

INDIA'S

NUCLEAR DILEMMA

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The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons was opened for signature 1 July 1968 in Washington, London, and Moscow. Fifty-six nations signed the treaty that day in Washington. Among the nations not signing were India, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, and Japan.—Editor.

TWO recent developments in the nuclear political field must have shaken many Indians from their complacent, easygoing attitude in regard to the evolution of a nuclear weapons

policy for India. One is the report of Communist China's intention to test her nuclear missile system across Indian territory into the Indian Ocean. The other is the draft nonproliferation treaty.

These two significant events highlight India's dilemma in formulating a positive nuclear policy. Her present attitude officially has been "not to go in for the bomb for the time being." Can this posture still be retained with that naivety and simplicity that has been so characteristic all these years?

A balance of terror between the superpowers has already been reached,

and the scale of damage is so vast that it is their aim that war between them should not break out by accident, mistake, or misunderstanding. They are extremely keen that nuclear proliferation be stopped and that other nuclear powers do not continue developing nuclear weapon systems.

Dual Risk

Neither superpower would find it easy or comfortable to provide a nuclear umbrella to another country. This would entail a dual risk: a commitment to launch a nuclear second strike on another country for the sake of the guaranteed country, with all its consequences, and the risk of being the object of a nuclear first strike by a country which is the enemy of the guaranteed country.

Meanwhile, Communist China's nuclear policy could follow several courses. It could develop a regional deterrent based on bombers or land-based and submarine-launched missiles; or develop a global deterrent composed of long-range bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and more advanced submarine-launched missiles; or attempt to follow both.

It is possible that, in the short run, China may place stress on developing a regional deterrent while working on a global deterrent. It is equally possible that she may place stress on both a regional and global deterrent creating the impression among the superpowers that they will be under the threat of nuclear attack, and, there-

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fore, it would be preferable for them to leave Asian countries alone and unprotected. In any case, Chinese leaders know that, unless they rapidly acquire the technology for a credible threat of nuclear escalation, Red China will have to appease one or both superpowers.

Thus, on the one hand, there is the Chinese nuclear threat. On the other, there is the insistence from both superpowers that India sign the non-proliferation treaty. Should she sign the treaty or should she refuse and go in for an independent deterrent of her own? Signing the draft treaty does not give India a guarantee against a Chinese nuclear attack, but, by so doing, she commits herself forever against having her own nuclear weapons. Thus, without a deterrent guarantee, she is asked to opt forever not to possess the bomb.

First Reaction

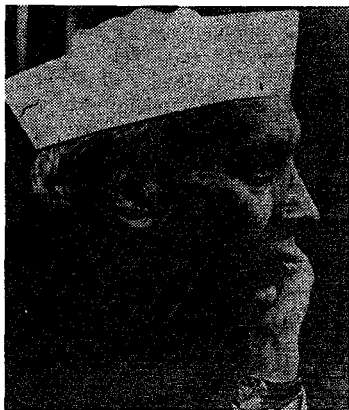
The most natural first reaction in such a situation is likely to be to develop an independent deterrent at least to indicate one's own self-respect. But this is not a matter which can be decided on mere sentiment, however strong. All factors must be carefully weighed before a decision is reached.

India needs the help of the superpowers in a number of ways and would probably lose this assistance if she opts for nuclear weapons.

France's policy of having her own "little bomb" as a "proportional deterrent" is crucially dependent on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's early warning system. India has no such advantage and would have to set up her own warning system; this would be a costly undertaking. West German military experts doubt the effectiveness of a *force de frappe* of

the French variety as an effective deterrent against a major nuclear power in spite of the advantage of an early warning system. Moreover, even though India decides to go the French way, France is not likely to help her in any substantial way.

Having signed the Moscow Treaty, atmospheric testing is excluded unless



Information Service of India

Inspired by great leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru (above) and Mahatma Gandhi, India's struggle for independence has been largely peaceful

India is prepared to scrap that paper too. And is India going to develop an antiballistic missile system in addition to the normal extensive civil defense system that will be required in most of the northern cities?

Opting for the bomb will not reduce the expenses of conventional defense; rather, these will have to be raised in the context of the political effects of such a nuclear decision.

The other alternative is signing the nonproliferation treaty. If this is done without bargaining, it will imply that

India has decided never to have nuclear weapons without first securing a guarantee of deterrence against a nuclear attack. Therefore, a demand for such a guarantee must be made; unless this is negotiated, India should not sign the document, however great the pressure.

The difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory guarantee from either or both superpowers should not be minimized. Neither superpower is eager to give such a guarantee. Even in the case of NATO states, a sense of uneasiness has arisen as to whether the United States would act effectively if a NATO country is attacked in the same manner as the attacked country would rush to defend itself. The same may be the case in the Warsaw camp.

Degree of Leverage

With the entry of antiballistic missile politics, and of the impending Chinese nuclear threat to both the Soviet Union and the United States by 1970, the two superpowers would be extremely hesitant to involve themselves with nuclear weapons in Asia where the chances of a war breaking out are greater. Therefore, for an Asian country to secure a credible nuclear guarantee from either of the superpowers is not going to be simple. But India as a potential nuclear weapon power has a certain degree of leverage which she should use to secure the best terms. A hard and intelligent negotiation is ahead, and a lot of arm-twisting techniques in the modern style should be anticipated.

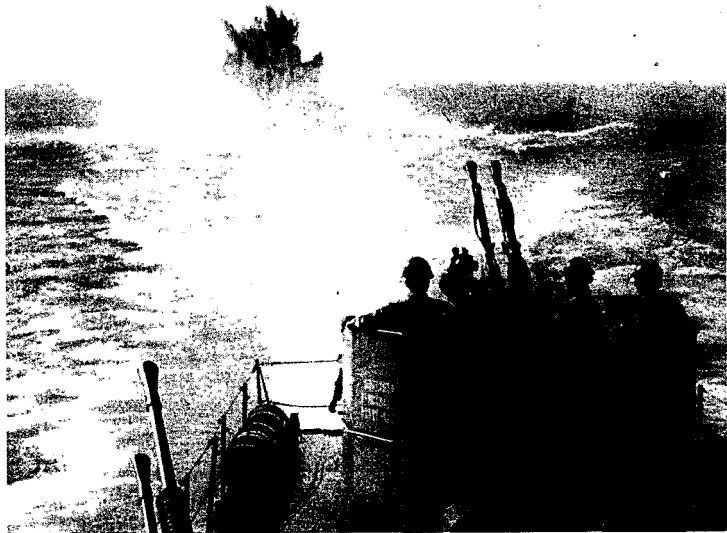
If India does not have her own nuclear weapons, a nuclear umbrella is certainly preferable to no umbrella at all. This will inevitably mean *de facto* reduction of sovereignty under certain circumstances. In spite of clauses

that may be written into an agreement for a nuclear umbrella, a certain ambiguity will still remain in the manner of execution of the guarantee clauses. This is in the very nature of nuclear politics.

Guarantee or no guarantee, China will have to think seriously before she

might be deterred from using the nuclear weapon first. However, the Chinese conventional threat and the threat of a "revolutionary war" still remain.

It would be in order for India to seek an assurance from the superpowers for substantial aid in this respect against such a Chinese threat. If In-



Even though Communist China is deterred from launching a nuclear first strike; the Chinese conventional threat remains

decides to launch a nuclear attack against any country. In such a situation, it is likely that one or both superpowers may rush in and devastate the industrial and military potential of China. Otherwise, the Chinese terror is likely to dominate the entire continent to the detriment of the superpowers in terms of world balance. It is in view of this danger that China

dia is deterred from nuclear proliferation, and if she is not helped in the sphere of conventional defense, it would mean keeping her powerless and defenseless against China, whatever the pretext.

This cannot be accepted; therefore, India should demand the unfreezing of the superpower policy of withholding military aid to her at the conven-

tional level. Of course, the argument, raised by the superpowers, of India's wasting her military or economic resources vis-a-vis Pakistan will have to be met by India.

Both alternatives are unsatisfactory. While making a bomb would isolate India and may not make her strong enough to fight China, the umbrella policy would make India a "second-class" nation. Such a political position in the latter contingency cannot be accepted by any nation on a permanent basis, and a stable, peaceful international life is bound to be threatened sooner than later. It is hard to believe that nations such as Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Japan can ever accept such a permanent humiliation.

A perfectly satisfactory solution to such a complicated issue is not, however, possible in this present world. A compromise position may be acceptable for a short period during which a more satisfactory alternative pattern of relations can be worked out.

Elements of Approach

What are the elements of such an approach that may be able to meet the nuclear global situation, as well as be acceptable to all nations? Nobody would deny that the introduction of nuclear weaponry has changed the strategic situation fundamentally and nuclear war has to be avoided. But the very knowledge of a new weapon has its own momentum that cannot be avoided except by mutual consent of all parties.

Today, no nation can have a completely independent defense system. Equally, no nation can feel safe if there is serious tension and conflict in any part of the globe. Therefore, a purely national angle of security and deterrence has become obsolete. If this

is the situation today with only five nuclear weapon powers, what would the world be like with five more such powers?

On the other hand, the acceptance of dominance of one or two superpowers as "Big Brothers" over the others is unjust and impractical if it is meant to be a stable arrangement on an urgent basis.

World Law

The only way out is to create a world authority by reorganizing the United Nations on a universal foundation, with its own world force. This will be possible only when the nations agree to surrender part of their sovereignty to this world authority.

The two superpowers must be persuaded to accept this basis as the only abiding framework of the rule of law enforceable in the international field. If pressed perseveringly and competently from all quarters, they will see the point and will themselves take a constructive attitude. The development of the World Law and the creation of an effective sanction behind it must now be on the agenda of nations on an urgent basis.

India should prepare a strong case for such an approach when her representative is pressed to sign the draft treaty. From the press reports, it is clear that both the superpowers will exert tremendous pressure on India, even making their economic aid conditional to her assent to the treaty. This pressure can hardly be resisted unless the minds of her leaders are clear, and unless she is convinced of the stand she must take.

Except the two superpowers, all the self-respecting nations will be in sympathy with her if she raises this fundamental question. It is a question of

giving a firm lead and persisting in it. Such a situation will not arise again, and, once India slips, she will never be able to take this stand later.

Let it be noted that, in this plea, India is not against nonproliferation; India is asking for a nuclear umbrella against a possible threat. In addition, she is raising the fundamental question of equality of status between nations and of the need for surrender of sovereignty by all nations to a duly

constituted world authority to be created by the nations themselves.

As long as such an authority is absent, private and unequal arrangements arrived at under compulsion between nations will not remove the danger to peace. If ratified under such unhealthy circumstances, the proposed treaty may be similar to the Treaty of Versailles that caused the emergence of a reckless dictator although the analogy may not be quite exact.

By 1985 the world's peaceful nuclear power stations will probably be turning out enough by-product plutonium for the production of tens of nuclear bombs every day. This capability must not be allowed to result in the further spread of nuclear weapons. The consequences would be nuclear anarchy, and the energy designed to light the world could plunge it into darkness.

But the treaty has a significance that goes beyond its furtherance of these important aspects of United States nuclear policy. In the great tradition of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, it represents another step on the journey toward world peace. I believe that its very achievement, as well as its provisions, enhances the prospects of progress toward disarmament.

President Lyndon B. Johnson