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29th April 1964

My dear Lal Bahadur,

In the wake of my last letter this too goes as a purely personal letter to which I hope you will have leisure enough to give attention. I write this about the Kashmir position. You are no doubt aware of what I have been saying on this subject.

I agree with Sri Jawaharlalji that the causes of ill feeling against India among Pakistan leaders are deep and are not to be expected to clear way as soon as we settle Kashmir. All the same I feel rather convinced that if we can possibly succeed in making Pakistan people feel that we have not taken away Kashmir for ourselves, depriving them of it, we shall have done a very great deal towards clearing up ill will. At any rate the Western world would no longer feel embarrassed about it.

The notion that if we give Kashmir autonomous status it will become a fertile field of international conspiracy and intrigue is in my opinion wholly baseless. Neither America nor Britain is hunting now for real property and new acquisitions of territory. The notion that soon as we give autonomy Kashmir will run away into the lap of hostile state is equally wrong.

My idea of the whole situation, as you can see from what I have said, is that the issue is how we shall at least reduce Indo-Pak jealousy and ill-will if not wholly remove them. Self-determination for Kashmir is as far as we are concerned a lesser issue than the aim of reducing Indo-Pak jealousy.

The idea that if we "let Kashmir go", we shall be encouraging secessions everywhere is thoroughly baseless. There is no Indo-Pak jealousy or anything corresponding to it in the case of claims like Dravidastan and the like. This argument calls for no consideration. Other secessionary claims have no justification except on the grounds of alleged discrimination or misrule which must be and can be dealt with easily enough.

I have written too long a letter. But I hope you and Jawaharlalji will be guided by Providence and bring this

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great opportunity to a good result. I see the hand of Providence in the release of Sheik Saheb. If my line is accepted, I feel certain Western Powers will see to it that a two fronts danger never develop against us.

Yours sincerely,

C.R.

Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri
Minister, Govt. of India
New Delhi