THE STRENGTH OF INDIA

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TWO gigantic land powers, India and Red China, are growing up in Asia adjacent to each other. They have much in common—huge populations, low standards of living, fast-rising birth rates—and both are struggling to industrialize.

Each is deeply immersed in its own domestic and economic problems, and one might think that both have far too much to do to contemplate international aggression. As for India, she has enjoyed her role as a major neutral power between East and West; Red China, on the other hand, is fully committed to communism and all it implies. Red China's policy is one of corrosive expansion. Already the Red tide laps relentlessly against the wall of the Himalayas.

Not so long ago the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, is reputed to have replied, in answer to a question concerning the defense of his country, "Defense against what?"

How strong is India? Can she effectively dam the flood to the north?

The subcontinent of India, a peninsula jutting out into the Indian Ocean from the Asian landmass, for centuries has been shielded from invaders from the north by the massive ranges of the Himalayas. It contains a variety of terrain, ranging from mountain and jungle to desert and swamp.

To the northwest is Pakistan. To the north is Tibet, now a province of Red China, with only a few small border states such as Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim sandwiched between. To the east lie East Pakistan and Burma. India's land frontier is over 8,200 miles long, more than 2,600 miles of which she shares with Red China.

The population of 438 million (1961) is rapidly increasing; it has been estimated that it will exceed 492 million by 1966, and 625 million 10 years later. These are formidable figures, indeed. India can be regarded as more than a country in that she has seven major racial divisions, and a host of languages and dialects—one authority estimates 700, which may be roughly correct. Literacy is barely 23 percent but rising. The standard of living of the people is low, the government being haunted by the ever-present problem of feeding numbers that increase so rapidly.

Agriculture is the basis of the Indian economy, but methods tend to be primitive and yields low. For example, there were only 34,000 tractors on more than 315 million cultivated acres in early 1960. Traditions also affect agriculture. The cow is sacred and must not be killed. There are about 200 million head of cattle in India (about one-quarter of the world's total), but they are used only for their milk and as beasts of burden. It is estimated that at least one-third are nonproductive, contributing neither milk nor work. In other societies they would be dispatched as being uneconomic.

There are quantities of minerals in India, such as coal, iron, copper, and nickel, but the natural mineral resources of the country have by no means been fully explored, let alone developed. High hopes are placed in that direction.

Improving Output

In World War II India became a base for the Burma and Far East fighting, but no attempt was made to establish any "war industries." A number of scattered, small industries which had sprung up naturally were left to potter on in their own way without encouragement from industrial Britain. Before 1947 there was hardly any heavy industry to speak of in India. Since achieving independence, intense efforts have been made to build up a sound industrial base to balance and complement the agricultural economy. Progress in this direction has been made. Two five-year plans have been completed, and another one is just beginning. The plan aims at increasing the national income, food production, steel output (from three to 9.2 million tons per year), petroleum products, and cloth. This will cost 8,700 million pounds. Several countries, including Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, are assisting under various programs.

India is a democracy, modeled somewhat on the British pattern, but with several differences. The government is broadly committed to a policy of socialism, but a "caste" system retards this, especially in respect to establishing cooperative farms and other enterprises dependent on social intercourse. In industry the accent is largely on state control, but private capital continues to play a large part.

Communications in India are fairly good. A system of trunk roads was established by the British, of which there are still more than 144,000 miles

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in first-class order. There also are more than 240,000 miles of secondary, improved roads in reasonable condition. These roads stretch out to link the main cities, ports, and centers, but until the aggressive intentions of Red China became so apparent, few roads led to the Himalayas. Since then a network of strategic roads leading to the northern frontier is being constructed. Trucks and motor vehicles, both foreign and Indian, are ample, if not abundant, for the present economy of the country. Vehicle production is rising; more than 52,000 were turned out from Indian factories in 1960.

The people generally rely upon animal transport. Rivercraft are used, where possible, as many of the rivers are navigable.

A good railway system links the ports and the main centers within the country.

Recent History

Consolidated and ruled by Great Britain for nearly two centuries, power was handed over in 1947, when India and Pakistan became independent. Generally, parts with Moslem roots went to Pakistan and the others to India, but this left large communities on both sides stranded in an alien country. The birth was painful, as the sudden removal of British control resulted in mass migration and communal slaughter. Actual figures of those killed are unknown, but may have been a million, or some say even more. The displaced and homeless were many times that number.

The prominent Indian leader, Mr. Nehru, became the Prime Minister of India, the chief political post. His immediate concern, once the birth pangs had subsided, was to ensure that it remained a united country. He dreaded fragmentation. Within India there were a host of practically independent princely states which formerly had private treaties with Britain. They had to be persuaded to forego their rights and privileges and merge their territories into the new India. Hyderabad, one of the largest, resisted such pressure, and was not integrated until it was invaded and occupied by Indian troops in September 1948.

Almost at once a dispute arose over the northerly state of mountainous Kashmir. Although Kashmir has a predominantly Moslem population, its ruler was a Hindu, who opted to join India. Pakistan at once protested, and the troops of India and Pakistan clashed in Kashmir itself, where they still face each other across an uneasy cease-fire line.

To the northeast difficulties were encountered in the wild, tribal country of the Nagas, the famed "headhunters" who also demanded complete autonomy. Again, Indian troops had to intervene. This problem still is not satisfactorily solved.

On the whole, in spite of a few internal spasms, matters have gone as well since independence as Mr. Nehru reasonably could have hoped, although one state, Kerala, has voted Communist in its local elections, much to his discomfort.

In May 1951 the Red Chinese invasion of Tibet, the power vacuum to the north, brought communism to the borders of India. Then followed some years of uncertainty. Nehru, despite darkening skies, preached the gospel of peaceful coexistence with Red China, refusing to believe that the worst could happen, until he was shaken by another upheaval in Tibet in March 1959. This time the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal

leader of Tibet, fled southward into India.

Six months later the first sizable clash between Indian and Red Chinese troops occurred on the frontier.

The Army

Britain had always maintained a large standing army of Indian troops in India, as well as a British garrison. The Indian Army in 1939, recruited on a voluntary basis, amounted to slightly more than 177,000. Another 55,000, the private armies of the semi-independent states, could be added to this number. During World War II the army expanded rapidly until it reached a total of more than 2.5 million, and was reputed to be the largest "volunteer army" in history. When the war ended its strength melted away quickly, almost to its prewar level.

When India gained her independence, the army was divided between India and Pakistan, largely on the basis of religious persuasion. The 23 infantry regiments, each varying from two to five battalions, were disposed of in the following manner: 15 went to India, as did six of the 10 Ghurka regiments (the other four were retained in the British service and deployed mainly in Malaya); 12 of the 18 armored regiments (each of battalion size only); 19 of the 27 artillery regiments; and about two-thirds of the engineer and other logistical units. This gave a base of about 120,000 trained, experienced troops upon which to build and meet the requirements of rapid expansion.

Troops were required to replace the evacuated British garrison for internal security duties, to staff headquarters and centers of instruction, and to provide the specialist services, the majority of whom had been British personnel. Not the least urgent reason for expansion was warfare with neighboring Pakistan. The Indian state forces were incorporated, and an extensive recruiting campaign was carried out. From 1948 until 1953 were years of expansion, at the end of which the Indian Army was about 500,000 strong. The dispute with Pakistan meanwhile ensured that the army received a certain priority and an appreciable share of the national budget.

The fighting in Kashmir died down and, together with Nehru's declared policy of peaceful coexistence and neutralism, led to a reduction in force. In 1959, Red Chinese aggression reversed this trend, with the army returning to its former maximum strength of some 500,000. It is now reported to have exceeded that figure.

Army Organization

The Chief of Staff, with general headquarters at New Delhi, is directly responsible to the civilian Minister of Defense, who controls and directs defense policy through the professional service chiefs. Army general headquarters has the usual branches on the British pattern. For military purposes the country is divided into three territorial commands, the Southern, the Eastern, and the Western.

Field formations closely follow British organization. There are three brigade groups to a division, and three divisions to an army corps, while an "army group" may consist of any number of army corps with supporting troops. Although in theory the field units are neatly earmarked into divisions, for practical purposes the brigade group can be regarded as the basic field formation.

The army still remains predominantly infantry. The men are trained

at 21 Indian and Ghurka regimental centers, each looking after and feeding a varying number of battalions with reinforcements. The battalions themselves are formed into brigade groups. The infantry battalion consists of four infantry companies and a headquarters and a support company and is about 850 strong. It has the usual conventional infantry weapons, such as rifles, light and heavy machineguns, mortars, and antitank weapons of the British type, most of which have been manufactured in India.

The fighting in Kashmir in the winter of 1947-48 brought home the fact that the Indian infantry lacked winter and mountain training. The majority of the troops employed by the British in their almost perennial northwest frontier wars, had been Moslems, skilled in this kind of warfare. A mountain brigade and a mountain and winter war training center were formed, and special training was given to other units until there were at least three brigade groups expert at this type of warfare. Since 1960 this form of training has been extended. The plan provides that most of the Indian infantry units will be as capable of fighting in the mountains as on the plains or elsewhere.

The armored elements were fused together into an armored corps of about 12 battalions mounted in either tanks or other types of armored fighting vehicles, practically all British made.

India has been producing her own small artillery pieces for some years, and so has been able to increase slightly her batteries of mountain, field, antiaircraft, and antitank artillery. There are more than 20 ordnance, gun, and carriage factories, but heavy artillery still has to be procured from Britain.

Motor transport has increased in proportion to the size of the army, and now India produces her own three-ton truck. Also a number of packmule companies have been formed to operate in the mountains. A paratroop training center was taken over from the British, and a paratroop brigade built up.

India is said to have the only land-air warfare training school in Asia.

A part of the army is earmarked for internal security duties and is distributed about the countryside, with many units set up in old British cantonments. A large part, perhaps 12 to 14 brigade groups, is concentrated either in Kashmir or in the northwest facing Pakistan. Since partition, the Indian Army has faced that direction. More recently, however, Indian leaders have been forced to recognize that the greater danger lies not there, but to the north. Recently, a few brigade groups have moved northward to concentrate just south of the Himalayas at strategic points, covering the main mountain passes.

The Officers

The cadre of Indian officers developed during World War II. Although the seed was sown before that, there were few Indian officers prior to 1939, since the Indian Army was officered principally by the British. Viceroy's Commissioned Officers, a class of native officers, acted as junior leaders and made up to some extent for the lack of Indian officers. Huge influxes of Indians from the educated classes were accepted during the war, regardless of caste or creed. The majority proved to be very efficient and adaptable. At the end of the war most of them returned to civilian life. Before

1947 the highest rank held by an Indian was that of brigadier, since it was not British policy to promote Indians to high rank in view of possible political implications.

However, the small body of regular Indian officers had been thoroughly trained. In addition, they had ample battle experience and up to medium-level staff experience, so they were able to step into the shoes of the departing British officers.

The cadre of regular officers had to be increased and attention was given to recruiting suitable material. Fortunately, the prestige of the army was, and remains, high. It has been able to attract good types in sufficient numbers to meet the present requirements without difficulty. There are about 12,500 officers, but generally they tend to be rather mature for their rank or appointment. There are, for instance, platoon commanders of 30 years of age, and company commanders of over 40. The officer, unless he reaches general rank, retires at 48. Those who retire, either on reaching the age limit or before, find that prospects of obtaining civilian employment are reasonably fair.

The officers generally reflect their British training, having adopted British military customs, mode of life, organization, and uniform almost completely. English is the official language, they keep in close touch with British military developments, and show a keen interest in them. They do not intend to sink into insular backwardness and stagnation, but follow modern military thought and development. In this sphere they are well-informed and as progressive as their budget will allow.

There are two officer-producing schools for which an interservice selection board chooses candidates. About 750 cadets are commissioned into the army each year. The School of Infantry and other specialist centers train officers in technical subjects and the Defense Services Staff College prepares them for staff duty. In 1959 the National Defense College was set up to train Indian officers for senior appointments and commands.

On the whole, the officers corps is a happy, loyal, hard-working, capable, and intelligent body. The bravery and leadership in the field of the Indian officer were amply proved on a score of fronts in World War II. There can be no doubt whatever that in any hostilities he will fight well.

The Indian Army lacks an adequate officers' reserve, which would handicap any expansion. A reserve was established formally in 1959, and all ex-officers, within certain age groups, were encouraged to register. No figures have been published, but it is thought that this has been only partially successful. It is doubtful whether 20,000 have come forward to register, and of the actual number, a large proportion are more than 40 years of age. A new approach is needed.

Enlisted Men

British military thought always subscribed to the theory that the various peoples of India exhibited distinct martial or nonmartial aptitudes. Accordingly, they enlisted into the Indian native army only the Hindu "fighting races," such as the Dogras, Rajputs, Jats, Gharwalis, Sikhs, and Ghurkas, and would not recruit from southern India or Bengal. (The Moslem element which went to Pakistan is not discussed here, of course.)

During World War II the recruiting base had to be broadened. The so-

called "nonmartial" peoples who enrolled were under British direction, mostly in logistical formations. But the few who served in combatant units and saw action put up a good show, which indicated that the British theory probably was extreme.

On partition the new Indian Army consisted almost entirely of Hindu "martial races," and the government was faced with the problem of giving the army a national character by enlisting a proportion of the so-called "nonmartial" peoples. Response was poor, probably for two reasons. First, over a long period the British had created a division between the educated classes and the military. Second, the nonviolence creed of Mahatma Ghandi had sunk deep into the conscience of the masses. This problem still remains, but is slowly being overcome.

The Hindu soldier himself is brave and efficient. Those from the "fighting races" have a long tradition of military service. They enter the army with zest and enthusiasm. Moreover, the warrior is the second highest of the five castes in the Hindu religious and social structure, and so has prestige seldom accorded to a soldier in other countries.

The army remains a voluntary one, in which the majority of the men are on long service tours of duty. The standard of training is high and the state of discipline admirable. Morale also is at a high level. The Indian soldier has proved in war that he is a fighting man to be feared and respected.

The Territorial Army

Faced with the necessity of providing some form of second line defense, India decided to emulate the British system and institute a "Territorial Army" on a voluntary, part-time basis. There had been volunteer units before 1947, but not many. This plan was put into effect in 1949 when a tentative target of 200,000 volunteers was set, but results were disappointing. Having been long divorced from military matters, the majority of the population was of the view that "war was for the soldier, not the civilian." There was a slight spurt in voluntary recruitment in 1954. But generally it dragged badly until 1959, when the tempo quickened, and it was reported that the Territorial Army had reached "90 percent" of its goal, which by this time may have been revised.

The volunteer may enlist between the ages of 18 and 45 years. He engages to serve for seven years with the Territorial Army, followed by eight years in the Territorial Army Reserve. All are expected to attend an annual camp of between four to 14 days, and certain periods of instruction at their Territorial Army unit center in the evenings or on weekends. The Territorial Army units are mainly situated in the cities. More units are to be formed and it is expected that the establishment will be increased, if that has not already been done.

In an effort to overcome the general military lethargy and the indifference of the educated classes, a National Cadet Corps has been instituted. Both boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are encouraged to join. It is a form of youth training with a military flavor. This National Cadet Corps seems to fluctuate in the region of about 200,000 strong, but over the years a large number of young people have been brought in touch with the military needs of the nation.

Air Force

India has a flourishing and expanding air force.

Out of the old Royal Indian Air Force, she gained eight squadrons of British aircraft. This nucleus has gradually increased as more modern aircraft have been acquired. In 1955 a Soviet offer to provide *MiG's* and *Ilyushins* was refused. Instead, India chose British *Canberras, Hawker Hunters,* and French *Mystères.* However, in 1961 she changed her policy and a dozen *Antonov-12's* were accepted. A few *Mi-4 (Hounds)* helicopters previously had been acquired.

Indian industry has produced a few light aircraft, but the air force has had to rely upon foreign ones, and will have to for some time to come. India is developing her own fighter jets. The main types of aircraft in service are *Canberras, Hawker Hunters, Liberators, Vampires, Mystères,* and *Gnats.*

The strength of the air force in 1960 was given as 26,400 men and about 450 operational aircraft. Since then plans to expand it to 25 squadrons, equipped with the best modern jet aircraft, have been put into operation. When these are completed the Indian Air Force will be able to contribute to the defense of the Himalayas. Indian pilots are trained and exercised in India and ample good material is available. Indian pilots performed well during the closing stages of World War II.

As a form of reserve, in 1955 the Auxiliary Indian Air Force was instituted on a voluntary part-time basis. It has five squadrons located in the main cities, four of which are equipped with jet aircraft.

Navy

The Indian Navy is much smaller than the air force. When Britain withdrew, India was faced with the problem of providing defense for her 3,500 miles of coastline. From the breakup of the old Royal Indian Navy, India gained four sloops, 12 minesweepers, and a corvette—small enough indeed for such a task. The navy has since been slowly built up, and at present consists of one aircraft carrier, three destroyers, eight frigates, 12 minesweepers, and other small craft. Her two shipyards are now producing small ships.

The navy has had to take a lower priority than either of the other two services. It seems that India does not expect invasion from the sea as much as from the land, and has cut her cloth accordingly.

A naval aviation wing has been developed, but it is still small in size and potential. In addition, a naval cadet corps exists for young people on a part-time voluntary basis.

Foreign Relations

Indian relations with certain foreign countries may seem a little unusual, but she has special problems and other stresses and strains that are not always fully appreciated abroad. India's primary concern is with three countries, which are in order, Pakistan, Red China, and the Soviet Union.

Pakistan

There have been interracial massacres at intervals throughout Indian history, and traces of fear and hatred live on to color her relations with Pakistan. On partition, race warfare flared up, and traditional hatreds between Hindu and Moslem were violently revived. Since her inception, Pakistan

has been the main "enemy," and Kashmir the main bone of contention. Although the cease-fire line in Kashmir has remained "static," there have been numerous incidents over the years between the two countries at places where their frontiers are together. As late as April 1959, an Indian jet bomber was shot down over Pakistani territory.

The creeping erosion by Red China in 1959 alarmed not only India, but Pakistan as well, and brought about a somewhat forced agreement on certain disputed parts of their frontiers. It seemed at first that the Red Chinese menace had brought India and Pakistan together. For some months all boded well for improved friendship, but this condition did not last and underlying prejudices again rose to the surface.

Pakistan accused India of building up a modern force with which to attack her, while India, upset when the US sent modern jets to Pakistan, made counteraccusations. At the time of writing, the two leaders, Prime Minister Nehru of India, and President Ayub of Pakistan, are openly scolding each other in public. The rift between the two countries is not healed, and is deeper than many in the West realize.

Red China

The other country that India has been forced to consider closely, somewhat reluctantly it would appear, is Red China. For years Nehru tried to steer a course of neutralism between West and East. He hoped to be a friend and confidant of both, but involved with neither side in defensive pacts. Red China's conquest of Tibet in 1951 seemingly made no difference. Nehru still aspired to gain Red China's friendship. For years he sponsored her admittance into the United Nations. Although the two ideologies were vastly different, Nehru constantly advocated peaceful coexistence. So emphatic and single-purposed was he on this theme that in 1957, when the Red Chinese flagrantly constructed a road through Ladakh, Indian territory, to link up Tibet with Sinkiang, Nehru neither protested to China nor informed the Indian people of the facts.

It was not until August 1959 when Red troops openly attacked Indian frontier posts that he was thoroughly disillusioned. During September and October there were further patrol clashes and incursions, and Red Chinese troops occupied some 9,000 square miles of Indian territory. This was later increased to about 12,000 square miles. Red Chinese maps show about 40,000 square miles of Indian territory as their own.

Chou En-lai proposed a demilitarized frontier, but Nehru would not agree, refusing to meet him for talks. In April 1960 Chou En-lai visited India, but the meeting was cool and no agreement was forthcoming. Relations between the two countries are now very cold, and the frontier has become hot, causing India to focus her defense effort on it instead of on Pakistan.

Although commonsense decrees that the Indian defense forces should point northward, this premise has been reluctantly accepted.

USSR

For years the USSR angled for influence in India. Although Nehru was friendly, he also was noncommittal. In 1955 Bulganin and Khrushchev visited India in an attempt to establish more cordial relations. They failed on that occasion. Russian arms and

aircraft were refused. A similar offer made in 1957 also was turned down.

The Soviet Union persevered and gradually gained a foothold in the technical and industrial fields. By 1960 it was thought that almost 49 percent of the foreign technicians in India were Russians. Russian assistance—technicians, loans, and equipment—has been funneled into steelworks and other enterprises to include Russian prospecting for oil in India.

In February 1960 Khrushchev again visited India. When Nehru tried to persuade him to use his influence to modify Red Chinese policy, Khrushchev refused to discuss the matter. Later that year, India accepted Russian aircraft and more may be on the way. It is thought that other military arms and equipment were refused. In March 1961 it was announced that quantities of petroleum would be imported from the Soviet Union, a move that probably has not pleased Red China.

It appears that Soviet influence is increasing. Khrushchev is willing to supply arms which is somewhat paradoxical in view of the fact that they would be used primarily for defense against Russia's Communist sister, Red China. Perhaps Khrushchev would like to see a stronger India to act as a counterweight against Red China. He knows that if India fell to Red China, a huge slice of the world's land surface would be under Mao's form of communism. The influence of Moscow's brand would diminish correspondingly.

Other Countries

India's relations with other countries can be summed up more briefly. She is friendly and close with Britain, having received arms, money, and other assistance from her. With the United States she also is friendly, more reserved in manner, but has accepted loans and other aid. Canada has helped her to establish atomic reactors. She is generally friendly with other foreign countries, but not close. For some obscure reason, India has not recognized Israel.

India is a prominent member of the United Nations. She speaks her mind on world affairs, and shares fully in UN projects. She sent an ambulance unit to Korea and later an Indian brigade assisted in the repatriation of prisoners of war. In Indochina she provided military and civilian inspection teams. She contributed an infantry battalion to the United Nations Emergency Forces for guard duty in the Middle East between Egypt and Israel. More recently, she has sent military observers to Lebanon, and now has a brigade of troops in the Congo.

In the purely military sphere abroad her activities also have been fairly wide. Indian instructors set up the Military Academy in Ethiopia and combined services delegations have visited both Red China and the Soviet Union. The Indian Air Force has provided training facilities to Burma, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Malaya, and Ghana. The navy has made several worldwide goodwill tours and visits.

Comparison With Red China

India's democratic neutral outlook may ultimately bring her into hostile contact with Communist China aiming at world conquest.

India and Red China have several characteristics in common, such as huge expanding populations, low standards of living, and difficulty in feeding the masses. They are both agricultural countries which are only in the first stages of industrialization,

and both are technically underdeveloped.

The advantages seem, on the face of it, to be with Red China because her population is mobilized and indoctrinated. She has a large army (perhaps 4.5 million, with a 250-million militia as a reserve) and a large air force (perhaps 3,000 operational aircraft), with plenty of conventional weapons. Her commanders have had war experience in handling large bodies of troops. On the other hand, India has only a small army and air force, lacks conventional weapons, and her high command never has experienced large-scale warfare.

India's main advantages seem to be the natural Himalayan defensive line, Red China's dependence upon Soviet generosity for aviation fuel, and overextended Chinese communications systems. Also, India can rely upon several countries to come to her aid, either materially, morally, or both, while Red China stands alone and has no friends of any consequence. She cannot rely completely even upon her Communist sister, Soviet Russia, who cheerfully helps India to arm herself to repel Chinese aggression.

To make any impact Red China would have to assemble a gigantic expeditionary force, with all its necessary supporting services, and maintain a conventional line of communication over the massive obstacle of the Himalayan ranges. It is doubtful whether China could do this because her army is static and guerrilla-minded.

Conclusion

Brought face to face with Red China, how would India fare in war?

The Indian Army, small, but determined and efficient, supported by its air force, should be able to hold the Reds along the line of the Himalayas for a time. Foreign aid would be needed, as she could not continue the struggle alone indefinitely. Her main weakness lies in her lack of reserves. Hostilities would almost certainly unite the nation, and bring in Pakistan as an ally. It is also unlikely that India would find herself alone in a fight against Red China.

Should the Himalayan wall be breached at any point, the Red Chinese soldier would find himself alone in a hostile country with every hand against him, a vastly different proposition than conducting guerrilla tactics against a background of well-disposed peasantry, as events in Korea showed to a small degree.