

# Military Review

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*In This Issue*

- ◆ What Is the Threat?
- ◆ Canadian Unification
- ◆ Vietnam Ground War

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# Military Review

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|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Canadian Unification . . . Wg Cdr J. Gellner, Royal Canadian Air Force, Ret   | 3   |
| The Commander and Civil-Military Relations . . . LTC Irvin M. Kent, USA       | 9   |
| The Coup D'Etat . . . . . C. E. S. Dudley                                     | 14  |
| German Reserves and Replacements . . . . . Eric Waldman                       | 21  |
| Inchon: The General's Decision . . . . .CPT H. Pat Tomlinson, USA, Ret        | 28  |
| Ho's Mistake . . . . . MAJ Dave R. Palmer, USA                                | 35  |
| Moscow and the Chinese Missile . . . . . Fritz Ermarth                        | 40  |
| What Is the Threat? . . . . . COL Irving Heymont, USA, Ret                    | 47  |
| India's Alternatives . . . . . Brig R. D. Law, Indian Army                    | 56  |
| Ground Warfare in Vietnam . . . . . Anthony Harrigan                          | 60  |
| Turkish Army's Role in Nationbuilding . . . . . COL Clifton C. Fox, USA       | 68  |
| Operation Moldau . . . . . Anonymous  | 75  |
| A New Look at the Minutemen . . . . . MAJ John R. Galvin, USA                 | 80  |
| Weapons for Internal Defense: 1970-80 . . . . . COL Alvin C. Isaacs, USA      | 87  |
| Mobility Without Wheels, Wings, or Blades . . . . . COL Charles M. Tyson, USA | 92  |
| <u>Military Notes</u> . . . . .   | 97  |
| <u>Military Books</u> . . . . .   | 108 |



# INDIA'S ALTERNATIVES

Brigadier R. D. Law,  
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**N**UCLEAR detonations by Communist China and the prospect of mainland China becoming a nuclear power have posed a number of problems for India. These problems have a direct bearing on her domestic and foreign policy. Most important is the question of whether India should attempt to develop and produce nuclear weapons.

When sufficiently developed, China's nuclear capability will pose a serious threat to India's security, and, unless the Indian armed forces are provided nuclear support, their morale will suffer a serious setback. To expect the armed forces to resist Chinese attacks which are supported by nuclear weapons would be a useless sacrifice.

If India is to defend herself against Chinese aggression, or if she is to have any hope of recovering lost territories, her forces must have nuclear

support, be it with her own weapons or those obtained elsewhere.

In modern war, the morale of the armed forces is essentially a part of national morale. If cities and industrial complexes are subject to Chinese nuclear attacks, maintenance of national morale will be an impossible task unless India has the means to retaliate, thus providing a deterrent to the use of these weapons by an aggressor.

### The Deterrent

India is at a considerable disadvantage compared to China. From Tibetan bases, China can strike at many of India's major cities and much of her industrial potential without employing highly sophisticated delivery means. On the other hand, India cannot retaliate against Chinese cities or industry without highly sophisticated delivery systems. The only military targets within easy reach are those in Tibet and Sinkiang, and China would not be unduly concerned about attacks on these targets. Therefore, if India develops nuclear weapons, the cost will be high.

The annual cost for an effective nuclear deterrent is of a magnitude clearly beyond India's means unless she stops development and increases taxation. This would certainly lead to a collapse of her economy and cause widespread discontent—a situation which would be to China's liking.

India has pledged herself to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and has

been one of the most enthusiastic supporters of disarmament. This stand is widely appreciated by the civilized world and, along with her policy of nonalignment, has helped to ease world tensions. As a result, India has attained a position in international affairs out of all proportion to her material strength.

A reversal of these policies is bound to tarnish India's image in the civilized world. She would cease to be a stabilizing influence in international disputes. This would be a disservice to the cause of peace. However, these considerations are secondary when the country's sovereignty is at stake.

### Proliferation of Weapons

If India attempts to develop nuclear weapons, other nations may consider themselves threatened by India and follow suit. This may well start a chain reaction and result in some irresponsible nations possessing nuclear weapons which would considerably increase the chances of the outbreak of nuclear wars either accidentally or intentionally. The development of nuclear weapons by India will, therefore, have far-reaching effects.

India's efforts to promote world peace and her sacrifices for this cause have been appreciated in most quarters. Consequently, she receives substantial aid from practically all the developed countries of the world, irrespective of their ideologies. India will continue to require such aid for many years. If India were to take the step which would lead to nuclear proliferation, she would lose the sympathy she enjoys. In fact, in order to discourage India from producing nuclear weapons, external aid may well be refused or stopped altogether by many nations.

The attainment of a nuclear capa-

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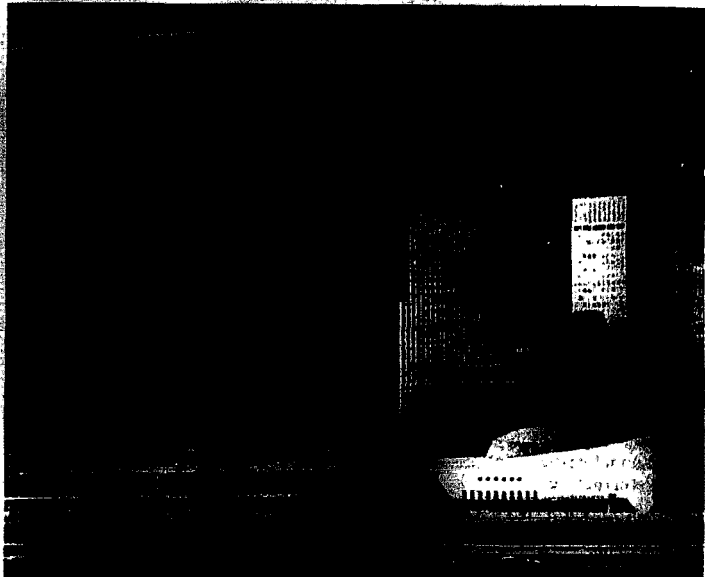
bility will certainly bolster India's prestige among Afro-Asian countries and produce a corresponding setback to China's stature. It will retard the spread of Chinese influence and would be a major contribution toward the containment of Communist China.

Since ignoring the Chinese nuclear threat would mean an undue risk, and

- Requesting a nuclear shield under the auspices of the United Nations.

- Entering into collaboration with a country or countries, similarly threatened, to share the cost of development and production.

- Intensification of nuclear research in India so the time gap be-



*Department of State*

**A UN nuclear shield is not a sufficient guarantee for India because a Security Council member could exercise his veto at a critical time**

since development and production of nuclear weapons and their associated delivery means would severely tax India's economy, four alternatives are open:

- An understanding with one or more friendly nuclear powers to provide nuclear protection to India in the event of a Chinese nuclear attack.

tween a decision to produce nuclear weapons and actual production can be reduced to the minimum.

The United States has made a general statement that her assistance may be available to any country threatened by a nuclear attack. India could not possibly rely on a general declaration of this nature, for this is not a suff-

cient guarantee that nuclear protection will be provided at the critical time. A more concrete arrangement is necessary, possibly in the form of a treaty. Countries which could provide this protection are the United States or the Soviet Union.

India could enter into an agreement with either one, both of them individually, or with the two collectively. Such an agreement would not be contrary to India's policy of nonalignment, but it will not be entirely free from drawbacks.

First, the ability of a country to be able to provide the required support will depend upon the international situation prevailing at the time. For instance, if India had an agreement with the United States, she may not be able to offer assistance if, as a consequence, she is threatened with retaliation by the Soviet Union. It is extremely unlikely that India would have any control of nuclear weapons supplied by another nation.

Under the UN Charter, any member threatened by aggression can ask the United Nations for assistance. If threatened with a Chinese nuclear attack, India could follow this course; however, there are serious disadvantages. All decisions of the United Nations are subject to a majority vote. It has been India's experience that the voting in the United Nations is not always on the basis of a case's merits. Not to be ruled out is the possibility that a member might exercise his veto in the Security Council at a critical time.

The only country likely to be threatened by China and which is sufficiently advanced to collaborate with India in the development and production of nuclear weapons is Japan. The strong feeling in that country against nuclear

weapons is well known. Therefore, it is unlikely if any Japanese Government would be in a position to collaborate on such a project in the face of such strong public opinion. Further, the Japanese Government has declared that it would accept the positioning of US nuclear weapons if Japan is threatened. Under these circumstances, it is doubtful if Japan would be prepared to divert resources for the development of nuclear weapons.

In addition to any other arrangement that India may make, it would be a logical course to step up nuclear research so that, if the need arises, India could start production of nuclear weapons with minimum delay. This would be a useful standby arrangement in the event other arrangements fail to materialize.

In a few years, the Chinese nuclear capability will pose a very live threat to India, and she has to devise ways and means of countering it. Development of nuclear weapons is clearly beyond India's resources, and such a step would have serious repercussions on her economy.

Nuclear protection under the auspices of the United Nations will not be sufficiently reliable, for one cannot afford to stake a country's security on the whims and fancies of voters or those who have the power of veto. An agreement with the United States, or the Soviet Union, or both for nuclear protection would have disadvantages, but it is the best under the circumstances. In addition, efforts should be made to step up nuclear research to an extent that the timelag between the decision to produce nuclear weapons and actual production is reduced to the minimum. This would be a useful standby.