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Mission to Washington

IT was inevitable that, the moment India became independent, she would emerge as the leader in Asia. Much has happened in Asia and in the world since India's independence. Some of the Western countries have been inclined to write India off as an ally for democratic peace. Suspect in both camps of the "cold war", India has pursued a policy of good neighbourliness. Her foreign policy is now better appreciated. India's economic achievements compare favourably with those of Communist China. Bandung has convinced Asia that India has no design to be an arrogant and aggressive leader in Asia. Her moral status is now firmly established. New Delhi's foreign policy is appreciated in Moscow, Belgrade and Peking, Cairo values New Delhi's mature judgment. Despite the Anglo-French aggression in Egypt, India remains a member of the Commonwealth. Since the Anglo-French aggression in Egypt, India and America have drawn closer together.

Since independence, New Delhi has functioned as a bridge between two rival sides in the "cold war". India's first major achievement was the joint enunciation of Panch Shila by New Delhi and Peking. This was the prelude to Bandung. Her second achievement was to convince the Soviet Union that Panch Shila was the only secure basis of relations with nations and neighbours. Deeper international influences would seem to confirm Pandit Nehru's reiterated belief that, in spite of Hungary the process of liberalisation of regimes in Eastern Europe will continue. In the past, India has adroitly exercised her influence as a Commonwealth member and her friendly relations with Communist countries to ease the tension between the two rival camps. In the changed current phase of the international situation, it is essential that New Delhi must cooperate with Washington to eliminate local tensions as well as to maintain world peace. It is a happy coincidence that Pandit Nehru will have talks with President Eisenhower at an opportune time when India and America are in closer agreement on the immediate world issues.

Developments since the Summit Conference at Geneva have provided the opportunity for closer collaboration between India and America in the interests of world peace. De-Trumanisation, along with de-Stalinisation is a process which is not without significance. But it is neither necessary nor relevant to stress any clandestine understanding between America and Russia to evacuate Europe for joint exploitation of Asia. This is not the main motive behind Washington's hostile reaction to the Anglo-French aggression in Egypt. Here, it is useful to discuss the changed global strategy since the Geneva understanding between East and West not to start an atomic war. Before the Geneva Summit Conference, Washington's policy was to ring the globe with bases and bastions. This strategy has become obsolete since the "hydrogen" stalemate. Pentagon now relies on "Forgo America" for strategic retaliation in the event of war.

Washington's earlier policy of fortifying overseas bases has had some unintended consequences. It has encouraged the revival of Anglo-French colonialism. With American supplies of war equipment, Britain and France had tried to maintain their positions in Indo-China, Algeria and Cyprus. Since the nuclear deadlock, Britain and France have increasingly relied on NATO equipment to perpetuate colonialism, NATO

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equipment was, contrary to the agreement between America and NATO allies, used by Britain and France flaring their aggression against Egypt. With "Fortress America" as the basic defence strategy, the realisation has dawned on Washington that America's earlier world strategy has been exploited by some of her NATO partners to perpetuate colonialism. Washington is now in a mood for a reappraisal of the necessity, as well as of the indirect consequences, of overseas bases and military alliances like SEATO and the Baghdad Pact. Sadder by the Egyptian experience. President Eisenhower may now concede that Pandit Nehru's apprehensions that Pakistan may exploit her membership of SEATO and the Baghdad Pact are not entirely without basis, despite the distinct understanding that Pakistan will not use American supplies of war equipment against India.

India has been consistent in her attitude that military alliances provoke counter-alliances, and create instead or preventing, tensions. New Delhi has been equally emphatic that SEATO and, in particular, the Baghdad Pact are military alliances which may be exploited to perpetuate colonialism. Developments in Egypt have confirmed these fears. It is the Baghdad Pact which has provoked Russia to make attempts to win friends in West Asia, even as NATO has created, and justified, the Warsaw Pact. Wiser by the Egyptian experience, Washington now accepts the necessity for strengthening the United Nations. To enhance the status of the United Nations, it is necessary to make this organisation truly representative. This is one of the main arguments for encouraging all countries, now under subjection, to choose the form of government they like, so that they, as free nations, can become

member-States. Meanwhile, if it is necessary to admit all independent countries, including Red China and Japan, into the United Nations. No doubt, Pandit Nehru will inform President Eisenhower about his talks with the Chinese Prime Minister as the former discusses with President Eisenhower the question of Red China's admission into the United Nations. There are now brighter prospects that Russia will not oppose Japan's claim to be a member-State. Egypt and West Asia will be the major issues in the agenda for discussions between Pandit Nehru and President Eisenhower. On these issues, it will not be difficult for the Indian Prime Minister and the American President to reach an agreement. Pandit Nehru's visit to America will have achieved its main purpose if he can secure President Eisenhower's full endorsement to the policy of strengthening the United Nations in order to preserve world peace.

Going Their Several Ways

WHAT the Planning Commission is thinking, what the Government at the Centre is doing and what is happening in the State Governments it is not often that one has to connect all three even in the limited sphere of Governmental activity, where information is so much more readily available. To get a conspectus of what happens in the lives of the people in the towns and village is, of course, much more difficult. With the sights fixed principally on 'coastal statistics', on the movements of foreign trade and payments, industrial production and only the broader changes in agriculture, one can hardly expect to get a full view of what is happening in the country. And of late foreign affairs have been so much in the limelight that even that limited view has tended to be dimmer than usual.

But a number of things have come tumbling together in the last few days and their impact has been so powerful that willynilly, one has to sit up and take notice. Developments each of which could be normally left to follow its own course and treated in isolation have come crowding together in such a manner that sorting them out becomes difficult, if not impossible. Yet the opportunity should not be lost: indeed it is essential to try to get a connected picture for there is no reason to suppose that as

time goes on, things will sort themselves out of their own accord, so that each problem can be handled as it arises, by itself.

There has been a 'sizeable problem of foreign exchange before the country for some time. The losses in foreign reserves month by month have been so heavy that it is no longer wise for the government to pretend" that there is no reason for any 'scare' and that business can go on as usual. Foreign resources for the Plan, it was known all along, would be harder to secure in the sense that self-help would not avail beyond a point. Not that the problem of raising internal resources presents no difficulties; it is in fact much more formidable for one cannot draw on external assistance to a considerable extent, as is possible in the case of the former, under favourable auspices. But flexibility of operations in the field of foreign resources is definitely more restricted.

The question of internal resources had also to be tackled some day of course. But considerations of strategy made it advisable that the Government should go slow and the economic situation prevailing at the time when the draft Plan was drawn up, did not impart urgency to it. Now there has been a change, forced by rising prices and the Finance Minister has modified his assessment of the situation from one of 'strains',

but no inflation' to that of 'incipient inflation.' Partly the present emphasis on resources is also in order to present a clean bill to the prospective foreign lenders, particularly those who go by the accepted commercial criterion of credit worthiness.

To suggest, however, that the Government has been waiting, Micawber like, for some thing to turn up would be wrong and unfair. It has been assiduous in extending foreign contacts and foreign economic collaboration for the completion of the Plan, it is hoped, will fan out and all will be well.

It is perhaps only a question of foreign exchange here and now to meet the deficits in the next few months, until the World Bank loan becomes available and the credit arrangements which are now being negotiated with so many countries are finalised. But why did we allow ourselves to get into this predicament, when import control has been in operation and every little thing involving foreign payments needed Delhi's approval?

It is easy to be wise after the event and say that somebody must have tripped somewhere. of course, even so, outsiders who do not have access to all the inside information may go wrong. Was the Finance Minister over-optimistic in banking upon foreign assistance, or rather, the timing of it? Since on Govern-