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INDIA vs. THE BOMB

by

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Two events of recent occurrence have been of outstanding importance to the world and particularly India, they are the Chinese atomic explosion and the dismissal of Mr. Khrushchev. The Chinese explosion cannot be ignored; it cannot be written off; it cannot be played down. We are the country for which it has the most immediate importance. To India, it is a clear threat that any attempt on our part to regain our lost territory will invite nuclear retaliation. Already, after their victory in NEFA over us in 1962, the Chinese communists have been looked at with awe and respect, unfortunately, by most of the new countries in Asia and Africa. Now they may be expected to exercise even a freer and stronger hand against us and in our neighbourhood.

The immediate psychological and political aspects are much more important than the purely military. This explosion and its possibilities hold out tremendous potentialities of political and diplomatic blackmail to be used by communist China against us and against the other free peoples of Asia. It will be used as a powerful support to Chinese communist diplomacy to erode and undermine the freedom of India and the other free countries of Asia. This is something that we cannot ignore except at our peril.

The removal of Khrushchev is also a matter of some interest. I for one never accepted the view, which was widely shared superficially, that Khrushchev was the great White Hope of Liberalism in Russia and that ~~he~~ was fighting the so-called Stalinists! In fact, he was fighting a rear guard action on behalf of the Communist Party Dictatorship against the forces from below, the new elite, the new middle class intelligentsia, which was trying to throw off the yoke of this dictatorship. He was giving ground and making concessions very much as an absolute monarch has to reduce his monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in order to keep up his rule.

Marshal Chen-Yi has quite rightly described Mr. Khrushchev's removal as follows:

"It opens the possibilities of re-establishing the unity of the socialist camp."

In other words, the communist monolith, which was broken up, the axis that was shattered, is in very good chance of being restored. Those who know the facts are aware that the schism between Moscow and Peking was as much personal as ideological. The hatred of Khrushchev for Mao Tse-tung and of Mao Tse-tung for Khrushchev was extremely well known to those who knew these two men. Everyone knew that so long as these two men were in position, there would be no rapprochement or detente between Moscow and Peking. But one of them has gone, and he has gone because he was coming in the way of that rapprochement. There can be no question that one of the reasons why Khrushchev was removed in this brutal fashion by his colleagues was that he was persona non grata to Peking and, with his removal, a detente becomes possible. I am not saying that the old Axis will be restored in all its glory. I am not saying that we shall be face to face with the monolith that we had under Stalin. But I do say that, to imagine that this means nothing to us and that the new Government of Russia can be depended upon to be as antagonistic to Peking as the last one was, is to fool ourselves and our people.

We have to face the fact that we shall now be up against a Government in Moscow which will try to make every effort to make friends with China. Mr. Isaac Deutscher, said in the Sunday Telegraph at the end of October:

"Mr. Shastri at any rate should not count on the increased supply of arms which Khrushchev has just promised him."

It is against this background of a new Government in Moscow which will prefer its "brotherhood" with China to "friendship" with India, to use Mr. Khrushchev's own words, that we must consider our own path.

Against this background, what is the choice for this country faced with the Chinese atomic explosion? As I see it, we have three possible alternatives open to us. The first is that we should appeal to the United Nations and world opinion, and thus force the Chinese Communists to abandon their nuclear weapons. I would call it a policy of sitting pretty and doing nothing because, in all seriousness, in 1964, to expect world opinion to stop Mao Tse-tung from going his own way is to mistake illusion for reality. The Chinese Communist dictatorship has shown that they care two hoots for world opinion. Do they not ignore world opinion? Did they not offend it

when they attacked Tibet in 1950 and again in 1960? Did they not flout world opinion when they attacked India in 1962? Is not every act of theirs a flouting of world opinion? Therefore, to expect Mao Tse-tung to show any respect for world opinion and to count on world opinion to protect us from the Chinese nuclear attack is to expose the people of the whole of Northern India, in a most callous and irresponsible manner, to destruction and external aggression. There are official spokesmen who say Shrimati Indira Gandhi said on 11th November:

"If there is a nuclear war, everyone is in it. It makes no difference whether India has the atom bomb or not.....It has to be a world war."

This is, again, another fallacy, another illusion. A country that chooses to keep isolated and non-aligned, a country that has no allies and friends, has no right to expect that if one bomb is dropped on its territory of a nuclear nature, the whole world is going to endanger its own existence. This assumption that Shrimati Gandhi has made is dangerous. Of course, it is a very comforting one. If we can count upon it, certainly we can sit back happily. But there is nothing automatic about a nuclear attack of any kind becoming immediately a world war. It may or may not. Supposing it did, supposing an attack that obliterated New Delhi or the whole of Bihar and Bengal with the industrial complex situated at Jamshedpur, Durgapur and all the rest of it were to be followed by American bombing of Peking, is this the highest objective of our policy? Is this what we want - that we should be destroyed but somebody else also should be destroyed with us? That is surely not what we are aiming at. What we are aiming at is to see that a bomb is not dropped on us.

In other words, the objective of our nuclear policy should not be retaliation but deterrence. As we are placed today, there is no such deterrence. Such a deterrent can only exist if one or more major Powers in possession of nuclear force bind themselves to us by agreement or treaty to retaliate in case we are attacked.

It is not without significance in this context that the policy of doing nothing and appealing to world opinion is also the policy that is accepted by both wings of the Communist Party in India - the Moscow wing and the Peking Wing. Surely, that support coming from these two quarters

and their affiliation with Peking and Moscow should make us consider whether we as patriots, we as lovers of the people of our country can chime in with that line. We must think again.

This line leads to conceding hegemony to communist China in Asia. It leads to our sinking gradually into a satellite status of either Moscow or Peking. It would amount, if pursued to the abandonment of the Union Government's very first duty to defend the country's frontiers, its sovereignty and its people.

That brings us to the second alternative that is before us, and that is to make the bomb or, as somebody has quite aptly described it, "to keep up with the Joneses across the Himalayas". Keeping up with the Joneses is sometimes possible, sometimes it is not, and we should consider whether it is possible in this particular case. First of all, what would be the purpose of making the atom bomb? Would the objective to make atom bomb be to retaliate? Would it be to drop a bomb on Peking after Delhi is destroyed? No, the objective would be to have a deterrent. It would be to stop the Chinese from dropping a bomb on us. Therefore, our bomb cannot be a retaliatory bomb, but a deterrent bomb. If that is so, let us consider whether it is feasible for us to undertake it. *First of all, can we afford the cost?*

An American expert, Christopher Hohenhamser, estimates <sup>that</sup> the cost of capital investment on a militarily significant nuclear programme for us would be Rs.25 crores with an annual operating cost of Rs.10 crores. The US Atomic Energy Commission has given another estimate - I am only mentioning a few; I do not know which is right - that we can establish enough plutonium production to manufacture one crude bomb at a cost of Rs.25 crores. Then somebody else has estimated that the cost of establishing a diffusion plant for the separation of Uranium 235 involves a capital cost of Rs.500 crores and an equal amount of Rs.500 crores for running the plant, which means Rs.1,000 crores. In November 1964, the French Cabinet accepted a military budget, defence budget, largely for nuclear purposes, because, as we know, they are trying to go forward with the process of making their own bomb. That budget runs to 16,000 million French francs or, let us say, roughly Rs.1,600 crores for the coming year plus an equal amount, another Rs.1,600 crores, on the air arm for developing the Mirage 4 so that the bomb could

be delivered to its target. These two total Rs.3,200 crores for one year for France, about three-quarters of the entire outlay of our proposed Fourth Plan per year. So, only one-fourth of the Plan would be left for other purposes, three-fourth would be eaten up by our endeavours, if we were to put ourselves in the position of France.

Then, the cost of the bomb is not the only thing; the cost of delivery is as expensive, as the French budget points out. The vital Chinese targets are 2,500 miles away, targets like Peking, Shanghai and the Manchurian industrial complex, comparable to our Bihar-Bengal-Orissa industrial complex, or is even farther. We would, therefore, require an entire supersonic jet air force to deliver the bomb, to make it a real deterrent. On the other hand, our own targets like Delhi, U.P., Bihar and Bengal are only 300 miles away from the Chinese communist bases in Tibet. So, any old conventional bomber which gets through our lines of defence can drop the bomb and blow up millions of people. Therefore, they do not need any supersonic air force. As the atomic race develops, we can imagine what astronomical figures such budgets would involve us in and what would be their effect in our economy, what would be their effect on the life of our people.

Marshal Chen Yi boasted that the Chinese must have their atom bomb even if they had to go without pants. In the brutal, heartless dictatorship over the Chinese people such as he exercises, he might <sup>ger</sup> away with it. But can any democratic government, whatever the party, hope to survive in a democracy if it asks the people to do without food and clothing so that the wretched bomb may be made?

What would be the consequence? We would have no money either for agriculture or consumer goods or heavy industries! All schemes of development under the Fourth Plan would have to be scrapped because three-fourths of the Plan would be consumed by defence. All the projects will be starved impartially so that the nuclear monster may be fed. Famine and misery would stalk the land and there would be vast economic discontent and people would revolt against starvation imposed on them.

And who would be the biggest beneficiaries of that discontent? The Peking Fifth Column in this country. I can conceive of no more thorough method of playing Peking's game to perfection than to enter into this mad

competition with them in making the bomb.

It is not only the cost and logistics that are coming in the way. Our psychology also comes in the way. To exercise deterrence, the enemy must know that you are prepared to drop the bomb first. Can any one believe that, led by our present pacific Prime Minister, or anyone else who is likely to replace him, any Government in this country is going to drop the atomic bomb first before they drop their bomb on us? The Chinese communists are men of that kind. We are not people of that kind. This is always the advantage that the wicked have over the good. Therefore, even if we had the bomb, they would know that we would not strike first, that they would be the ones to strike first. The whole idea of deterrence would be defeated by our very pacific and decent instincts. At the very least, we would have to develop a ten-to-one superiority over the Chinese to be able to strike terror into their hearts, to put the fear of God into Mao Tse-tung. It is clear that this target of ten-to-one nuclear superiority and the readiness to drop the bomb first is something which are not economically or politically or psychologically within our reach.

Therefore, the case against our making the bomb is not a normal or pseudo-moral one. The case against making the bomb is a practical one of basic national interest, of what is good for this country, for its very survival. We should not make an attempt to make the bomb because we cannot make it an effective deterrent.

This brings us to the third choice. The third choice is to accept the principle of interdependence, to admit that we are living in a world where none of us can stand entirely on our own, that "no man is an Island", as John Donne has said, "He is part of the Main". We talk of One World. When statesmen send messages of greetings, they give expression to that very laudable objective. How about striving for one world for a change? How about moulding our politics in that direction instead of <sup>making</sup> platonic statements? The only answer to the Chinese bomb is the acceptance of the principle of interdependence in nuclear affairs.

Today there are two major nuclear powers who can exercise that deterrent on our behalf - one is the United States and the other is the Soviet Union. Let us certainly invite both of them to enter into an

agreement with us, separately or jointly, to guarantee to protect us from nuclear attack in case such an attack is made against us. Let us do so, if we like, not by ourselves; let us do it with other free countries, the freedom-loving countries of Asia, like Iran, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Japan, and tell these governments; we want you to let the world know that if anyone threatens to drop the bomb in any of these countries, you will see to it that it is prevented from doing so by the first strike. If both of them agree, let us welcome it.

I confess I do not think that the Soviet Union would agree to it. Even Mr. Khrushchev would have turned down such a suggestion. Today, with the new Government trying hard to make friends with Peking, we may be sure of not getting a positive answer. But it would be right to ask both these Powers to give us this assurance. If one of them turns it down and the other gives it, we should go ahead and accept that protection. There is no reason why we should give a veto to either of these powers in regard to the protection of our people and their lives.

Today, if there is any deterrent available, certainly it is the deterrent of the United States, a deterrent that has in fact, whether we like it or not, protected our sovereignty and the sovereignty of the other free countries of Asia and Europe during the last twenty years since the Second World War. If it were not for that deterrent, Stalin would have overrun the whole of Europe and Mao Tse-tung the whole of Asia. In this context, the Prime Minister quoted as saying in Guntur in reference to the suggestion that I am now making that "we must maintain our independence and sovereignty," the implication being that if we accept the guarantee of a nuclear deterrent on our behalf, we would in some subtle way be mortgaging our independence and sovereignty. I entirely agree with him that nothing should be done that may mortgage our sovereignty or independence. But I urge that today no country can guarantee its sovereignty and independence unless it has the good sense to pool its security and independence in collective security with the other free countries of the world. We are living in a world where independence of the old types is outmoded and has no reality. It is a myth.

The British Labour Party has decided to scrap its own nuclear

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The British Labour Party has decided to scrap its own nuclear

deterrent which the Conservatives had installed. They call it a myth and they are negotiating again for the American deterrent, the American umbrella, to cover the United Kingdom. Does this mean that Mr. Harold Wilson is going to surrender the independence and sovereignty of Britain to America?

The new Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Sato, on 11th November made a policy statement. He said two things: Japan will not make the bomb, but Japan will accept US nuclear-provided submarines in Japanese ports under the Japan-US mutual security treaty. Does this mean that, because he accepts the American nuclear umbrella, he is going to sell out the independence of Japan or make it a subject country of America?

There is no connection between giving up our independence and security and accepting the deterrent. It is the other way. If we do not accept the nuclear deterrent, we are in fact exposing ourselves to a situation where gradually our security and independence will be eroded, whether we want it or not.

Some people ask: "Why ask for an American assurance openly? Do we not already have it? Let us be Machiavellian! Let us pretend that we shall not ask for it but we know and they know that they will always come to our rescue!" They ask: "Has not President Johnson said so?" Let us carefully read President Johnson's very interesting and encouraging statement of 18th October. President Lyndon Johnson said:

"Nations that do not seek nuclear weapons can be sure that, if they need US support against the threat of nuclear blackmail, they will have it."

There is an 'if'. It is a conditional offer. It is an invitation to anyone who feels like it to get up and say so. In that event, President Johnson says *that* the United States is pledged to guarantee freedom from nuclear attack by giving the protection of their own superior nuclear force.

Therefore, it is quite clear that to read something more in it than there is would be misleading and unfair both to ourselves and to the person who made the offer. It is not enough to leave the offer in the air. We have to come forward and accept. It is not enough if we shout after being attacked, "Please come and help us", as we did the last time, and ask the United States to drop the bomb on Peking because, as we agreed earlier, w

what we want is to deter an attack and not to retaliate. We want the US to act as a deterrent so that no bomb is ever dropped on us and we want to do it in a way without destroying the economic life, the hopes and dreams of our people and without engaging ourselves in a mad attempt to compete with China.

On whose mind must a deterrent work? We may know that the Americans will come to help us. The Americans may know it. Let us say that we privately settle that with them. But that is not good enough. It is the mind of the person who is to be deterred that counts. It is the man in Peking with his finger on the trigger who must know that, before his bomb can drop on us, he will be destroyed. That is the deterrent. That can only be done by a public agreement, publicly announced. Hence, the necessity for the survival and protection of India is an open Mutual Security arrangement entered into with the United States and, if possible, with the Soviet Government.

Finally, it is said: Would not this be contrary to non-alignment? We of the Swatantra Party do not accept non-alignment. We have said since 1960, two years before the Chinese military attack, that non-alignment had lost all meaning in the context of aggression against us by a major Communist power. But let us for the moment agree that we do not want to abandon non-alignment as a policy. Even those who agree with non-alignment, even those who hold non-alignment dear, should have no difficulty at all in inviting a nuclear deterrent for the protection of our people against a nuclear attack.

Non-alignment, when first worked out, meant that we had to be neutral between Russia and America and the two groups. What relevance ~~has that~~ has that concept got when we are in the line of fire, when we are attacked? If non-alignment meant not to ask for help from other countries, then Pandit Nehru, our Prime Minister, betrayed non-alignment in October 1962. He made an appeal to all the free countries of the world to come to our assistance and he said that this was consistent with non-alignment. If anyone today argues that to ask for the nuclear deterrent would be to abandon non-alignment, he would be condemning Pandit Nehru.

Or is it suggested that we can ask for help only after we are

destroyed and not before? Is that the logic of non-alignment - that we must be half-destroyed that our country must be half in ruins, before we can ask for help, and that we must not ask for it in advance? Surely, that is not a wise policy for any country or government to follow. An ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure.

What this country needs today is to turn away from the barren path that has led us to the isolation and humiliation in which we find ourselves in, where neither Zanzibar nor Burma or Ceylon shows the slightest respect for us or what we want. We have to turn away from that path by learning to recognise and distinguish between friends and enemies. We have to learn to stand up to our enemies boldly. We have to learn to link arms with our friends. We have to learn to follow a good-neighbour policy with our immediate neighbours without appeasing or surrendering anything. We have to learn to be self-reliant in regard to conventional weapons and to be good world citizens in regard to the nuclear deterrent.

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