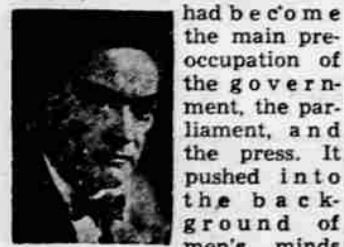


Today & Tomorrow

By Walter Lippmann

INDIA AND CHINA

When we arrived in India about the middle of last month, the conflict with China had become the main pre-occupation of the government, the parliament, and the press. It pushed into the background of men's minds the supreme question of India's capacity to pull itself out of its fearful poverty. It raised a new and unexpected question. This is whether India must mobilize for war, and in doing so must put off indefinitely the indispensable work of solving the problem of how to feed its people. For the Indian economy is so desperately in deficit that if it had to shoulder the burden of a big mobilization and an arms program, the burden would be crushing and the consequences might well be catastrophic.



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I use the word catastrophic advisedly. The Indian standard of life is already almost insupportably low, and if it becomes not better but worse, no one can be sure that the central government can maintain the unity of India against its great variety of languages and races and of local nationalisms and against the deep historical tendencies towards separation. What threatens India if the internal development fails is not a general lapse into Communism. It is a breakup into separate states, some of which would no doubt be Communist, others which would be right-wing Hindu, and no one can know what else.

The problems of India, then, is to defend itself against Chinese aggression on its borders while concentrating its main attention and energy on its internal problem.

THIS means that India will have to defend her interests on the frontier by diplomacy. She can man some of the frontier posts and shoot back at Chinese raiders. But the pressure of Chinese expansion will continue. For the problem of Chinese expansion is not primarily an Indian problem. Indeed, it is only incidentally an Indian problem and, although no responsible official in any country can or should say so, everyone who has studied the situation in central Asia knows that this is true.

In the years to come the main issue of global politics will be the containment of China. The Soviet Union, which has much the longest and much the most vulnerable and much the most controversial frontier with China has the principal interest in containing China. Almost certainly Gen. de Gaulle was right, though he was very tactless, when he said the other day that the Soviet Union's problems in Asia are one of the reasons for her seeking an accommodation with the West.

One can, however, only hope and pray that Senators and Presidential candidates and other addicts to speech-making like Secretary Bru-

cker and some of our more fluent generals, will leave this subject alone. Otherwise, they will put Mr. K. on the spot where he must reaffirm loudly his alliance with Peking against Western anti-Communists. It is a risk even for journalists to talk about this delicate matter. But they at least can be ignored or disavowed.

THE proposition on the Indian-Chinese frontier is such that a permanent settlement between Chou En-lai and Nehru is most unlikely. For one thing, the Chinese, and that includes the Nationalists Chinese in Formosa quite as much as the Communist Chinese on the mainland, do not recognize the legality or the rightness of the McMahon Line as a frontier. They assert that this line, which the Indian government claims is the legal one, was imposed on Tibet by the British who dominated Tibet when China was helpless and in the throes of a revolution.

The old frontier was bound to come into question when China was strong enough, as she is now, to reconquer Tibet. And it is true, I believe, that most of the disputed territory is inhabited by Tibetans or is geographically related to Tibet. What India is confronted with essentially is the determination of China to complete and to consolidate its conquest of Tibet, which is strategically the keystone of Central Asia.

In this conflict with China the terrain is on the whole unfavorable to India. The disputed places are much more easily accessible to the Chinese who are on the Tibetan plain than to the Indians who must come across some of the highest mountain passes in the world to supply their outposts.

A striking illustration of this is what happened on the northwestern frontier in that part of the territory of Kashmir which India now occupies. This territory is known as Ladakh and the disputed part of Ladakh is an entirely uninhabited mountainous region, called Aksai Chin, which juts out into the place where Chinese Tibet adjoins Chinese Sinkiang. Here there has occurred a most curious thing. The Chinese have built a road across Indian territory to connect Tibet with Sinkiang, and nobody knew they had done it until after it was completed.

It is evident that this road is of no interest to India, except as a point of honor. But what is more significant, the road has no strategic or poli-

tical relevance to India, and is in fact designed to connect two great Chinese territories which are vital to the control of central Asia. There is no conceivable way in which the Indian army could recapture that road. For there is no way that the Indian army could get there. The disputed territory is about as inaccessible from India as is the South Pole.

THE government's policy is to argue its case with China, to propose reasonable compromises, and to fight back where it can if there are other incursions. There are Indians who criticize Nehru and would like a stronger policy. I have talked with some of the leaders of the opposition, seeking to find out what they mean by a stronger policy. Some would merely use stronger words. But there are a few who want to turn to the United States and ask for arms and military assistance.

Unless the Chinese aggression becomes much more flagrant than it is, I do not think that the Indian government will ask us to intervene, and I gather that we believe that nothing of the sort should be asked of us. The basic and decisive reason for this policy of American abstinence is that American intervention would inexorably compel the Soviet Union to align itself with Red China. That would be a disaster. There is very little that we can do to recover territory in the inaccessible mountains of the Himalayas, and to fight a great war with China over the Indian frontier would ruin the real hope for the future, which is that the Soviet Union will work itself into a policy of containing China.

The true line of policy for India, as for the rest of us, is to conduct a holding operation as long as that is possible, and in the meantime to promote indirectly and with delicacy a policy of containment. China with its huge and rapidly growing population may, as it augments its industrial capacity, become the most formidable power on earth. It may well require the combined power of the Soviet Union and of the West to keep it within acceptable limits.

BEFORE leaving this momentous subject, which I have come nowhere near exhausting, I must put in a few words about how the Chinese action has shown up the illusions of Prime Minister Nehru. No doubt he has had his illusions. They were based on a failure to realize that a strong China would assert ruthlessly the historical imperial ambitions of the Chinese nation. These ambitions are shared equally by Mao Tse-tung and by Chiang Kai-Shek. Mr. Nehru thought, mistakenly, that if he befriended the Chinese revolution, he could live in peace with it. But the Russians also had

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their illusions about China and so did we. The Russian illusion has been based on the dogma that "Socialist" countries cannot be rivals and enemies, and that in a Socialist world all would be harmony. The Russians have learned in Manchuria, they are learning in Mongolia, they will be learning on the frontiers of Sinkiang, that they were mistaken.

And what about our own illusion? It has been that if we boycotted and ostracized the Chinese revolution, it would somehow collapse and wither away. But after all our boycotts and our ostracism, what we see now is a China which, however miserable the lot of its own people, is strong enough to dominate central Asia and begin to lay claim to everything that was ever within the orbit of the Chinese emperors. We have been not a whit more realistic than Nehru. For when he thought he might get on with the Chinese revolution, we have imagined that we could weaken it by making faces at it.

So, there is no ground for saying we told you so. And there is every reason for feeling humility and for clearing our minds as we face the overriding problem of the future, which is the containment of China.

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Benefit Checks May Be Sent to Banks

Benefit checks from the Veterans administration may be sent directly to the beneficiary's bank for deposit to his account, provided the bank has been given the required power of attorney, S. T. Brannock, contact representative, VA Domiciliary, Camp White, said Friday.

A special U. S. treasury form is available for the purpose of assigning the power of attorney to the beneficiary's bank. This arrangement is convenient for veterans who travel and those who have frequent changes of address which make it difficult for them to receive their checks with regularity, Brannock pointed out.

A complete explanation of the arrangement and the necessary forms may be obtained by contacting the office at the VA Domiciliary, Camp White, or any VA office.

Contrary to former legal requirements that a check could not be forwarded to a beneficiary who moved, checks in payment of monetary benefits may now be forwarded, provided the addressee has left a forwarding address with the post office, Brannock said.

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