and his advisers will possess enough diplomatic, political and strategic flexibility to make a meaningful cooperative effort. There should be no foolhardiness about the policy coherence in Peking's bureaucratic structure of power. From



this perspective the apparatchiks in Peking have developed a strategy which focuses on getting the Dalai Lama back and then closing the door on his exit. In the final analysis, therefore, the future of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan identity hinges upon the ability of Dharamsala to avoid a narrow configuration which would limit the Dalai Lama's freedom of action. With a sense of participation in global and regional issues of peace and conflict resolution the Dalai Lama should test Peking's reactions, permit himself a clear line of retreat if the need should arise, and work through small steps for playing a multidimensional role for developing a stable and peaceful society in Tibet. The historically shared experience of exile in Dharamsala has provided the Dalai Lama with diplomatic and ecumenical contacts which have a potential role in the future. The stabilisation of the institutions developed in Dharamsala are an authentic requirement for the ultimate protection against political and cultural oppression.

Harnessing Support from Other Countries (July 1990)

Speaking at a peace conference in Tokyo, Prof. Sondhi argued on two lines: firstly promoting a peace process in Tibet to become a role model for other conflict zones in Asia and secondly, calling upon India and Japan to play a more active role in advancing human rights in Tibet.

If Asia is not to be the focus of new hostilities, the worsening regional climate should be reversed by the guiding concepts similar to those employed in stabilising détente in Europe. Japan and India can serve their own respective interests by providing Asia with a versatile negotiating forum by consultations on a long-term strategy for Tibet ... An Asian "Helsinki process" could one day be appropriately named as the "Lhasa Process" and the demilitarisation of Tibet could be achieved through collaborative peace postures of Japan, India and China within an overall framework of moderation."



Indeed in bringing pressure from two prominent countries in China's neighbourhood, Professor Sondhi's argument especially appeals to Japanese sensitivities. Traditionally, Japanese have been reluctant to support explicitly the cause of Tibet.

The Tibetans have been deprived of their human rights in their homeland, but the international community's response has been only symbolic. Both Japan and India have a moral commitment to uphold human rights, if Hiroshima and Gandhian ideals have any continuing significance for their respective national outlooks. In the case of the Tibetan human rights issue, the intolerable abuses by the Chinese cannot be checked unless Asian countries come together to constrain (Beijing). To develop a stable human rights order in Asia, Japan and India have to cooperatively strengthen the expectations of the Asian community."

Reemphasising the Significance of Tibet

After the end of the Cold War in 1991 and disintegration of the Soviet Union, nationalist movements across the globe resurfaced with renewed vigour as was evident in Eastern Europe. Professor Sondhi in an effort to drive home the significance of the Tibetan struggle reminds the Indian establishment of the strategic significance of Tibet. Writing in the Telegraph, January 2nd 1992 he emphasised that there is simply no way in which India can ignore the strategic location of Tibet as the heart of Asia.

Tibet holds the Key to Beijing

There is clear evidence that India and China failed to narrow their differences on key bilateral issues at the Narasimha Rao-Li Peng summit, and India frittered away its bargaining strength on the Tibet issue by meekly accepting the Chinese formulation. Mr. J.N. Dixit, the foreign secretary, and his team could not match the Chinese mandarins in self-confidence, and in the event provided



us with a painful but critically important lesson: diplomacy is conducted best when it is not defensive or parochial but is authentically related to the political ethos of the country.

Mr. Narasimha Rao's first encounter as Prime Minister with the Chinese has been little short of catastrophic and he is almost inevitably fated to experience a series of diplomatic failures which may bring back the highly bitter memories of Jawaharlal Nehru who complained that he had been stabbed in the back by the Communist regime in the 1960s.

Contrary to claims in the official media, India did not have serious options or proposals over Beijing's deeply-held positions on Pakistan. India did not at any stage ask China to declare a moratorium on the shipment of new weapons to Islamabad or to halt current arms transfers. While the Chinese used the rhetoric of accommodation, on every important issue they retained a maximalist position against Indian interests. The Chinese did not provide any serious points of discussion on the border question and there was no progress towards either a piecemeal or final solution. The Chinese continue to support wholesale the grand over-simplification of the nuclear dilemma in Asia offered by Pakistan's proposal for South Asia as a nuclear-free zone.

The Chinese insisted on a tough wording on Tibet, and India obliged with its own brand of pusillanimity, in the form of an elemental violation of the human rights of Tibetan exiles in India. We have now to ask whether this has been good for Indian diplomacy and for Indian national interest. Observers with an anti-Indian bias like Neville Maxwell have been quick to perceive a reversal of the government's entire diplomatic approach much in the fashion in which Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech abdicated deeply held positions. Maxwell, of course, has little to say about the relative merits of political and military aspects of Soviet and Indian national security policies. Nor does he take a look at the



Chinese negotiations with the Russians on Mongolia. There, Beijing insisted on several preconditions and one of these was the demilitarisation of Mongolia.

What is sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander. There is simply no way in which India can ignore the strategic location of Tibet as the heart of Asia. As long as it remains the location for missile bases and for bombers and missiles targeted at Indian cities and cantonments, there can be no real agreement between the two biggest states of Asia.

It is also necessary to consider the foreseeable evolution of the international system in which the Chinese regime is finding itself out of step with the emerging world order. The opposition to "hegemony" is of great utility to Beijing in justifying repression at home and in Tibet and for the refurbishment of its own hegemonism in Asia. In this light, the key to grasping what Chinese strategy means is for India to create some more room for manoeuvre over Tibet. Indeed, Jawaharlal Nehru made the initial mistakes by his particular conception of communist ideology and legitimizing the Chinese presence in Tibet, but before his death he was able to enter several caveats about the Chinese relationship with Tibet. His famous comment that the people of Tibet must have the final say about their future suggests that the traumatic events of 1962 changed his beliefs and attitudes on the enormous military presence of China in Tibet.

The evolution of India's policy on Tibet and the pattern which served to guide policy makers until Indira Gandhi's time can be described as a dual track pragmatism: a positive predisposition to improve relations with China coupled with agreement on core principles and techniques advocated by the Dalai Lama and his government-in-exile in Dharamsala. While Nehru's attitude to Tibet can be described as idiosyncratic, it was balanced by the cognitive set shared by Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad,



C. Rajagopalachari, Ram Manohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. All of them were distinguished public figures and provided competing assessments of problems besetting Sino-Indian relations. If there was ambivalence towards Tibet on the part of Nehru, all these other participants in the public realm were able to draw upon a consensus regarding the core values of Hindu-Buddhistic reverence for Kailash-Mansarovar and act in defence of the aspirations of the Tibetan people. Mrs. Gandhi's belief in a range of political values of realpolitik led her to pursue a diplomatic solution of the Sino-Indian dispute with the dispatch of K.R. Narayanan as ambassador, but at the same time she continued to regard the Dalai Lama as the linchpin of Indian policy.

However, Rajiv Gandhi and V.P. Singh adopted a model of theorizing on Sino-Indian relations which was inchoate. Both of them lost the understanding of Tibet as an issue linked to the political ethos of India. In a polemical tract written at the time, I had pointed out the disruptive effects of Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China. Narasimha Rao has neither the means nor the ambition to challenge China's encroachments on Indian territory, but he could have at least avoided simplistic and inadequate conceptions of a so-called "Third World perspective" in world affairs if he had avoided the use of Chinese communist vocabulary which is clearly inimical to Indian interests.

There has been much controversy about the linkage between Kashmir and Tibet. The Dalai Lama has sent a very clear message from Dharamsala and has referred to the general feeling of solidarity of Tibetans with India which Chinese political pathology cannot tolerate. Ever since Mr. Li Peng spoke to Indian correspondents in Beijing and tried to indulge in semantic gobbledygook to cover up the enormous military presence of China in Tibet, Mr. Narashimha Rao should have resisted being drawn into China's strategic plans to overcome its own latent instability



in Tibet at India's cost. The answers on the Tibetan question are complex and both India and the Dalai Lama share an interest in common in demonstrating the efficacy of non-militaristic approaches. Mr. Rao would have enhanced his credibility by arranging for the Dalai Lama to be present in New Delhi and affirmed the spirit of Indo-Tibetan solidarity, to which both Nehru and Indira Gandhi at least paid lip service. In his dialogue with Mr. Li Peng, Mr. Rao loaded the dice against himself by giving a *carte blanche* to the Chinese leader to dictate the political configuration of the diplomatic encounter. By sending the Dalai Lama for hibernation to Dharamsala during the talks, India failed to highlight the moral dilemmas presented by China's ongoing military occupation of Tibet.

Mr. Narasimha Rao lost influence where he could have won new prestige for three reasons:

First, he has made the increasing militarization of Tibet legitimate, although both he and his policy advisers know that Chinese imperialism in Tibet cannot be maintained in the context of the new world order. His talk about the autonomous region of China is unrealistic and counterproductive as far as the goal of real disarmament and confidence-building between India and China is concerned. Mr. Rao has not offered any viable alternative policy to the pleas of the Dalai Lama for demilitarization of Tibet. The missiles and bombs in Tibet are no respecters of either the McMahon Line or of the Line of Actual Control. If the ensuing dialogue through the Joint Working Group is to have any real meaning Mr. Narasimha Rao will have to go back to the basic issue which is the military conversion of Tibet into an armed border which has changed the whole strategic balance against India.

Second, on the question of Pakistan-abetted insurgency in Kashmir and Punjab, Mr. Rao's pretensions of representing a higher form of Panchsheel politics has led the country into the very opposite



direction from the one that we hoped he was taking us. He has frittered away the bargaining power which Indira Gandhi secured after the Bangladesh war and has done something fearfully dangerous.

Mr. Rao has introduced a certain rigidity in the situation in which it would hardly be surprising if there were an accretion of hegemonic power to the Chinese. By appealing to the Chinese to prevent the escalation of Pakistan's anti-Indian activities Indian diplomacy is hardly going to develop a momentum which will stabilize the dangerous situation in Punjab and Kashmir. The Chinese see little sense in giving up their natural ally, Pakistan, especially when New Delhi suggests a stance of political appeasement.

Finally, Mr. Narasimha Rao's *weltanschauung* as reflected in his first major summit makes him fearful of a flexible international structure. What needs to be asked in the context of his mute acceptance of Mr. Li Peng's sophistry on external political pressures, is whether his image of India's role in an interdependent world is related to the core content of the political ethos of our nation, and whether his decision-making will be bureaucratically determined to bear a strong family resemblance to Chamberlain at Munich.

Despite Doordarshan's propaganda blitz and the reportage of the political and journalist pilgrims to Beijing, the Li Peng-Rao summit has detracted generally from the credibility of Indian diplomacy as an effective force in the new era. The communiqué issued at the end of the talks is a bizarre document which is too divorced from reality to be productive. If the situation is to be salvaged both India and China must learn that the principal problem they face is the Tibet problem. The irrelevance of the provision for checking the Tibetan exile community's activities is self-evident. This community is a living reproach to the genocidal imperiousness of the Chinese rulers in Tibet. There is no way in which either Li Peng or



Narasimha Rao can forestall reaching a point in which Chinese rule will be demolished and a free Tibet rejoin the comity of nations.

The advantages of attempting a genuine compromise with the Dalai Lama are that China can get out of the straitjacket of outmoded ideological assumptions and India can creatively shape the realities of regional and world politics in accordance with its political and civilizational ethos.

During some of the last years of his life Prof. Sondhi chose to focus upon the legitimacy and continuing relevance of the Tibetan struggle. He hoped for a solution to the Tibetan problem within the matrix of common shared interests and ideas. Dialogue and settlement rather than confrontation are the only ways to move forward. In advocating a vision for a future Tibet in the 21st century, he expressed his faith in the common sense and wisdom of all three concerned parties, India, Tibet and China, which together have to confront an inescapable and extraordinary moment of truth.



Appendices

Edited Report of a ROUNDTABLE ON A NEW POLICY FOR
TIBET held at India International Centre, New Delhi on
October 3rd 1965 under the auspices of the Tibet Swaraj
Committee

Introduction: Tibet is now on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly at the United Nations. Contrary to the warnings of the prophets of gloom, as a cause it has refused to die. It has broken through the shackles of being merely a case of violation of human rights, and is now restored to a political issue; and in its candid note to the Chinese Government, published in October, the Indian Government created history by referring to the Chinese military presence in Tibet as an invasion.

With these currents of a change afoot, it was deemed essential to take steps towards revising our thinking on Tibet, and to search for new policies that would more adequately give effect to these new winds of change. In this context the Tibet Swaraj Committee decided to hold a Roundtable, to discuss A New Policy for Tibet, as the first of several meetings to chalk out a composite programme for this new orientation.

The character of this first roundtable has been exploratory and definitive – searching out and clarifying areas and trends of change. The basis of the whole discussion has been the affirmation of independent Tibet as a true and sovereign nation.

Dr. G. K. Mookerjee (Chairman): ... from 1951 to 1952 I worked at the Historical Division when I studied the problem with a certain amount of personal interest. There were very few documents on Tibet available at that time because most of



them had been taken away by the British, when they left India. Of course today there is much more literature than was available at that time. The government as you know at that time decided to accede to the Chinese request for the integration of Tibet into China, but the current government thinking has talked of an 'Invasion of Tibet'. One thing is however clear. The Tibet issue is not finally solved and it is one of the problems that will occur again and again, and we will have to tackle it again sooner or later.

M. L. Sondhi: It is no longer possible to speak of a Communist bloc. There are many centres of power within the Communist world. Peking is one such Communist centre of power, and it is regarded as *the* power centre in Communist Asia. It cannot tolerate even the suspicion of any other power centre and immediately moves in to defend its status whenever the possibility of a challenge occurs. However this attitude is wrong. There is more than one power centre in Communist Asia. For India not to recognise this is to hold China to be more powerful than she really is. Moreover, China has power ambitions in Europe which cut across Communist and non-Communist lines. These provide us with situations which we can exploit. Then there is the question of ideology. In spite of all they do, the Communists are hampered by their doctrines, of Marxism, Leninism, Maoism etc. and all their various combinations. They are always under a compulsion to keep up the doctrinal myth. International experts on Communism are agreed that Communism breeds in-fighting due to this doctrinal compulsion. Whereas it is not possible for India to originate a conflict within the members of the Chinese Communist circle, it can always take advantage and exacerbate those that already exist.



In the non-Han areas the linguistic minorities are a growing headache for China; this phenomenon of the search for self-consciousness of minority groups is part of a world process, and one which India will also have to face, for example, in relation to the Nagas and Sikhs. The Tibetans are highly self-conscious people, and China is finding it difficult to eradicate their individuality. There are growing doubts in China itself regarding the wisdom of their policy of destroying the culture of Tibet. The cultural problem is a crucial one. The intellectuals in Tibet must be having problems. Just now China is making much of the PLA. But at some stage she will have to recognise the Communist Party of Tibet, and then the intellectual problems will be on the increase. Cultural policy has always been a source of great difficulties for Communist rulers in Europe as well as Asia. In these circumstances a massive effort by Tibetans in exile with Indian help could help maintain the ferment in Tibet, and sharpen the conflict between national interest and Communist ideology. The Indo-Tibet border is far from sealed, and it could be used to smuggle reading material into Tibet, or it could be dropped by air. A high power broadcasting station would be of great help in maintaining cultural resistance by the Tibetans. Lastly, the Tibetans in India could be organised, the intellectuals among them, to work towards the obstruction of Chinese political goals.

Constitution-making is an important business in all Communist countries. The ruling elite in Peking is subject to considerable pressure by Chinese revisionists and after Mao-tse-tung, there is bound to be an intellectual upheaval, which will create pressure to revise the constitution. In this context the need for some work on the Tibetan Constitution can be emphasised. There is no need to be cynical about the practical consequences of such work. There are many



aspects to be discussed, the abolition of the so-called feudal system, the guarantees of civil and individual liberties etc. There is considerable scope for new ideas in all Communist countries where the intellectuals feel quite distant from the ruling elite. The Communists are most vulnerable in this area. India can create a major political asset for itself by introducing into the Sino-Indian political conflict constitutional questions in the context of Tibet's future. Tibetans in exile should be encouraged to think in terms of a constitution for their country in which there is ample scope for the encouragement of rapid economic advance, social and economic rights and democratic government.

The military question is very important. Tibet has importance in the context of Disarmament and Arms Control which has not been fully appreciated in India so far. There is a good case for a detailed study of the matter by military and political experts. To quote what one of them, Oscar Morgenstern has to say: 'Tests might be made secretly ... in Tibet, where the prevalence of earthquakes makes a distinction between these and secret tests entirely impossible.' The Indian Government should immediately take up a study by its experts on what measures are necessary for preventing the military use of Tibet by China in the context of future nuclear development. Indian policy should encourage the development of the Tibetan question on the lines on which the Austrian question was kept up by the Western powers. Endless patience is necessary. We should remind the Chinese in every note that we send to them that the Tibetan issue is and will remain an outstanding international issue till the present Chinese policy is changed. Then there is the question of military assistance. This has been a great failure on our part. We must review this policy of arms embargo. There are still revolutionary forces operating in the Kham region of Tibet,



and we should at least initiate the policy by sending through private agencies non-military supplies like medicines etc. The intensification of India's relations with other Buddhist countries in Asia will have a relay effect on China's relations with Tibet. The extent to which India connects itself with a Buddhist renaissance in which the initiative is retained in Indian hands will pose a grave dilemma for the Chinese. Unfortunately India is not fully utilising its tremendous *intellectual* power in the manner in which, for example France under De Gaulle has mobilised its resources to exploit its relationships with countries under French cultural influence.

G. K. Mookerjee: The Chinese will never be able to consolidate their hold in Tibet – the Tibetans will continue to resist. They will put pressure in international circles to revive the question: India will have to do it.

Dr. Lokesh Chandra: ... In Soviet works, Tibet is not referred to as the 'Tibet region of China'. There are many classical studies 'from Russia on Tibet, indicative of a change in attitude. ... The cultural offensive mentioned is very important; the Chinese used it in Mongolia. The Russians had forbidden use of national script; when the Chinese came, they brought 2,000 copies of the biography of Chingiz Khan in the national script, and it was sold in two hours. Now the Academy of Sciences has permission to use the national script.

Giri Lal Jain: I am broadly in agreement with what Dr. Sondhi has proposed. The Tibetan issue is far from closed, and will not be solved till either of two conditions are fulfilled : – 1. Tibet becomes independent again or 2. The Tibetan people are really swamped by Han immigration. So far as the present situation is concerned, the Han settlement has



not been a success. Most of the Chinese have returned, due to difficulties with regard to food and climate. This is an important development and we should not fail to take note of it. Tibet is a nation by every definition of the word. It has a long history, and the Tibetans are acutely self-conscious of their separate and distinct identity. The Chinese occupation of Tibet in the past has never lasted longer than a decade or two. The arrival of the nuclear age makes Tibet an important issue. If the Chinese develop nuclear missiles and place them in Tibet, this will have grave consequences for us in terms of our security ... Our performance in Tibet is one of which we must be ashamed. We owe the Tibetans a tremendous debt, and there is no escape from it. There is much that can be disclosed to our discredit. Our policy of expediency has failed. If we had spent ten crores a year on Tibet, it would have sufficed to stall the consolidation of Chinese rule in Tibet. ... To blame anybody else is a case of the pot calling the kettle black. Till the year before last we even refused to support the case of Tibet in respect of Human Rights in UN. It would be premature to say, with regard to the present shift in our stance, whether it is a change in content or posture. Now India has officially held China guilty of having invaded Tibet. Perhaps the change is a result of greater confidence in our ability to defend our frontiers. ... If we do not take certain risks now, we will expose ourselves to impossible risks 20 years from now ... the Chinese will be able to act with impunity once their nuclear missile programme makes sufficient headway and our defence commitments will become impossible. Even fairly intelligent persons in India with interest in Tibet do not have adequate information. The government expounds its policies in a vacuum, and does not make available the facts on which its policies are based. This is particularly true in the field of defence. In military affairs the depth of our ignorance



is colossal. No newspaper can comment with any knowledge on military affairs, unlike his counterparts in Western countries. ... To discover Tibet is to discover India. We must all do what we can, independently, to promote the presentation of Tibetan culture, which is also part of our culture.

M. L. Sondhi: One point of clarification: you have said that our ability to do anything in Tibet turns on our ability to defend our frontiers. Do you mean by this that our frontiers are more vulnerable than those of other countries? There is another idea of strength, of the potential to increase the effectiveness of our influence, a capacity to instil fear into our enemies, which covers more than mere geographical location.

Giri Lal Jain: Yes, that is an important distinction, and I agree that to cut the Sinkiang-Tibet road would be a strategically good exchange for a road into NEFA. What I meant was that if our frontiers were fairly adequately protected, it would give us greater confidence, in contrast to the helplessness we have experienced before.

Mr. Hem Barua: ... The Government of India did not think that Tibet would be assimilated into China; it believed in the Chinese guarantee of an autonomous region; it has not been translated into practice, and this latest move of the government's may be due to the discovery that Tibet is now a part of China. It is now trying to adopt a new line.

Prof. Balraj Madhok: I have always been a critic of government's Tibet policy. I agree with all that has been said here on the matter, and do not wish to repeat it. One thing needs to be understood by the government and the people, and that is the phenomenon of the cultural infiltration by Tibet. Tibet



has infiltrated our borders; in Ladakh and Lahaul Valley, for instance, the people use the Tibetan script, their language has ties and links with Tibet. Lahaul and Ladakh have cultural and language links with Tibet. A political officer-in-charge of Tibetan affairs once said to me, that you can not save the border areas if the Chinese policy of Sinitication in Tibet succeeds. In the upper reaches of the Himalayas, the people are Buddhist and racially akin to Tibetan – e.g. in Himachal Pradesh, Pathoragarh, Sikkim, Bhutan, NEFA and Ladakh. ... The history of Tibet reaches back 2500 years. From the beginning Chinese influence has been temporary, and the first time they entered Tibet was at the invitation of the Dalai Lama in 1707. According to Tibetan sources the first king of Tibet was the son of Prasangjit of Kosala and a contemporary of the Buddha. From then on there has always been considerable Indian influence in Tibet. The Tibetans, however, have always resisted Chinese influence. The British contact with Tibet started with Warren Hastings (sic) when the British wished to start trade with Tibet. The Tibetans refused to honour the treaties signed between the British and the Chinese, so the British were finally forced to negotiate directly with them. In 1904, there was the Lhasa Convention, which contained 4 terms defining the relations between Dalai Lama's Government and the British Indian Government. In these terms one may clearly see the Tibetan Lama is head of an independent state. In 1907, an Anglo-Russian treaty was signed, in which it was stated that Tibet was under Chinese suzerainty. This was a purely political affectation, because at that time the British had no fear of China and they wished to avoid the Russian charge of having brought Tibet under their influence. In 1914, the Shimla Convention was held to settle the Tibet-China border about which there was some dispute ... Representatives of all the three countries met



as equals. The Tibetans brought mule loads of documents to prove their claims, but the Chinese just refused to accept them.

We must educate public opinion. The idea that Tibet was an independent country which has been overrun is an idea that must be kept alive.

Giri Lal Jain: If we can develop a more meaningful policy for Tibet other countries will change their attitudes towards us, since India will then have defined interests.

M. L. Sondhi: Panniker has mentioned in his book that at one time, the Chinese were mortally afraid that Nepal might attack them, and he (Panniker) had to assure them that there was no such possibility. What would you say about this, Mr. Jain?

Giri Lal Jain: The Chinese invaded Tibet a fortnight before they entered Korea, which shows that the two were connected for them. On October 25th 1950, they made advances into Tibet and then stopped. The military presence was of a nominal nature; it was used as pressure to get the Tibetans in Peking to negotiate. At that time, even intervention by Nepal would have tipped the balance.

M. L. Sondhi: We must not over-estimate the capacity of the Chinese. They are certainly not as efficient as we make them out to be. Khrushchev was no god that he became an anti-Stalinist, but used his position as a leverage for power. There is always an element of caution in Communist methods so that the policies of extermination are not carried out completely efficiently unlike the programme executed by the Nazis. In Communist theory they prefer a civil government. One day they will have to



recognise a Tibetan Communist Party. The Indian Communist Party is basically an inefficient administrative system. The Left is fighting the Right. Most Communist movements are experiencing this type of in-fighting. Once a Communist becomes a nationalist, he undermines the whole system.

G. K. Mookerjee: There are many such cases in the West also such as Wolfgang Leonhard for example. He was brought up by a Communist mother in Russia, and received his training as a Party Executive there. However, his nationalism proved too strong, and he escaped from Russia, then from East Germany; now he is resident in West Germany and is one of the strongest critics of the Communist regime.

Giri Lal Jain: As a brain washing system, Communism has failed. Any comparison with religion is entirely bogus.

M. L. Sondhi: It is impossible for Tibet to be swamped by Han immigration. If the Chinese were to make a success of it there, they would have to be motivated by an economic need to be richer than the Americans. Professor Lattimore has said that Tibet yields diminishing returns to any imperialism which tries to conquer it. And Communism has failed to find a solution to the food problem. However, I endorse Mr. Jain's view that we must wake up to the time aspect of the problem, and that the critical period is 5-10 years from now, during which we can do something.

G. K. Mookerjee: Now let us bring this discussion to a practical conclusion. There are three ways in which we can give effect to the debate:



1. We must keep the movement for Tibetan independence alive.
2. We must undertake that the Tibet question be brought before the United Nations.
3. We should organise these seminars as often as we can that we may draw up a programme of action. We hope we shall meet very soon again, and draw up a programme of action.

Resolutions of this Seminar

1. That India should recognise the Government of the Dalai Lama as a Government in exile.
2. That the Dalai Lama should be given travel and broadcasting facilities both at home and abroad.
3. That India should sponsor the Tibetan issue at the United Nations.
4. That material assistance should be extended to the Tibetan resistance.
5. That India should demand international inspection for possible nuclear weapons site in Tibet.
6. That Indians and Tibetans should initiate a discussion on a democratic constitution for Tibet.
7. That India, with the help of Tibetans in India, should launch a cultural offensive against Chinese-occupied Tibet.



Dharamsala Revisited: Shangrila or Sarajevo?

By K. Dhondup

TIBETAN REVIEW, July 1994

In the last week of April 1994, the town of Dharamsala witnessed riots fuelled by local right-wing politicians. Tibetans living in the area were subjected to *massive* violence. They were beaten up; their shops and residential properties were damaged by the rioters. In soothing the tensions, Prof. Sondhi played an important role which came to be acknowledged in this special report of the *Tibetan Review*, July 1994. Following are some edited extracts from this report.

"... Tibetans were under attack. Tibetans were not retaliating at all. They were watching in horror their properties being damaged, shops being looted and gutted. Only one member of the Tibetan cabinet was in town. The chairman of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies was also away. People rang the local Indian administration, but no response was forthcoming ...

As the situation demanded immediate attention ... (people) started ringing up ... to seek advice and guidance. They gave ... the numbers of all concerned authorities and recommended ... to talk directly to the Home Secretary.

... Late that evening a ray of hope dawned in the form of Professor M. L. Sondhi of Jawaharlal Nehru University. Professor Sondhi, a long time friend of Tibetans ... who was not aware of the seriousness of the crisis in Dharamsala as Tibetan officials he had met earlier did not even hint that anything was amiss. So it must have surprised him that ... a fervent appeal (was made) to do whatever he can to resolve the tension in Dharamsala and save the Tibetan



community from further victimization at the hands of local politicians ...

After discussing many possibilities, Prof. Sondhi (advised) ... that a Tibetan eyewitness must come down from Dharamsala to conduct a press conference on the situation ... (He also) reported and discussed the matter with highest officials and the BJP high command which ... deputed its Vice President Krishan Lal Sharma to deal with the situation in Dharamsala ... (However) apparently, the Tibetan administration was trying to play down the crisis and was hesitant about the idea of a press conference ...

Prof. Sondhi ... thought it might be a good for a team from Delhi to visit the sites of destruction and meet both Tibetans and Indians in Dharamsala. We (the author and colleagues) started contacting some important people to join this team ... the (Amnye Machen Institute) issued an invitation to Professor Sondhi to lead such a team. In view of this, Professor Sondhi thought it would be wiser to lead a preliminary team consisting of important people from the media and others with influence in the Himachal Pradesh state ... As (the team) was making transportation arrangements, (they) were informed that the cabinet had finally agreed to invite the team to Dharamsala. Minister Rinchen Khando Choegyal personally telephoned the invitation to Professor Sondhi. Everything was settled. Professor Sondhi asked (the author) to be in Dharamsala a day before the team's arrival ...

On the morning of 4 May, we (the author along with colleagues) received Professor Sondhi and his team at Kangra airport. Sondhi and two others went directly to Palampur to call on Shanta Kumar, BJP leader and former chief minister of the state. The press contingent was taken to McLeod Ganj. Later the two groups together met Tibetan ministers and visited the Arts and Metalcrafts Centre and the Lower TCV School. The team then visited the police headquarters. In the evening, over dinner they held detailed



discussions with local people and Tibetans. They did not waste time, and did not mince words either with the locals or with the Tibetans. They demanded facts and, to the furthest extent possible, verified what any side told them. As head of the team, Professor Sondhi drew the admiration of everyone for his tireless energy and initiative.

The next morning, the team from Delhi, ex-CM Shanta Kumar, BJP advocate Chopra, and politician Krishan Kapoor had an audience with the Dalai Lama. It was there that the Dalai Lama declared that if the presence of the Tibetans and foreigners who came to see him in Dharamsala is inconvenient to the local community, he will consider shifting out, perhaps to a place like Bangalore. Shanta Kumar apologised on behalf of his party and requested the Dalai Lama not to think of shifting from Dharamsala. Other members of the team also appealed to him to reconsider.

After the audience, the team met with the Deputy Commissioner and Congress-I politician Chandreshkumari. They also visited other sites of the riot. The next day the team returned to Delhi.

In one sense the unfortunate incident is now over. Yet the wounds of the conflict are not yet healed. Permanent solution does not lie in moving from a smaller to a bigger place or vice-versa. If only the Tibetans, especially in Dharamsala, will learn to follow a middle path in their day-to-day interaction with the local community as well as with foreigners, perhaps the first ray of resolving such conflicts will shine.



Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Session on Tibet Strasbourg 2002

Decision

For these reasons,
The Tribunal decides:

1. That the Tibetan people have from 1950 been, continuously deprived of their right to self-determination:
2. That this breach of a basic right of the Tibetan people has been achieved through the violation of other basic rights of the Tibetan people, among others by depriving them of the right of the exercise of freedom of religion and expression, by arbitrary arrests and punishments without trial, the destruction of religious and cultural monuments and by resorting to torture:
3. That the population transfers from the People's Republic of China into the territory of Tibet of non Tibetan people's is directed towards undermining the ethnic and cultural unity of Tibet:
4. That the division of the territory of Tibet in two parts, one called the "Autonomous Region of Tibet" and the other made up administratively of parts of various Chinese provinces, is also directed towards destroying the unity and the identity of the Tibetan people; and
5. That the Tibetan people were autonomously governed for many centuries: achieved a specific state structure after 1911 and that the basic Tibetan institutions are now represented by the Tibetan Government in Exile.



About ML Sondhi

Academic, diplomat, parliamentarian, above all a charismatic intellectual and public personality, Professor Manohar Lal Sondhi was a unique figure in the political history of post-Nehruvian India.

Professor Sondhi's life and work were unified by a single passion, that India live up to the promise of its freedom movement and emerge as a strong but benign force in the family of nations. He joined public life at a stage when the Nehruvian consensus had run afoul of reality with economic stagnation and a decisive defeat at the hands of China in the 1962 war.

He set about constructing and articulating an alternative vision by advocating a strong national defence as a prerequisite for peace. Thus he pioneered both in articulating a rationale for India's acquisition of a nuclear deterrent in the mid-1960's and in introducing courses in peace studies and conflict management at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He wrote and spoke copiously on non-appeasement rather than non-alignment as the proper foreign policy for India, and emphasised an open rather than a doctrinaire approach. He championed the cause of Tibetan freedom and spoke out forcefully against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and that of Afghanistan in 1979.

He foresaw well before the dismantling of the Berlin Wall that the Soviet Empire was doomed to fail, thanks to his intimate political and economic knowledge of communist regimes gleaned during his diplomatic stint in Eastern Europe and his academic study

of the region. This disposed him to champion a liberal economic order as opposed to Nehruvian socialism, and to warn against the creeping authoritarianism that was to culminate in the emergency of 1975-77.



During the late 1960s and early 70s he often travelled to Israel and South-East Asia, two regions whose spectacular advances in prosperity and nation-building he felt merited India's attention. He twice interacted with David Ben-Gurion, consistently advocated friendship with Israel, and argued for greater Indian engagement in South-East Asia. He met Prince Norodom Sihanouk on several occasions and published for the Prince his open letter to India and the Non-aligned movement at the time of the NAM conference in 1983. He was also a strong supporter of friendship with Pakistan and regional cooperation, and campaigned for the formation of a South Asian Parliament from the 1980s. The ties between Japan and India having remained tepid for some decades after the war, this was another relationship, founded in the warmth of the Rash Behari Bose, Subhas Chandra Bose and Radha Binod Pal war and post-war contributions, which he believed needed revival and intensification over a broad range of economic, strategic and cultural fields. He visited Japan on several occasions in the 90s and lobbied for institutionalising deeper understanding both in Japan and India.

His cultural interests were extensive, inspired by the wide-ranging 19th century Indian intellectual renaissance. As a child of the Arya Samaj mediated by the Ramakrishna and Ramana movements, he was keenly interested in a modern forward-looking Hinduism. He did not, however, have any patience with narrow sectarianism. He was deeply distressed by the obscurantist fallout of the sati incident in Deorala, Rajasthan, government complicity in the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and anti-Muslim riots Gujarat, and spoke out publicly and forcefully against their perpetrators across the political spectrum.

A Brief Biography

Professor ML Sondhi, (1933–2003) had his education from Punjab University (MA LLB), London School of Economics, Balliol College Oxford, and Charles University Prague (Czechoslovakia). He was elected Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University in 1956, but having simultaneously topped in the All-India UPCS examination, securing the yet unsurpassed highest marks in the oral interview, he opted for the Indian Foreign Service which sent him for a year's training to Balliol College, where the Rhodes Foundation also treated him as one of their own.



His first diplomatic posting (1958-1960) was at Prague as Cultural Attaché (also for a time Charge d'Affaires) where he developed, apart from formal professional contacts, a wide range of connections amongst dissenting literary and cultural circles. These interactions added to his studies of Czech Language and Literature at Charles University, gave him unique insights into the deeper currents of Czech society and culture.

At Krishna Menon's request he was next appointed Secretary to the Indian delegation at the UN (1960-61), but this only sharpened his resolve to quit the Foreign Service which he did promptly on his return to India, when he joined the then Indian School of International Studies as Reader in International Relations. This was an interim berth while awaiting the establishment of a department in East European Studies, in anticipation of which the School sent him on a year-long study cum liaison tour of Eastern Europe (Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia) and departments of East European studies in Western Europe (Switzerland, Germany, Britain) and the USA (Columbia, Harvard, Washington). He was also a Member of the Symposium on Conflict in Society, London 1965, which founded the academic discipline of Peace Research and Conflict Resolution.

About this time also, the Sondhis started publication of the monthly review *Shakti*, with Madhuri Sondhi as editor, judged by the Times Literary Supplement after a year of its publication as one of the twenty best journals in the Commonwealth. *Shakti's* Statement of Aims was fourfold: to seek an understanding of Indian politics with reference to a higher interpretation of Indian social and political doctrines; to effectively fight dogmatism and revive 'frontier thinking'; to develop forms of communication which restore fearlessness and abjure the dependencies of the colonised mind; and to emphasise human rights and freedoms to which the Indian tradition is committed.

In 1967 ML Sondhi was elected Member of Parliament from New Delhi on a Bharatiya Jana Sangha ticket, and served a term during which he earned a reputation for being a formidable and eloquent parliamentarian. He was appointed Member of the Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs and was also Secretary to the BJS Parliamentary Party. Apart from energetic work for his constituency, he took special interest in external



and strategic affairs and made memorable contributions to the debates on the NPT, the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia and West Pakistan's aggression on its Eastern sector in 1970. In public he took up such causes as Tibet, Bangla Desh, the Frontier Gandhi, the legacy of Subhas Bose, apart from multifarious concerns relating to the citizens of Delhi. He was especially responsive to the woes of innocent victims, and could claim responsibility for the release of young Trilok Chand Gupta imprisoned in a Pakistani jail after accidentally straying across the border, of Sukumar Bose locked up in a Polish communist prison after protesting the invasion of Prague by Warsaw troops, and nearer home, relief for internationally recognised cosmic ray scientist PS Gill who was the subject of government harassment in Chandigarh.

Regrettably the School, on grounds of his membership of a right-wing party, failed to utilise his services when they ultimately, a couple of decades later, introduced Eastern Europe as part of the Soviet Studies department. So he continued to teach in the Department of International Relations where he introduced highly popular courses on *Peace and Conflict Studies* and *Super Powers and the Third World*.

The ISIS merged with Jawaharlal Nehru University in 1971 and Professor Sondhi continued to teach. *Shakti* was reborn as the *Shakti Sunday Newspaper* with ML Sondhi as Chairman of its Editorial board, the first Indian offset-printed Sunday broadsheet of its kind, but had to close during the Emergency. The Eighties were marked by the seminars of the Group of Eighty of which he was Convenor, which took up a range of topics relating to national, political, economic and international affairs. He was the Indian nominator for the Nobel Prize awarded to the Dalai Lama in 1989, and Member of the Nominating Panel of the Gitelson-Meyerowitz Peace Award, 1990, which went to Simone Weill. After retirement in 1995 Prof. Sondhi was appointed Distinguished Scholar in JNU till 2001.

He worked in the Intellectual and Foreign Policy cells of the Bharatiya Janata Party and remained on its National Executive through the eighties and nineties. He was appointed Member of the Sardar Patel Foundation in 1999, and Chairman of the Indian Social Science Research Council in 2000. In the same year Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government,



APJ Abdul Kalam appointed him member of the Consultative Group of Departments on Science & Technology. In 2002 he launched his own Institute for Asia-Pacific Security.

In 1971, he published *Non-Appeasement A New Direction for Indian Foreign Policy* and later in 2001 *How India and Pakistan Make Peace*. His other books include, with Prakash Nanda, *Vajpayee's Foreign Policy Daring the Irreversible*, 1999, with KG Tyagi, *Asia-Pacific Security Globalisation and Development*, 2001; with Apratim Mukarji, *The Black Book of Gujarat*, 2002; with Ashok Kapur, *US and India Changing Strategic Parameters*, 2002, and with Madhuri Santanam Sondhi, *Hinduism's Human Face*, 2002.





