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India- Bewitched, Bothered,
and Bewildered

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Dear Dick:

India is bewitched by China, bothered by Pakistan, and bewildered by her role in the world.

Some weeks ago when I wrote you on the subject of Pakistan (CM-7, Pakistan Interview) I contemplated writing a similar letter on India. This has proved impossible. Indian views on foreign policy issues cannot be synthesized; the nation is too large, the press is too free, individual states are too powerful, religions and customs are too diverse, and politics are too vigorous to invite capitalization. Nevertheless, there are discernible trends and attitudes amongst Indians which significantly influence India's relations with the world generally and with the United States in particular.

Bewitched by China. India has recovered from the immediate impact of the traumatic shock she suffered 15 months ago when the Chinese Communists launched their military attack on India. But only now is it beginning to come clear to Indians that the Chinese victory involved much more than occupation of a few hundred square miles of Indian territory and the revelation of astounding weaknesses in the armed forces of India. China knocked India out of its position of leadership of the non-aligned world. China has replaced India as the dominant power in Asia from Karachi to Jakarta.

As this fact impinges on the consciousness of Indians there is a growing search for ways to reestablish the influence which India took for granted, and enjoyed, for so long. India needs a spectacular to reassert her world role.

The influential Times of India in a bid for the Indian role of leadership of the non-aligned, urges a "realistic rapprochement" with Communist China in the hope that India may thereby once again take the lead "in shaping Asian policies in an Asian context." An influential planner proposes a mammoth economic program; a leader of an opposition party suggests an alliance with the West; and a publisher's aide asserts that India needs a nuclear weapon.

Ailing Prime Minister Nehru resists these moves as unrealistic. He continues to support the strengthening of India's military establishment to meet external threats and to maintain internal

stability. He seeks weapons from Moscow, and from the West, and encourages domestic production of military equipment.

Those minority elements in India which urge military alignment with the West argue that reliance on Western military assistance would free Indian resources for economic development -- the area of important contest with China. They are also greatly concerned at the impact upon the Indian population of the predicted Chinese explosion of a nuclear device.* They believe that in the not too distant future India will need to seek shelter under the nuclear umbrella of the United States.

India's bewitchment with Chinese military power is matched by a difficult to understand acceptance of China's capacity to surmount her economic difficulties by socialistic techniques. Despite Chinese failures in agriculture and industrial development, there exists a widespread belief in India that state management of the economy as in China is a more fruitful path for economic development than the path of free enterprise.

In summary, China has achieved not only a military victory over India, but a psychological victory which leaves India - the second most populous nation in the world - feeling like a second-rate power, but willing to acknowledge China as a great power.

Bothered by Pakistan. While Pakistan views India as a dagger at its heart, India views Pakistan as a thorn in its side, albeit a very uncomfortable thorn. Although Indians believe that Pakistan armor has the capability of capturing New Delhi in a matter of weeks, they do not think such a move is very likely in view of the comparative ease with which India could dismember Pakistan by pinching off East Pakistan. Indians are far more concerned at the threat posed by the existence of Pakistan which they describe as a "theocratic" state -- a state composed of Muslims, governed by Muslims, and reserved for Muslims. They are concerned that Muslim attacks on Hindu and other religious minorities in Pakistan may revive communal disturbances in the heart of India where heavy concentrations of Muslims may suffer bloody retaliation at the hands of Hindu majorities. They fear also that a plebiscite in Kashmir would be conducted on religious issues and thus encourage disintegrative tendencies within the "secular" state of India.

Bewilderment. Indian bewilderment at her role in the world is compounded of many elements. Internationally the confidence with which Prime Minister Nehru assumed the role of leadership of the non-aligned world has been gravely impaired by Chinese military ascendancy

*Word out of China indicates the propaganda line being readied for Asian and African consumption. The Chinese bomb is to be a "peace bomb", the first nuclear weapon ever manufactured by the masses in their struggle against oppression and for peace!

the realm of private enterprise. Moreover, the excesses of India's own special brand of "robber barons" have instilled a widespread doubt about the ability of private enterprise to operate in such a way as to raise the standard of living of the poor at the same time that private enterprise creates wealth for its owners. Despite Indian fascination with socialism there is a growing recognition within some quarters in the government and increasing pressure from the Swatantra Party, the World Bank, and the United States for relaxation of governmental controls on prices, imports, and new business. The public sector versus the private sector debate is a popular subject for after dinner conversation and is illustrative of the confusion which threads through much of India's economic and political life.

United States-Indian Relationships. The bewitched, bothered, and bewildered condition of India is of significance to the United States because most Americans would rather see India than China as a great power influence in Asia. Indian political and economic policies may make Americans uncomfortable. But Chinese policies dominant in Asia would be downright appalling. Despite India's ambivalent attitude toward many important issues, her size, geographic location, and her general orientation suggest that U.S. interests in Asia will best be served if India remains stable, develops in a democratic pattern, and achieves substantial economic growth in a way not damaging to American concepts of free enterprise.

Relationships between India and the United States are greatly affected by India's attitudes toward China and Pakistan. While generally there is much appreciation for the promptness with which the United States came to the help of India when the Chinese attacked in November 1962 and, while Ambassador Bowles is roundly applauded in the villages when he mentions America's role at the time of the Chinese attack, the reservoir of goodwill filled then, and replenished now by continued military assistance, has developed a large leak. Indian goodwill toward the United States is being dissipated because it is alleged that the U.S. is supporting Pakistan in this year's row over Kashmir.

To the question: "Which is the more important factor in determining India's present and future attitudes toward the United States, the fact of U.S. assistance against China, or the position of the U.S. on India-Pakistan disputes?", the answer was invariably the same. "We judge you by your attitudes toward India-Pakistan issues. You came to our aid when China attacked India because it was in America's interest to prevent the expansion of Chinese influence in Asia. We knew you would help; you did; we are grateful; and we know you would help if China were to attack again. We judge the sincerity of your interest in India by the support you give us against Pakistan."

It is ironic that the American role of honest broker between India and Pakistan is the albatross around its neck in relationships with both countries.

and by Pakistan persistence in pursuing its claims to Kashmir. The deepening ideological split between the Soviet Union and China has made it more difficult to ascertain where to place the fulcrum of non-alignment. The excesses of self-determination, particularly in Africa, threaten the monolithic concept of India - a nation ever conscious of its many languages, peoples, and customs. "Balkanization" is a bad word in India.

Indian principles of international morality, espoused publicly over many years, are coming more and more into conflict with Indian self-interests. It must be a shattering experience to be for the principle of self determination except in Kashmir, to be against armed attacks across frontiers except in Goa, to be against the veto except if it is used to defeat a resolution directed against India, to be for the admission of Communist China to the United Nations to make her responsible and for the expulsion of South Africa because she is irresponsible. Perhaps principle is only as thick, or thin, as the national interest.

Domestically India is troubled. Although Indians constantly refer to their devotion to democracy, it is a democracy based on a vast, uninformed, illiterate electorate which for 16 years has taken its guidance from one man, Prime Minister Nehru, whose power has not been seriously challenged since he assumed office. In only a few instances has the Prime Minister's judgment been questioned enough to require policy modifications; most recently when press criticism induced withdrawal of his commitment to give the Voice of America broadcasting time on a transmitter to be built by the United States, and once earlier when the Chinese attack forced the Prime Minister to shed his Defense Minister, Krishna Menon.

The real test of democracy in India was not in past elections, remarkable achievements that they were. The real test will be the peaceful transition of power from Prime Minister Nehru to his successor. The tensions of the inevitable succession are already being felt. Decisions are delayed by the desire to avoid burdening a sick man. There is an unwillingness on the part of subordinates to make decisions while the Prime Minister still retains power to reverse those decisions and to demote Ministers who may err. Struggles for power within the Congress Party lie just below the surface. Yet at the same time there is an encouraging recognition of the need for the early selection of a successor to Mr. Nehru so that his benign influence may assist in the peaceful transition of power.

In the realm of economics there is much fuzzy thinking about socialism. Nevertheless, as a theory it has special attraction for the political and civil service establishments. The Prime Minister has not hesitated to press his belief that democratic socialism is the path to rapid economic development. "Doctrinaire socialism", one opposition leader told me, has captured many in the Indian Civil Service. Civil servants, he charged, have acquired a vested interest in government operation and control of enterprises normally within

I asked one Indian if he thought the United States might pursue a policy of "non-alignment" (a word with which Indians are familiar) as between India and Pakistan. He agreed that such a policy would be reasonable. But further exploration of what non-alignment meant in the context of the India-Pakistan disputes made it clear that the United States is expected to be non-aligned on the side of India. Short of an outright choice between India and Pakistan, which might endear the United States to one and alienate the other, America's non-aligned role on emotion-packed issues between India and Pakistan damages United States relations with both states.

The Soviet Union has chosen to support India on the Kashmir issue and that is one factor that keeps Soviet prestige high in India. One wonders if the national interest of the United States might not best be served by the forthwith suspension of military assistance to both parties. But in the present state of their relations such a move would almost surely invite deeper Soviet penetration of the subcontinent.*

Despite Indian disappointment at the failure of the United States to give unequivocal support on issues with Pakistan and the consequent decrease in the reservoir of goodwill, the general image of the U.S. in India has never been higher than in the period between the Chinese attack and the present. The unwillingness of the United States to

*In this connection, a prominent Indian opposition leader told me that in his opinion Adenauer and Nehru have had in common the fear of the day when the Soviet Union and the United States might find their separate interests in Germany and India, respectively, outweighed by their common interests. Their joint action then might be at the expense of Germany and India.

I had forgotten this observation until while writing this letter in Beirut, a distinguished Lebanese scholar told me that for many years he has been collecting statements of Arab leaders reflecting their concern that at some future time the Soviet Union and the United States might find a common basis for their interests in the Middle East, in which case "the mice could no longer play between the feet of the cats."

There is a growing concern amongst the less-developed states that the two super-powers might at some future time find it in their joint interests to act jointly against one or several under developed states. Solely in order to stimulate thinking one might ask whether the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. might not find it in their joint interests now to terminate military sales and grants to both India and Pakistan, with a joint statement to the effect that neither the U.S. nor the U.S.S.R. would tolerate Chinese expansion in the subcontinent or a military settlement of the Kashmir issue. Such a joint act might de-fuse the possibility of military conflict in the subcontinent of Asia and make it possible for India and Pakistan to concentrate on their economic development in whatever pattern might prove most efficient in their own cases.

assist in construction of the Bokaro steel complex as a public enterprise has been accepted with a minimum of complaint, although some Indians allege that the forces of the left were strengthened by that action. Other factors that might in the past have been expected to have an adverse effect on United States-Indian relations do not seem significant. Civil rights problems in the United States have little impact in India. To the extent that they are noted by the left, elsewhere it is recognized that the United States is dealing with the problem in a more forthright manner than many other governments with similar problems. United States troubles with Cuba and Panama attract little attention. Planned activities of the Seventh Fleet in the Indian Ocean receive some press attention, but not much. Indians don't have sympathy for the roars of Sukarno about the Seventh Fleet when he is attempting to rename the Indian Ocean and to usurp India's role of Asian leadership. Furthermore, since both China and Pakistan are against having the Seventh Fleet active in the Indian Ocean, the Indians are for it.

I have come away from India with a strong feeling that India needs the United States, and the United States needs India. Our separate national interests will jointly be served if we manage to minimize our differences, swallow some of our emotions, consult more frequently on Asian problems, and recognize that on the most basic of all principles we agree -- that society should emphasize the fundamental right of the individual to develop in a pattern of his own choice.

Chinese expansion in Asia threatens the free role of the individual in society. Most Indians now recognize that fact. So long as they do, the basic interests of India and the United States coincide.

Very truly yours,



Carl Marcy