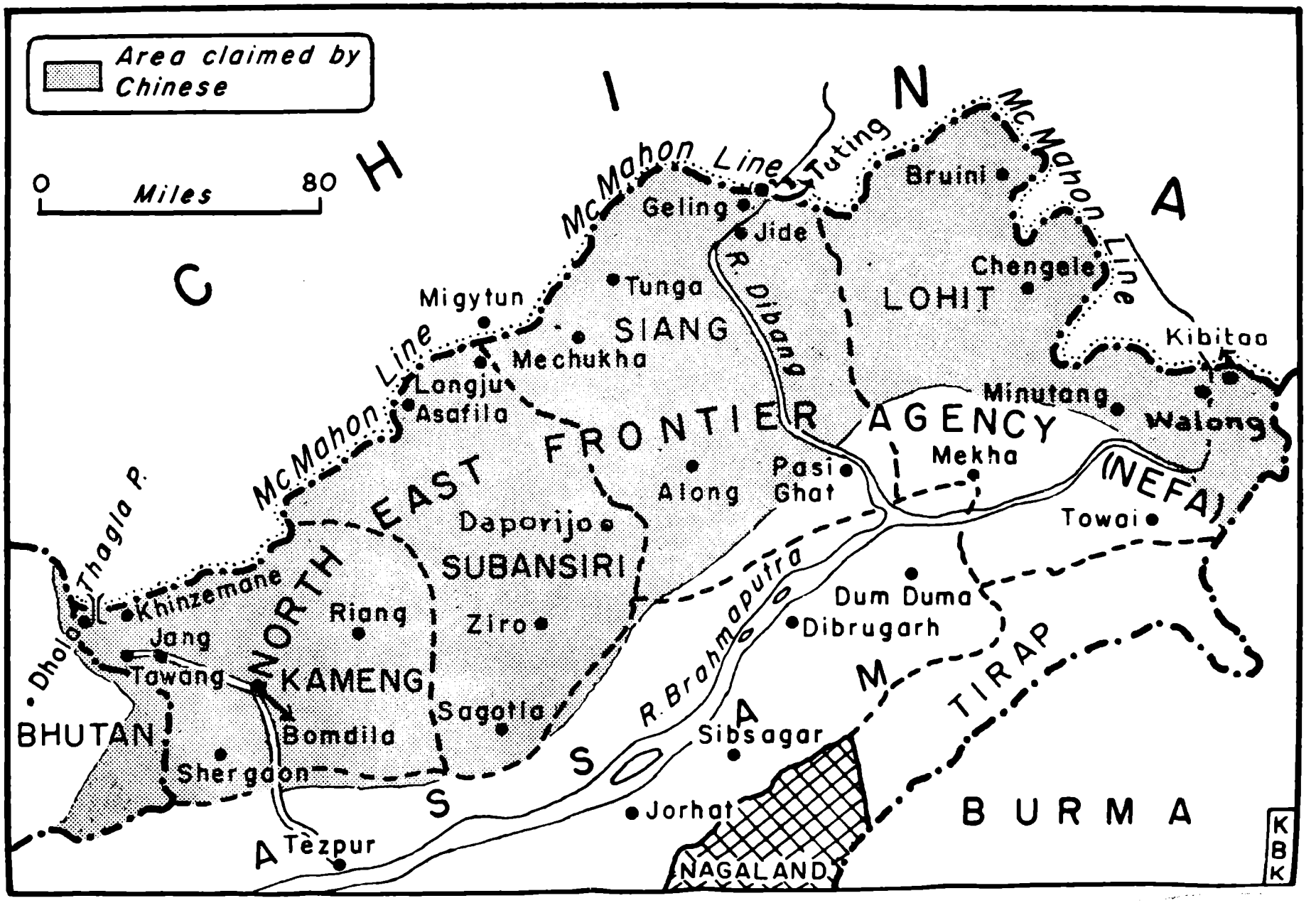
THE SINO-INDIAN DISPUTE

y N. J. NANPORIA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by

N. J. Nanporia

A Times of India Publication

First Edition
July 1963

Price Rs. 3.

PRINTED & PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETORS, BENNETT, COLEMAN & CO., LTD., BY PYARELAL SAH AT THE TIMES OF INDIA PRESS, BOMBAY, INDIA.

Contents

Preface

THESE articles, in the form of a weekly commentary on the Sino-Indian dispute, were written and published in *The Times of India* during the critical months between September 1962 and June 1963. They are here reproduced as a convenient reference for interested readers.

— N. J. N.

Getting "Tough"?

MR. KRISHNA MENON has ordered Indian troops at the trijunction of India, Bhutan and Tibet " if necessary " to open fire. The Union Home Minister has said, rather unnecessarily, that there is no alternative but to drive out the Chinese aggressors. Mr. Nehru in London has said that the Chinese incursion into NEFA is serious and jawans have been rushed to the border to take up what are described as " battle positions." What is the implication of all these alarums and excursions except that, at long last, New Delhi will use force to expel the Chinese from this sector? That is the logic of all that is being said and done but New Delhi's China policy rarely arrives at the logical conclusions towards which it appears to point. Expectations of a certain course of action are aroused and thereafter deflated to the bewilderment and despair of New Delhi's critics.

These critics, let it be said, are not armed with any assurance that their views on the China problem are the right ones; their proposals are based not on expert knowledge but on an evaluation of Indian policy in the light of what it pretends to be. A policy has certain objectives and criticism can legitimately concern itself with how these objectives ought to be achieved. Whether such objectives are practicable is for the Government to decide in the first place. The point is not necessarily that the Chinese intruders at the trijunction should be expelled by force which is something only the experts can finally determine but that if force is not to be used the impression that it will be should not be created.

Challenged by the kind of situation that has developed at the trijunction there should ideally be no hesitation whatsoever. Either there is calculated restraint in which case no references to " opening fire " need be made or to " battle positions " or to driving out the Chinese. Or there is immediate action without a verbal build-up that arouses expectations which cannot be fulfilled. New Delhi's policy falls somewhere between these two positions. Any initiative by the Chinese revives the

basic question of what New Delhi should do. Should it resist? Can it afford to resist? What are the advantages of restraint? What will the Chinese reaction be to either resistance or restraint? These are questions that cannot be easily answered every time there is a crisis and yet no adequate response is possible unless an answer is available. After all can it be sincerely said that the latest Chinese violation of the McMahon Line was not expected? Mr. Nehru himself anticipated something of this kind as was evident in his remarks in London. Why then does New Delhi continue to hesitate when challenged by a Chinese initiative? In the context of a basic policy no such hesitation is possible; New Delhi will either display the utmost restraint or respond with force. It will not, as is now the case, create the impression of action when the decision to act with all its implications has yet to be taken.

China policy and what New Delhi should or should not do cannot be debated over again every time Peking moves a pawn in a game of incalculable cunning. Nevertheless this is precisely what occurs for lack of an overall policy in reference to which immediate answers can be found from crisis to crisis. In the present instance Government has gone through the motions of intending to resist but there is nothing to suggest that this decision, if decision it is, has been made within the framework of policy. Already reports from Delhi speak of the " extreme step " of using force and of the need " to exercise reasonable restraint." Since when is it " extreme " to defend one's territory and up to what point is restraint " reasonable "? Here New Delhi is a victim of its inability to evolve the kind of comprehensive policy without which both action and non-action become ineffective.

If the answer is restraint this must be supported by policy considerations and similarly if the answer is action. One unfortunate result of the criticism by which New Delhi has been assailed is a tendency by the Government to persuade public opinion that it means to be tough. There is an assumption that the country expects the Government to be " tough " and this impels New Delhi to talk bravely of " opening fire," expelling the Chinese and so on. Naturally New Delhi cannot or will not always live up to such brave words and the result is disillusionment and a further wave of unfruitful criticism from

which neither the critics nor the Government can benefit. There is a limit beyond which no government can function on the basis of *ad hoc* considerations although this is what Mr. Nehru presumably meant when he asked for a "free hand" in dealing with the border dispute. Free hand certainly in selecting a basic policy the validity of which subsequently determines all government action but not a free hand in the sense that New Delhi should be permitted to reconsider its attitude whenever a crisis occurs.

There is a case for forthright action as there is also a case for patience and restraint but the obligation to choose one of these cannot be indefinitely evaded. New Delhi cannot be "tough" one day and what is described as "reasonable" another day. Nor can a policy be all tough or all restraint. In practice it will be a combination of both but with an unmistakable balance in favour of one. The country can have no reason to believe absolutely that either restraint or toughness is the final answer although it is entitled to an opinion. New Delhi should therefore suffer no anxiety to impress the people with its capacity for toughness if toughness is ruled out as either not feasible or undesirable for other reasons. The point is that restraint or non-restraint must be supported by policy considerations in which case the country will not hesitate to accept either as a policy fully in accord with the national interest.

New Delhi must, in other words, rely more than it has done so far on the good sense of the people. A policy of restraint and patience demands as much courage and a sense of responsibility as one involving military action but restraint simply in the hope that something helpful will turn up will be the equivalent of drifting from one point of crisis to another. In considering which way the balance of policy should be tilted—towards restraint or force—it would be useful to remember that supposedly military action in this context has a political value. Only after war has been declared and military power is the only available measure of success does military action cease to be a political factor. Since there is no war along the northern border and because neither of the two countries can invade one another there is unlikely to be one, the India-China dispute is a political battle. If finally Indian troops open fire at the

trijunction the motives should be not merely those of recovering territory or of expelling the Chinese but of political and psychological expediency.

The advantages of action are that the difference between what policy seems to say and actually is will be removed or diminished, that the Chinese will be disabused of their conviction that India is unwilling to act, and that every incident along the border will be an indirect exploitation by New Delhi of the balance of sympathy it enjoys in international opinion. Any " tranquillisation " of the border involving a reduction of tensions to the point where no dispute apparently remains will be quite contrary to the Indian interest. The issue must be kept alive, at whatever cost, by a readiness to react to every Chinese provocation without debate or hesitation. Only in this way can adequate pressure be maintained on the Chinese and can they be persuaded that they cannot get away with a *fait accompli.*

The limits of such a policy will be dictated by the military resources available but within these limits Chinese reasonableness is likely to be awakened more by determined action than by patient restraint. One difficulty is that unwittingly New Delhi has caused it to be accepted that non-alignment and the use of force are inconsistent. This was the weapon which India presented its critics and by which it was belaboured over the Goa issue. New Delhi continues to be inhibited by an irrational guilt complex whenever it considers action or force or pressure of any kind. Consequently non-alignment has emerged in a most unimpressive light to the scornful delight of its foreign critics. Non-alignment must have the strength to act if it can and not to act if it can't without shilly-shallying from one to the other every time Chinese troops set foot on Indian soil.

Delhi Dithering

Is New Delhi firm or " restrained " in relation to the crisis in NEFA? It is unlikely that anyone in Peking or in Delhi itself knows the answer to this. There is a certain advantage in keeping the enemy bewildered but its value rapidly diminishes when such bewilderment descends equally on everyone involved. Throughout the NEFA affair, from day to day, there has been nothing even remotely resembling a coherent and studiously calculated policy of containing the Chinese according to previously established military and political objectives. Everything that has been said and done smacks of *ad hoc* expediency which is simply a polite way of saying that policy-wise New Delhi was caught napping in NEFA as it was earlier in Ladakh.

The inspiration of the moment, particularly as Mr. Nehru experiences it, is no doubt helpful—within its limitations which are real enough. It can never be a substitute for a policy based firmly on long-term political and military strategic considerations. Without such a framework in reference to which every Chinese move can be countered immediately unaccompanied by alarums and excursions New Delhi's reactions have been piecemeal and un-co-ordinated. Hence the question whether New Delhi is inclined to stand firm or dither at the edge of compromise. When the NEFA crisis exploded New Delhi was handicapped firstly, by the absence of a policy and, secondly, by the absence of Mr. Nehru himself. The first was serious enough and prevented an intelligent response; the second was infinitely worse in that it ruled out even the consolation of an *ad hoc* reaction.

Admittedly feverish attempts were made to cover up the deficiency with a rash of platitudinous declarations — orders were issued to fire " if necessary ", jawans were rushed to the border, and it was suddenly discovered that there was no alternative but to drive out the Chinese from the territory they had occupied. Note the incredibly meticulous caution of " if necessary." Considerable areas in Ladakh have been lost to the

Chinese and the McMahon Line has been unmistakably violated but our troops are to fire only " if necessary." Jawans have been rushed to the border but where else are they to be rushed? There is no alternative to expelling the Chinese but who said that there was? All this is singularly unhelpful and Mr. Krishna Menon mistook his cue when he suggested that India would act only if the stituation became really serious. At a less exalted level a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry, with a so clever capacity for understatement, conceded that Chinese troops had " appeared " on the Indian side of the McMahon Line.

On the one side were flourishes of indignation and an implied promise of immediate action. On the other were irritating hints that the situation was not so critical as to justify hasty action. New Delhi meanwhile fed the press with stories of military brass rushing about and conferring. Is it really so unusual for the generals to concern themselves with a military problem when a problem exists? If the Chief of Staff confers with Mr. Krishna Menon, that is in itself hardly a matter for applause. Yet only such inconsequentials were released to the nation which in the result remained and continues to remain utterly in the dark about what New Delhi intends to do. This is not a request for military secrets but an illustration of the fact that in a democracy the people have a well-defined right to know what is going on.

Despite the initial doubts by which New Delhi allowed itself to be overcome it is now generally acknowledged that the NEFA situation is serious. Yet the External Affairs — as they have made plain in various ways — is anxious that the press should not " play up " NEFA stories that are considered " alarmist." No responsible newspaper will publish an obviously alarmist story for reasons of sensationalism and the caution is, therefore, quite superfluous. The purpose apparently is not to alarm or excite the public but it is a purpose which cannot and should not be fulfilled when the Prime Minister has described the situation as serious and the Chief of the General Staff himself has been entrusted with the task of expelling the Chinese from the NEFA area. The overseas press has already seized on various government declarations promising action against the Chinese. Whatever New Delhi's intentions may

have been expectations have been built up which it cannot now afford to leave unfulfilled.

Nevertheless the Prime Minister considers himself obliged to speak apologetically of the need for action and refer wistfully to the " principles of peace " associated with Mahatma Gandhi. Action is promised, the entire procedure of impending action is publicised, the press is advised to avoid alarmist stories, no action occurs and the Prime Minister speaks of non-violence. What are we to make of all this as also of the Prime Minister's request that the people should co-operate with the government? Can he doubt that the entire nation is behind him in resisting the Chinese aggressors? It has nothing more to give than this and in what way can it offer its co-operation? Discipline and increased production most certainly irrespective of whether there is or is not a NEFA crisis but the responsibility is finally with the country's leadership and it is here that many well-meaning citizens are assailed by genuine doubts.

During his stay in London Mr. Nehru informed the press that the border dispute was " bound to continue to be a serious one which can develop suddenly into a conflict." If only for diversionary purposes the Chinese, it was thought, would create trouble along the McMahon Line. The question whether the Indian forces would resist and in what manner pressed for an answer but none was apparently available. It was only after the actual crisis materialised and the initial dithering was over that the Defence Ministry abruptly woke up to the fact that a special corps to deal with NEFA was necessary and Lieutenant-General B. M. Kaul was summoned from his annual leave. Does it require a very specialised, high level military intelligence to anticipate in good time the need for a special corps before it arises? Why, moreover, was the one commander in the entire army considered best qualified to deal with the NEFA crisis on leave at a time when the entire border was being kept alive by Chinese hostility? Presumably in strenuous pursuit of its policy of deploring alarm and despondency the Defence Ministry unctuously pointed out that the troops under General Kaul were not a special task force but a new corps created under a routine administrative reorganisation.

How unfortunate it is that the Chinese cannot be fought in a court of law where New Delhi's legal pundits can revel in

subtle verbal distinctions which can subsequently be enshrined in an unending series of White Papers. Special task force or a new corps or whetever it is called in the army messes the fact is that if it was necessary it could and should have been established earlier. New Delhi's position now appears to be that it will not " talk " with the Chinese until " this particular aggression " in NEFA is vacated. Does this mean that even the preliminary discussions for reducing tensions considered valid for Ladakh do not apply equally to the NEFA situation? If they do all the brave talk of driving out the Chinese is meaningless although New Delhi would then be consistent in terms of its inability to stand firm. If they do not an inexplicable discrepancy is revealed and the now familiar bewilderment once more creeps back into the scene.

Is Ladakh less important than NEFA in that a refusal to talk applies to the one and not to the other? Equally unreal is the hope that the Chinese will discuss Ladakh without also bringing the eastern sector within the scope of the discussions. Since the aggressor in both cases is the same it is illogical willingly to discuss one and not the other. The alternative, of course, is not to discuss at all particularly with a government which New Delhi's Notes never tire of describing as devious, undependable and dishonest. There can be only one justification for New Delhi's seeming inability to decide, and that is that it is playing for time. Yet playing for time is itself a policy and must be coherently and intelligently conducted so that every part of it in relation to any other always makes sense. Mr. Nehru and Mr. Krishna Menon and others concerned deserve every support and sympathy in an affair in which the difficulties are enormous. But the public has a right to know that they are thinking and acting purposefully, particularly in a country in which everyone is free to ask questions.

A Few Questions

THIS is certainly no time for excessive recrimination but it is a time for some purposeful thinking as a preliminary to equally purposeful action. There is nothing alarming in the fact that Indian troops in NEFA have given ground to numerically superior and better equipped Chinese forces. The point is that Indian resistance was absolute and the jawans undoubtedly gave an excellent account of themselves — a performance that has injected new courage, determination and confidence into the entire country. Yet heroic resistance in one sector or another will be nothing more than tragic if such heroism is not supported by an appropriate policy.

The fairly large-scale Chinese offensive means, if nothing else, that a stage has been reached when certain questions must be asked and to which answers must be available if the Chinese problem is to be handled adroitly and successfully. The Prime Minister and the Defence Minister are weighed down with an extremely complicated burden and in this situation will certainly receive the unconditional support of the nation. Nevertheless the questions remain since they are inherent in the situation as it has developed, and can be asked not in a spirit of recrimination but in that of constructive co-operation. The first question is: is it not now necessary, if it was not before, to sever diplomatic relations with Peking?

The entire drift of New Delhi's " policy " has been to display as reasonable an attitude as possible despite every provocation. Restraint is admirable and in certain conditions is useful but beyond a point encourages unreasonableness in the other party concerned. The Chinese have never appreciated or understood Indian " reasonableness " and never will if the evidence so far available means anything. On the other hand what is regarded incorrectly as " unreasonableness " can possibly persuade the Chinese who are a realistic and pragmatic people into some degree of co-operation. It is in this sense that uncompromising toughness is the direct and only road to peace. The NEFA offensive is a military affair but with a political objective — that

of pressurising New Delhi into negotiating a compromise in Ladakh in exchange for a Chinese recognition of the McMahon Line. What has encouraged Peking to suppose that so fantastic a bargain can ever be struck? Chinese ignorance of Indian psychology is one answer. Another is that New Delhi's " policy " has done everything possible, intentionally or otherwise, to create the impression of an unlimited willingness to negotiate.

Seize territory, accuse India of launching an offensive, and then offer to negotiate. Such is the Chinese tactic and it is not, as the official press release of the Defence Ministry suggests, a recent discovery. This release maintains that the " pattern of Chinese policy is now becoming clear " which is untrue since it has been clear from the very beginning of the border dispute. The only possible Indian answer to this is to demonstrate — by action and not verbally — New Delhi's outright rejection of any negotiations for the duration. One such demonstration may be to sever diplomatic relations which will be consistent with the admirable resistance of the Indian forces in NEFA. The temporary loss of territory or a few posts, though certainly regrettable, is no reason for excessive concern and Mr. Krishna Menon is entirely right in saying that Indian troops will withdraw wherever the terrain is not militarily defensible.

What is vital is unqualified resistance militarily and politically. Militarily resistance is now being offered although even here there appears to be some kind of an inhibition. Indian troops and supply aircraft, it is said, have been strictly instructed not to cross the McMahon Line. Often an invading force cannot be contained or expelled unless the troops resisting aggression exercise the right to cross the border into enemy territory and this applies particularly to aircraft. To restrict Indian forces to the southern part of the Line may be to place them at a disadvantage. A shooting affray is a shooting affray and why should it be hindered by restrictions and inhibitions that are in any case recognised only by one of the parties concerned? There may be compelling military reasons why it is not desirable for Indian forces to cross the Line in which case of course, they should not and in which case also it is quite unnecessary officially to point out that there is such a restriction.

It is, however, on the political front that the spirit of resistance is not quite absolute. Even while there is a major offensive in NEFA the Defence Minister suggests that the primary objective of resistance is negotiation. Whether or not finally conditions that are not foreseeable compel negotiations as in the national interest, this is most definitely not the time to speak of negotiations as the national objective. Are the jawans in NEFA fighting simply to enable the politicians to sit down at a table and talk? Also confusing is the Defence Minister's claim that India is fighting because " the future of socialism and democracy depend upon goodwill between our peoples (the peoples of India and China)". What has socialism to do with all this and why inject ideology into a matter that cuts across all parties and creeds and is in the fullest sense of the phrase a national interest?

Is it Mr. Krishna Menon's implication that only those who believe in socialism and who further believe that the only way of serving it is to restore Sino-Indian friendship can understand the necessity of resisting the invasion in NEFA? Chinese " behaviour ", it is said, has been deplorable and we must chastise them accordingly and wait patiently for the day when they will know better and apologise for behaving so naughtily. This is the strain in which New Delhi throws up its hand in horror at the discovery that the Chinese were preparing the present offensive for three or four months during which they talked of negotiations. Of course the attack was premeditated. Can anyone be reasonably expected to launch an attack that is not? Which government in the entire world ever talks of negotiations without preparing for the alternative possibility of the use of force? Civilisation has nothing to do with it and the horror and indignation in New Delhi are therefore quite misplaced.

Another question is: what of U.S. aid? The suggestion that non-alignment will be compromised if in a situation like the present one India accepts aid from wherever it is available is quite ridiculous. Should non-alignment and the national interest conflict there should be no hesitation in abandoning non-alignment. Fortunately there is no such conflict and non-alignment needs no apology for accepting or seeking the means by which it can defend itself. An Indian defence mission is to

arrive in Washington shortly — could not the need for equipment have been anticipated in good time particularly when the Chinese threat to violate the McMahon Line was clear enough one year ago? Obtaining equipment quickly is not an easy business and should not be complicated by the obsessive desire of the External Affairs Ministry to make out quite unnecessarily that the non-alignment policy is not being compromised.

Yet another question is: what of the Soviet role? This has been rather equivocal in the sense that New Delhi is supposed to be thankful for the Russian refusal to support the Chinese. New Delhi cannot afford to be so liberal with its gratitude and Moscow might be usefully told that if its desire for Sino-Indian friendship is genuine its role could be rather more positive than it has been so far. These are questions about which some rethinking is necessary without any wringing of hands on how badly the Chinese have let us down. All that is rather dismal history the lessons of which must be learnt immediately and fully.

A Time For Frankness

ONE may be forgiven for receiving the impression that all the politicians in the entire country are speaking all the time — often with breath-taking irrelevance — and all on the same subject of the Chinese aggression and what the people are expected to do about it. No intermission appears to be in sight and in the overheated atmosphere of the patriotic " gesture " it is not particularly easy to trace the outlines of the specific ugliness the Chinese have created for us. Yet the effort must be made since effective action today is determined by what is anticipated in the future and what is anticipated depends in turn on past experience.

Appeals for unity, hard work, sacrifice, purposefulness and " sinking of differences " have a certain limited value but also tend to reduce thinking to the level of platitudes. Thus it is solemnly suggested that there should be no recrimination or a post mortem into what has gone wrong. When everyone is waving a flag of his own it is not easy to resist this invitation to keep our mouths shut. The fundamental question of why the Indian army was so ill prepared in NEFA need not, at this time, be pressed although it is a question that will one day have to be asked and answered. In this sense Mr. Nehru's rejection of a post mortem is one with which there is no quarrel. Presumably all the things the Defence Ministry should have done and did not do are now being done. Nevertheless satisfying obvious and urgent needs as they arise and about which there can be no two opinions does not add up to a policy.

It is at the policy level that something resembling a post mortem could be usefully conducted, firmly and quietly to whatever unpleasant conclusions it may lead. The inefficiency of a single person or of any Ministry is very much less to the point than the policy reappraisal that is absolutely essential if admirable intentions are to be translated into meaningful action. Its absence is primarily responsible for the manner in which New Delhi's reaction to developments for which it is not prepared swings from one extreme of complacency to the

other of unnecessary alarm. Some memorable sayings of the recent past by highly placed members of the Government may be quoted to prove that, in their eyes, what was not alarming yesterday is alarming today and what was dismissed as uninformed criticism is suddenly enshrined as the truth they have always worshipped. Such extremes reflect New Delhi's failure to anchor its actions to the firm bedrock of policy.

A policy requires a certain degree of frankness and a willingness to recognise errors for what they are. This applies particularly to the problem of obtaining urgently-needed aid from wherever it is available. Yet this need, though recognised, is heavily conditioned by the inhibitions that continue to weigh down New Delhi despite the crisis in the north. The Soviet Union has defined its attitude towards the China problem, thus shattering one of New Delhi's cherished illusions. Mr. Galbraith on behalf of the United States has also defined the attitude of his government. New Delhi cannot continue to behave as though these things have not happened. Even now there is a distressing inability frankly and courageously to acknowledge that in the matter of military aid the country is dependent on the goodwill and generosity of its friends, including the United States.

Why the cryptic mystery regarding the identity of the " friendly nations " from whom, according to Mr. Nehru, equipment is already being obtained? Mr. Nehru is reported to have informed some members of the Congress parliamentary party executive that " it is up to the friendly countries to render assistance but the extent to which they might help is a matter for them to decide." The Prime Minister has also commented that the Chinese attack has " awakened us to new realities " but New Delhi's remarkable attitude towards foreign aid suggests that the awakening is yet incomplete. Must we place ourselves on a pedestal and await an offer of aid which we will condescend to accept when it is made? Why this fuss and pother over considerations of false prestige and of a precious neutrality that is in any case not in question? There is nothing whatsoever to be ashamed of in asking for and obtaining aid when it is necessary to do so. From the earliest days of the crisis the western powers have expressed their readiness to help. To say that it is for them to help if they want to is to continue to

live in the "artificial atmosphere of our own creation" which Mr. Nehru has deplored.

Another aspect of policy reappraisal concerns diplomatic relations with Peking. The severance of relations is a diplomatic weapon that should be used before it is lost to the Chinese. Once Peking is convinced — and there is still reason to believe that it is not — that New Delhi will not negotiate except on its own terms the Chinese will not hesitate to sever relations, thereby once again doing what New Delhi should have done. The implication of all that the politicians have said and of the proclamation of an emergency is that the struggle will be prolonged and New Delhi will never compromise its territorial integrity; if this is firm and irrevocable there is no reason why the fiction of diplomatic relations should be maintained. New Delhi cannot afford to leave undone anything that can help to persuade the Chinese that they can henceforward expect no quarter from this country.

It is at the very least rather strange, that those in New Delhi who until the other day unfairly accused their critics of talking irresponsibly of war should themselves now refer loosely to a major war. Here again we see a bewilderingly rapid transformation of what was formerly an "incursion" into a "major invasion". The less melodramatic although serious truth is that the Chinese manoeuvre by which the Government was caught napping is what it has always been — a political move to pressurise New Delhi into a compromise. The entire purpose of creating the present situation is to confront New Delhi with the dilemma of having to seek western aid and drastically readjust the country's economic plans or to come to terms by surrendering what might appear to be a negligible portion of territory in the north. It is characteristic of Chinese tactics to push the country to the extreme point where the dilemma can no longer be ignored. Yet it is a dilemma of New Delhi's own making, till the last believing in Chinese *bona fides* and fearing a danger of entanglement in the cold war that was never very real. Peking has taken the initial moves to mobilise support among the Afro-Asian powers for some kind of conciliation on the border dispute. References are already being made to the Bandung spirit and President Nasser has started visualising himself in the role of an "honest broker".

All this together with Moscow's rather brusque indications of its sympathy for the Chinese is designed to weaken New Delhi's resolve to resist, particularly when, as is clearly shown, the only way out of the dilemma is to recognise friends as friends and accept their aid in the spirit in which they are ready to give it. Non-alignment the purpose of which is to serve the nation's interests and not the prestige of those who consider themselves its special protectors is basically tough enough to survive the challenge of the present crisis. Peking's anxiety to bring New Delhi to the negotiating table means a number of things. Firstly, off-key though it may sound, the situation is considerably short of a major war and, secondly, an unconditional, persistent and undeviating refusal to negotiate will confound the Chinese and impel them on their part to undertake some necessary rethinking.

Their objective is limited and specific and if this had been correctly interpreted without either complacency or panic all the necessary political and military measures could have been taken in good time without declaring a national emergency. With disarming sincerity the Prime Minister has said the Chinese " all the time led us to believe that they had agreed to the McMahon Line as the border ". However New Delhi may choose to interpret these words Mr. Krishna Menon's " war mongers " will insist on accepting them as a vindication of their point of view for which New Delhi displayed so little sympathy and understanding.

A Trap In The Making?

Now that everyone is convinced that everybody else is suitably patriotic it would surely be helpful to ask and attempt to answer what Peking's tactics are likely to be. National mobilisation of resources has its well-defined uses but it is — on a large scale — neither more nor less than an *ad hoc* reaction to an outrageous piece of Chinese initiative. Reactions from moment to moment to one or another Chinese initiative does not unfortunately add up to a comprehensive policy. The call for unity, for greater production, for zeal and discipline, for sacrifice and all that is implied by the declaration of a national emergency are reactions and therefore not a substitute for intelligent political anticipation.

The Indian posture that must finally take shape and influence New Delhi's outlook and conduct in the months ahead should be adapted to two possibilities. Both of these arise from an assessment of China's probable course of action after the present lull in NEFA. This lull is dictated in part by the need to consolidate and establish dependable lines of communication but even more by political considerations. China's territorial successes in NEFA have won it certain tangible benefits and any further penetration will increase these benefits substantially. Bhutan, Sikkim and Assam will be exposed to increasing pressure and if it is Peking's intention to do so it can be prevented from exploiting this situation only by the resistance of the Indian army. Yet what evidence is there to suggest that the Chinese will persist in their adventure to the stage of considerably enlarging the area of both their threat and commitments?

The strain of such a campaign will not be negligible even for a totalitarian State and the territorial advantage they have seized through their initial successes in NEFA is meaningful only in the degree that they intend to proceed further into the sub-continent. Deeper penetration will involve many serious consequences of which only the outlines can now be seen and to which Peking cannot remain indifferent. Its relations with

the Soviet Union as also with the independent non-aligned powers as a whole, its reluctance irrevocably to lose Indian friendship, the cost of a prolonged campaign, and its fear of an even greater isolation than it has suffered so far are some of the factors that argue against any unlimited invasion. Conversely, if Peking's objective is specific and strictly limited and this objective is a political one the Chinese may be expected to choose a course other than a continuation of the present invasion. The second and more likely possibility from which the Chinese can hope to derive some political advantages is a sudden but calculated withdrawal in NEFA to the positions held on September 8.

Such a withdrawal when it is least expected would be characteristic of the manner in which the Chinese conduct their affairs. Peking will once again declare its attachment to peace and its goodwill towards this country. It will announce that its purpose of forestalling an Indian attack has been achieved and it will thereafter gently remind Mr. Nehru that India is committed to negotiate if the positions of September 8 are restored. How will New Delhi, the nation and international opinion react to a master stroke of this kind? Before such a display of Chinese " reasonableness " and seeming evidence of a desire for a peaceful settlement there will be a terrible sense of deflation and anti-climax in this country together with extreme bewilderment. Once again New Delhi will be caught in a moment of serious imbalance by an unexpected but carefully controlled deflection of Chinese strategy.

Having made overtures to the West with the prospect of an increasing flow of military equipment, fearful that it has compromised non-alignment, fearful also of the political, economic and military consequences of a prolonged struggle and having emotionally conditioned the nation to what is said to be a total war how can and will New Delhi adjust itself to the implications of such a situation? Obviously the problem will be at the very least an embarrassing one. It was this probability that impelled some of New Delhi's critics to question the usefulness of proclaiming an emergency and creating the atmosphere of a total and irrevocable war. The sudden shift from describing the Chinese aggression as an " incursion " to condemning it as a major invasion did not reflect the truth and was yet

another example of New Delhi's tendency simply to react and swing from one extreme of complacency to the other of exaggeration. The difficulty will be intensified by the unfortunate commitment by New Delhi to negotiate if the Chinese withdraw to the lines they held on September 8.

The Soviet Union, President Nasser with his peace-loving associates, and the larger mass of indifferent observers elsewhere are standing at the sidelines eager to persuade Mr. Nehru to negotiate at the slightest opportunity. This opportunity the Chinese may offer quietly and calculatingly after having demonstrated their military strength and also with every prospect of manoeuvring New Delhi to the negotiating table. This political objective and not the seizure of territory as such has been and continues to be the primary motive of everything Peking has said and done since the beginning of the border crisis.

Mr. Nehru's own inclination as a man fervently attached to peaceful methods will be to seize any opportunity for negotiations particularly if the Chinese surrender the territory they have taken in NEFA. A more realistic, controlled and less emotional response to Chinese military pressure — and especially if accompanied by a fair measure of military support — without creating an excessive sense of national emergency would have firstly, enabled New Delhi more correctly to assess Peking's motives and secondly, allowed it a greater margin for manoeuvre at a later stage. Instead the alarums and excursions which are justified to the extent that the Defence Ministry has let the country down have been carried to the point where the nation is, in a manner of speaking, entirely without emotional reserves of any kind. Keyed up to the pitch to confront a situation that has incorrectly been described as a major war or invasion, the people will be psychologically unprepared for any sudden change in the situation of the type the Chinese are capable of creating at a time of their own choice. This does not mean that the nation will not accept negotiations but that it has not been prepared, as New Delhi itself is not prepared, to face the alternative of unconditionally refusing negotiations irrespective of what the Chinese may do.

The NEFA invasion is one step in the softening up process leading up to the offer of a settlement after a withdrawal in

NEFA the price of which will be a compromise in Ladakh. This still remains the only supreme objective of the entire Chinese strategy. Caught in the backwash of relief, exposed to the pressure of a world opinion in favour of peaceful methods, tied to the commitment to negotiate if the *status quo ante* of September 8 is restored and impelled by the general national preference for a peaceful solution, New Delhi must call upon considerable reserves of character and determination to resist the temptation to compromise. Chinese rejection of New Delhi's offer of October 24 as also of President Nasser's four-point plan may be explained on the grounds that a withdrawal from Peking's point of view will be politically exploitable if it is voluntary and not under the terms of a preliminary agreement. Furthermore, the withdrawal must be sudden and accompanied by an appropriate political offensive after China's military power has been unmistakably demonstrated and India is psychologically unprepared for anything but a prolonged and sustained campaign.

Negotiations will mean complete surrender of the conditions New Delhi insisted upon up to September 8 and also a concession to the Chinese of the objective they have patiently, fanatically and ruthlessly worked for during all the years after their initial invasion of Ladakh. Discretion demands a clear anticipation now by New Delhi of such a manoeuvre by Peking, difficult though it may be — after all the errors that have been committed — to face up to a challenge that will be infinitely more complicated than the military one in NEFA. The situation is serious but it is not yet and will probably never be a major war. To call it such is to obscure the facts and also to deprive ourselves of the opportunity calmly and courageously to assess it for what it is and understand the probable motives that have brought it about. Even if the present lull is broken by a second massive Chinese attack the trump card of a sudden withdrawal by Peking will always be available to it. A psychological and political failure to prepare for this will have far greater repercussions than the military deficiencies in NEFA that have already cost us so much.

Second Thoughts In Peking?

NEW DELHI is entirely correct in rejecting China's proposals of October 24 as "vague, confusing and deceptive." Such they undoubtedly are but does it follow that Peking's motives to which they are a clue are equally deceptive? In our effort to understand the shape and significance of Chinese aggression parallels have been rather shakily drawn with Hitler, a new imperialism, the Suez affair, European policies in the 18th and 19th centuries and an inherent "expansionism" in China's world vision. These comparisons are interesting as talking points but are singularly unhelpful in answering the question why the Chinese are behaving as they are. It is the Government's task and more specifically of the External Affairs Ministry to equip itself with what is known as an "appreciation" of the total picture including China's basic intentions and the margin of probabilities within which it will operate.

On this appreciation will depend the extent and pace of foreign aid, the degree of internal mobilisation and a definition of the nation's diplomatic and military objectives. It will also help to fashion the methods by which these objectives can be achieved. Yet it is on this point that there is reason enough to question the adequacy of New Delhi's posture. Nothing in the torrential flow of official words released since September 8 suggests the existence of anything resembling a professional "appreciation" of Peking's motives. On the contrary Mr. Nehru has confessed repeatedly that he is pained and bewildered by Chinese actions, and he informed the Lok Sabha on November 8 that "it was difficult for him to say what the Chinese wanted" primarily because of the contradictions in their statements. Yet setting aside the inconsistency in Chinese lies and propaganda the seeming contradictions are supported by a comparatively clear consistency of purpose.

This purpose was obvious in 1960 when Mr. Chou En-lai in his discussions with Mr. Nehru in Delhi proposed a settlement on the basis of "present actualities," implying a recognition

of the McMahon Line in exchange for New Delhi's surrender of the territory lost in Ladakh. It was obvious even earlier but confining ourselves to the events subsequent to September 8 what is the purpose that appears to emerge? China's massive attack occurred on October 20. Four days later Peking submitted its three-point proposals affirming the principle of peaceful negotiations, providing for the withdrawal by both Indian and Chinese forces 20 kilometres from the line of " actual control," and suggesting a Nehru-Chou high level meeting. These Chinese statements already contained the hint that the NEFA offensive was simply to forestall a massive Indian attack. In a letter to Mr. Nehru the Chinese Premier further clarified these proposals by explaining that the line of " actual control " meant the positions held on November 7, 1959, and that the proposed withdrawal of 20 kilometres on both sides applied only to the eastern sector.

Such information as is available indicates that the difference between the positions of September 8, 1962, and those of November 7, 1959, adds up to approximately 2,000 square miles additionally seized by the Chinese in Ladakh and about four miles penetration south of the September 8 line in NEFA. Even allowing for some margin of error it does suggest that the Chinese are prepared, so soon after their large-scale attack, to surrender the greater part of the territory seized in the present operation. The more obvious reasons that have impelled New Delhi to reject the proposals are firstly, that the difference between September 8, 1962, and November 7, 1959, though comparatively negligible is nevertheless a difference in favour of China, and that the principle of a mutual withdrawal from any line in NEFA, including the McMahon Line, is not applicable to the eastern sector. The less obvious reason is that the invitation to negotiate implicit in the Chinese plan must be considered in a context outside the merits or otherwise of the plan itself.

The Chinese clarification of November 4, Peking's offer two days later of a summit meeting, Mr. Chou En-lai's emphasis on the almost complete coincidence between the McMahon Line and that of November 7, 1959, the hopeful references to *Panchshila* and the spirit of the Bandung Conference — all these reflect an increasing eagerness to achieve their single

major objective of a settlement in Ladakh that will enable them to control the areas seized up to November 7, 1959. Everything that the Chinese have said and done has been subordinated to this end including the massive attack in NEFA. The idea of seizing territory in order to surrender it for a political advantage is very Chinese. Since Peking is apparently willing to give up much though not all of the territorial advantage acquired through the latest operation its objective can immediately be seen as political and limited. This explains various other aspects of what would otherwise be a frustrating political puzzle.

Peking has let loose an intensive barrage of propaganda in the direction of the Afro-Asian powers and more particularly of the U.A.R., patiently stressing peaceful negotiations and Chinese refusal to be provoked by the " war hysteria " created by " imperialist war mongers." The Soviet Union, swinging back to neutrality after an initial miscalculation, is once again back on the sidelines committed as before to a peaceful settlement. On what basis did Peking and Moscow assume that, exposed to pressure, New Delhi would compromise over Ladakh? Peking certainly and Moscow probably must be disappointed and puzzled by the Indian failure to take the easy way out. All the frantic references to " imperialist war mongers " and the Bandung spirit are a reflection of this communist bewilderment. The answer is twofold: firstly, no post mortem is necessary to establish the fact that during the past three years New Delhi has done and said everything possible to create the impression of a willingness to compromise, scrupulously avoiding provocative action for fear of jeopardising the peace; and, secondly, the Chinese and even the Soviet Union today remain abysmally ignorant of the psychology of non-communist peoples and of the processes by which a democracy functions.

On the evidence New Delhi offered India should be happily negotiating with the Chinese according to Peking's calculations. New Delhi itself appeared to believe some time ago that non-alignment and western military aid were inconsistent but India is now gratefully receiving such aid without abandoning non-alignment. New Delhi itself appeared to proclaim that resisting China with western aid would introduce the cold war into

this part of the world but nothing of the sort has happened. New Delhi itself seemed to be convinced that rather than adopt a firm stand it would prefer to preserve intact its image of a peace loving nation with moral ideals, but in the event Indian resistance has not shattered India's basic belief in the methods of peace. All this is what Mr. Nehru probably meant when he confessed that the nation had awakened to certain " realities."

The basic error of Indian foreign policy lay in the false impression it gave, thereby misleading the Chinese into the supposition that they could get away with what they were doing. Firmness was therefore justified from the earliest days of the Chinese invasion in Ladakh not because war was or is the solution but because such firmness would have dispelled the dangerous illusions nourished by the Chinese regarding India and its capacity to resist. It is this firmness and this specific reason for it and not any inherent inadequacy in the Chinese proposals that justifies a refusal to negotiate. China's eagerness to settle and its bewilderment over India's resistance can be turned to the Indian advantage by an absolute and unconditional refusal to talk or discuss either a settlement or a reduction of tensions. That is the only language perfectly intelligible to the Chinese and to which they are likely to respond with respect.

Such a policy must be accompanied by a holding operation and a consolidation of military strength with western aid tailored to this specific objective. China cannot afford indefinitely to sustain its penetration when it cannot reap the political advantage it hoped to gain. A few more offensives will not alter the fact that, faced by such Indian determination, China will have failed in its strategy of out-manoeuvring New Delhi. Peking's answer will probably be a tense waiting game for which the Indian people must be prepared without undue excitement, emotionalism, exaggerated expectations and an unrealistic estimate of what the Chinese intend to do.

How Firm Is Firmness?

SEPTEMBER 8, 1962 has become symbolic of the dividing line between the past and the present. After that date many illusions and images were shattered although of these some traces linger in New Delhi's attempt to minimise the follies of the past. On balance it can now be said that New Delhi's policy has acquired, if rather belatedly, a certain mental muscularity which it never had before. Circumstances have compelled it to achieve this degree of maturity about which two things need to be said. One is that this should have occurred several years ago as many of New Delhi's well-meaning critics recommended only to be brushed aside as imperialist "warmongers." On this point nothing more can be usefully said. The other is whether the implications of the new posture of standing firm have been fully understood by New Delhi. It is after all a posture to which the Government is not accustomed and demands considerable reserves of patience, determination and political acumen.

"Firmness" can be translated into policy only when New Delhi asks itself and answers the question what its attitude will be when the positions of September 8, 1962 are restored. This *status quo ante* is the immediate objective and New Delhi has, for once, insisted categorically that nothing less will be acceptable. Yet Indian policy must look ahead beyond the limited horizons of September 8, 1962 since it is at that stage that the crucial diplomatic battle will be fought. Will the firmness that will enable New Delhi to achieve the objective of September 8 be maintained to achieve the further objective of an acceptable settlement? This presupposes, of course, that China will either shortly or after some months of waiting patiently withdraw to the September 8 line to enable it to continue its aggression across the negotiation table. In the Chinese vocabulary of politics there is no such thing as peaceful negotiations. Negotiations, for Peking, are simply another form of aggression which is something New Delhi cannot afford to forget since it has been conditioned to believe that talking is a peaceful activity.

In other words we should not be carried away by the relief of transferring the campaign from the battle field to diplomacy and the temptation to assume that Peking's willingness to talk on New Delhi's terms will be a victory must be firmly resisted. Despite the concentration of Chinese troops and the tempo of Peking's military activity along the front China has carefully and deliberately left the way open to negotiations. It has intensified its efforts to seek the good offices of the non-aligned powers. It has submitted a variety of proposals followed up by " clarifications " that appear to bring them progressively nearer to New Delhi's condition of September 8. It has carefully refrained from creating the impression within China that a major campaign is being waged. For the Chinese people the affair is yet a border skirmish in which the purpose of Chinese military activity is to " chastise " the Indian forces and compel them to behave in the spirit of Sino-Indian friendship.

Frenzied demonstrations were held against American imperialism in Cuba but hardly any or none at all against India. Political vituperation was directed against the Soviet Union for its role in the Cuba affair and comparatively little towards India as a whole. In a lengthy article in the *People's Daily* of Peking a senior member of the Chinese Communist party who presumably reflects the mental attitudes of his superiors proposed that increasing military pressure would compel Mr. Nehru to accept China's proposals of October 24. If Peking is not quite convinced yet it will shortly be that such pressure will not now, as Peking had reason to believe earlier, impel New Delhi to negotiate on China's terms. It is at that point that Peking will suddenly switch its area of aggression from fighting to talking. The Chinese people have not been informed of Peking's rejection of President Nasser's four-point proposals and Mao Tse-tung will therefore be able to claim that having forestalled an Indian attack the Chinese forces can and will be withdrawn to the positions of September 8.

Such a withdrawal may be preceded by a " holding " operation, keeping approximately to the present line, going through the motions of consolidation and maintaining the tempo of fiercely probing military activity. Finally, however, Peking will realise that its manoeuvre of militarily pressurising

New Delhi into talks has failed and that the same objective must be attempted by a calculated withdrawal. In this sense advancing and withdrawing are different methods with the same objective in view. The alternative will be for China to cling to territory that is militarily and politically quite meaningless which it has seized at enormous political and economic cost. It is into this kind of predicament that China is being led by New Delhi's firmness the moral of which surely is that, contrary to earlier suppositions by policy-makers in New Delhi, firmness in certain conditions does yield dividends and is the shortest cut to peace and not war.

It follows that when the positions of September 8 are restored New Delhi must be fully prepared for the next phase of the overall Chinese manoeuvre. Peking will have been suitably impressed by India's determination to answer force with force. It will also be necessary to persuade the Chinese either that New Delhi refuses to talk or that if it does the purpose will be simply to insist on a complete Chinese withdrawal from all sectors. It has been implied unfortunately by New Delhi itself that such an attitude would be extreme and unreasonable when it is nothing of the sort. Since Peking's entire manoeuvre is to consolidate and permanently hold the territory it has seized in Ladakh a withdrawal from NEFA will still leave the Chinese in a position of strength. It will still retain the fruits of its aggression — a fact which Peking will attempt by every means to obscure when the withdrawal from NEFA occurs. New Delhi will then be tempted in the backwash of relief over a Chinese withdrawal to relax its firmness and hurriedly readopt the posture of a peacefully inclined nation since it is a posture in which New Delhi is most at home. It is a danger that derives from Mr. Nehru's own goodness and sincerity of purpose but it is none the less a danger.

For the Chinese for whom talking is another form of aggression any Indian willingness to talk will be construed as something less than the determination shown by New Delhi when challenged by China's military strength. The assumption that whereas China is capable of aggressive talks as part of an overall manoeuvre India is not is certainly not untrue. Moreover it will suit Peking's interests to switch from fighting to talking and anything that suits Chinese interests can hardly

be consistent with Indian interests. Talking and being firm will therefore be in this context a contradiction in terms. Mr. Nehru was merely scoring a debating point when he declared the other day that it was meaningless to negotiate after the Chinese had withdrawn from every inch of Indian territory since in that case there would be nothing to negotiate. This is quite untrue in that it will be necessary, as New Delhi has conceded, to negotiate minor adjustments of the border and consolidate this border permanently by an unequivocal political agreement with Peking. All this will involve negotiations after but not before Chinese aggression has been completely vacated.

There is therefore no basis on which Chinese action in Ladakh can be differentiated from similar action in NEFA although Chinese diplomacy has consistently attempted to suggest such a difference. Indian willingness to accept this difference and therefore to imply that a withdrawal in NEFA will enable New Delhi to start talking on the Ladakh problem would be to throw away all the advantages it is acquiring by standing firm at present. The Prime Minister is entirely correct that China cannot occupy New Delhi and India cannot occupy Peking which means that the present affair is not a major war but a political-cum-military manoeuvre which New Delhi must counter at its appropriate level. China, of course, will not evacuate Ladakh simply because New Delhi stands firm but this is a problem the nation must learn to live with indefinitely, patiently and with determination because firmness or weakness in relation to it will determine the course of Sino-Indian relations in the decades to come.

A Chinese "Puzzle"?

SINCE general bewilderment over China's latest manoeuvre persists it might be useful to reproduce certain relevant extracts from the weekly feature " International Scene " published in *The Times of India* on November 5, 12 and 19.

From the November 5th article: " What evidence is there to suggest that the Chinese will persist in their adventure to the stage of considerably enlarging the area of both their threat and commitments?

" The strain of such a campaign will not be negligible even for a totalitarian State and the territorial advantage they have seized through their initial successes in NEFA is meaningful only in the degree that they intend to proceed further into the sub-continent. Deeper penetration will involve many serious consequences of which only the outlines can now be seen and to which Peking cannot remain indifferent. Its relation with the Soviet Union as also with the independent non-aligned powers as a whole, its reluctance irrevocably to lose Indian friendship, the cost of a prolonged campaign, and its fear of an even greater isolation than it has suffered so far are some of the factors that argue against any unlimited invasion. Conversely, if Peking's objective is specific and strictly limited and this objective is a political one the Chinese may be expected to choose a course other than a continuation of the present invasion. The second and more likely possibility from which the Chinese can hope to derive some political advantages is a sudden but calculated withdrawal in NEFA to the positions held on September 8.

" Such a withdrawal when it is least expected would be characteristic of the manner in which the Chinese conduct their affairs. Peking will once again declare its attachment to peace and its goodwill towards this country. It will announce that its purpose of forestalling an Indian attack has been achieved and it will thereafter gently remind Mr. Nehru that India is committed to negotiate if the positions of September 8 are restored. How will New Delhi, the nation and international

opinion react to a master stroke of this kind? Before such a display of Chinese " reasonableness " and seeming evidence of a desire for a peaceful settlement there will be a terrible sense of deflation and anti-climax in this country together with extreme bewilderment. Once again New Delhi will be caught in a moment of serious imbalance by an unexpected but carefully controlled deflection of Chinese strategy.

" The Soviet Union, President Nasser with his peace-loving associates, and the larger mass of indifferent observers elsewhere are standing at the sidelines eager to persuade Mr. Nehru to negotiate at the slightest opportunity. This opportunity the Chinese may offer quietly and calculatingly after having demonstrated their military strength and also with every prospect of manoeuvring New Delhi to the negotiating table. This political objective and not the seizure of territory as such has been and continues to be the primary motive of everything Peking has said and done since the beginning of the border crisis.

" The NEFA invasion is one step in the softening up process leading up to the offer of a settlement after a withdrawal in NEFA the price of which will be a compromise in Ladakh. This still remains the only supreme objective of the entire Chinese strategy. Caught in the backwash of relief, exposed to the pressure of a world opinion in favour of peaceful methods, tied to the commitment to negotiate if the *status quo ante* of September 8 is restored and impelled by the general national preference for a peaceful solution, New Delhi must call upon considerable reserves of character and determination to resist the temptation to compromise. Chinese rejection of New Delhi's offer of October 24 as also of President Nasser's four-point plan may be explained on the grounds that a withdrawal from Peking's point of view will be politically exploitable if it is voluntary and not under the terms of a preliminary agreement. Furthermore, the withdrawal must be sudden and accompanied by an appropriate political offensive after China's military power has been unmistakably demonstrated and India is psychologically unprepared for anything but a prolonged and sustained campaign.

" Discretion demands a clear anticipation now by New Delhi of such a manoeuvre by Peking, difficult though it may be

after all the errors that have been committed — to face up to a challenge that will be infinitely more complicated than the military one in NEFA. The situation is serious but it is not yet and will probably never be a major war. . . . Even if the present lull is broken by a second massive Chinese attack the trump card of a sudden withdrawal by Peking will always be available to it. A psychological and political failure to prepare for this will have far greater repercussions than the military deficiencies in NEFA that have already cost us so much."

From the November 12th article: "Such information as is available indicates that the difference between the positions of September 8, 1962, and those of November 7, 1959, adds up to approximately 2,000 square miles additionally seized by the Chinese in Ladakh and about four miles penetration south of the September 8 line in NEFA. Even allowing for some margin of error it does suggest that the Chinese are prepared, so soon after their large scale attack, to surrender the greater part of the territory seized in the present operation.

"The Chinese clarification of November 4, Peking's offer two days later of a summit meeting, Mr. Chou En-lai's emphasis on the almost complete coincidence between the McMahon Line and that of November 7, 1959, the hopeful references to panchshila and the spirit of the Bandung Conference — all these reflect an increasing eagerness to achieve their single major objective of a settlement in Ladakh that will enable them to control the areas seized up to November 7, 1959. Everything that the Chinese have said and done has been subordinated to this end including the massive attack in NEFA. The idea of seizing territory in order to surrender it for a political advantage is very Chinese. Since Peking is apparently willing to give up much though not all of the territorial advantage acquired through the latest operation its objective can immediately be seen as political and limited. This explains various other aspects of what would otherwise be a frustrating political puzzle.

"The basic error of Indian foreign policy lay in the false impression it gave, thereby misleading the Chinese into the supposition that they could get away with what they were doing. Firmness was therefore justified from the earliest days of the Chinese invasion in Ladakh not because war was or is the solution but because such firmness would have dispelled the

dangerous illusions nourished by the Chinese regarding India and its capacity to resist. It is this firmness and this specific reason for it and not any inherent inadequacy in the Chinese proposals that justifies a refusal to negotiate."

From the November 19th article : " Yet Indian policy must look ahead beyond the limited horizons of September 8, 1962 since it is at that stage that the crucial diplomatic battle will be fought. Will the firmness that will enable New Delhi to achieve the objective of September 8 be maintained to achieve the further objective of an acceptable settlement? This presupposes, of course, that China will either shortly or after some months of waiting patiently withdraw to the September 8 line to enable it to continue its aggression across the negotiation table. In the Chinese vocabulary of politics there is no such thing as peaceful negotiations. Negotiations, for Peking, are simply another form of aggression which is something New Delhi cannot afford to forget since it has been conditioned to believe that talking is a peaceful activity.

" Despite the concentration of Chinese troops and the tempo of Peking's military activity along the front China has carefully and deliberately left the way open to negotiations. It has intensified its efforts to seek the good offices of the non-aligned powers. It has submitted a variety of proposals followed up by ' clarifications ' that appear to bring them progressively nearer to New Delhi's condition of September 8. It has carefully refrained from creating the impression within China that a major campaign is being waged. For the Chinese people the affair is yet a border skirmish in which the purpose of Chinese military activity is to ' chastise ' the Indian forces and compel them to behave in the spirit of Sino-Indian friendship.

" If Peking is not quite convinced yet it will shortly be that such pressure will not now, as Peking had reason to believe earlier, impel New Delhi to negotiate on China's terms. It is at that point that Peking will suddenly switch its area of aggression from fighting to talking.

" Finally, however, Peking will realise that its manoeuvre of militarily pressurising New Delhi into talks has failed and that the same objective must be attempted by a calculated withdrawal. In this sense advancing and withdrawing are different methods with the same objective in view. The alternative will

be for China to cling to territory that is militarily and politically quite meaningless and which it had seized at enormous political and economic cost. It is into this kind of predicament that China is being led by New Delhi's firmness the moral of which surely is that, contrary to earlier suppositions by policy-makers in New Delhi, firmness in certain conditions does yield dividends and is the shortest cut to peace and not war.

"It follows that when the positions of September 8 are restored New Delhi must be fully prepared for the next phase of the overall Chinese manoeuvre. Peking will have been suitably impressed by India's determination to answer force with force. It will also be necessary to persuade the Chinese either that New Delhi refuses to talk or that if it does the purpose will be simply to insist on a complete Chinese withdrawal from all sectors.... Since Peking's entire manoeuvre is to consolidate and permanently hold the territory it has seized in Ladakh a withdrawal from NEFA will still leave the Chinese in a position of strength. It will still retain the fruits of its aggression — a fact which Peking will attempt by every means to obscure when the withdrawal from NEFA occurs. New Delhi will then be tempted in the backwash of relief over a Chinese withdrawal to relax its firmness and hurriedly re-adopt the posture of a peacefully inclined nation since it is a posture in which New Delhi is most at home. It is a danger that derives from Mr. Nehru's own goodness and sincerity of purpose but it is none the less a danger."

Not So Enigmatic

EMOTIONALISM no doubt has its points but it does tend to swing one's judgment from one extreme to another — from the earlier supposition that the Chinese are friendly Asian neighbours to the discovery that they are wily and cunning people, inscrutable and full of unexpected tricks. Both these suppositions are unhelpful and particularly the second in that it is nothing more than a caricature of what the Chinaman — in fiction — is supposed to be. Mr. Chou En-lai's implied offer of negotiations after a unilateral Chinese withdrawal is admittedly a clever piece of work and a failure to grasp its implications cannot be justified by referring to so-called Oriental inscrutability. The Chinaman in diplomacy is neither more nor less cunning than the next man although he does follow a logic of his own. Mr. Nehru, strengthened by his experience, is therefore entirely correct in refusing to commit himself on the latest Chinese manoeuvre. There is no urgent need for any commitment or specific reaction for quite some time. For this one primary factor is exclusively responsible and it is only in relation to it that New Delhi can now adopt a meaningful posture.

This is that the situation today is in various respects qualitatively different from that before September 8, 1962. Earlier it was necessary — though this was unfortunately not accomplished — to impress on the Chinese mind the fact and reality of Indian determination. Earlier also the Chinese hoped that military pressure would bring New Delhi to the negotiating table. Both these factors are not as valid as they used to be. China has tested Indian determination and found it rather more resistant than expected and New Delhi on its part has been reinforced by the discovery that firmness can yield dividends. Since the specific purpose of underlining the Indian capacity to resist has been fulfilled it is not in the Indian interest to take refuge in a blind rigidity of outlook, dismissing every Chinese move or gesture as a subterfuge. Here again Mr. Nehru has spoken with the restraint and calculation of a leader

rapidly maturing under the pressure of events. Simply to reject the Chinese plan is not an adequate answer and particularly so if this is done on the grounds that it is safer to say no rather than yes in dealing with someone whose behaviour has seemed to be inexplicable. New Delhi's rejection — and rejection it undoubtedly should be — must be inspired by the right reasons and also be accompanied by a greater degree of resiliency.

Peking's proposals are significant on two levels — firstly in terms of what they contain, and secondly in terms of the fact that they have been submitted and are to be unilaterally implemented by the Chinese. There has been considerable agitation over the first level of significance, about the extent to which Indian forces can reoccupy territory after the Chinese withdrawal, where the various lines are to be delimited on the ground and what the " reciprocal conditions " to which the Chinese refer really add up to. On these points New Delhi has very rightly asked for Peking's clarification. The initial obscurity of China's proposals, it should be noted, enables Peking to " clarify " them subsequently in any manner that suits its interests. If between the request for and receipt of clarification Peking considers Indian determination to be less than what it appears to be or that it is indeed quite uncompromising the " clarification " will be adjusted accordingly. One main Chinese proposal can, therefore, be exploited by Peking for a variety of purposes without creating the impression of compromise or retraction.

Yet the detail of where and how Indian and Chinese forces will be disposed though definitely most important provides only one side of the picture. For the rest one must turn to a consideration of the fact of the proposal itself. This proposal reflects an increasing anxiety by China to escape from the dilemma into which it was led by a serious miscalculation of the Indian spirit to resist. Peking fully realised that it could not indefinitely penetrate deeper into Indian territory without creating an impossible situation for itself but hoped that the appearance of doing so would impel New Delhi to negotiate. Since this hope has vanished it is most unlikely that the Chinese will launch another major invasion of NEFA. The Chinese " offer " therefore is a means by which a shift can be made from one tactic to another with the unchanging objective of a compromise

settlement. Military pressure in the form of probing action along the frontier will probably be maintained but a large-scale campaign as a political move will by now have been firmly rejected by the Chinese as an unfruitful weapon.

It is for this reason that the Chinese withdrawal is not conditional upon anything that India might be expected to do. It is something which the Chinese are anxious to bring about in their own interest. New Delhi's posture should accordingly be cautiously to exploit China's miscalculation while steadily building up its military strength in collaboration with the western powers. It is necessary skilfully to play for time until the day when by force or negotiation the Ladakh problem can be solved. This may be many years hence but it is a problem with which the Government and the people must be willing to live, with patient determination. An increasing degree of military preparedness accompanied by a diplomacy that has taken the measure of the Chinese will enable New Delhi to turn even negotiations to our advantage. The stronger India is the more likely indeed of such fruitful negotiations since in this context negotiations will not indicate weakness.

The first step — and this will be more eloquent than any verbal declaration — will be to advance to the positions of September 8, 1962 when such an advance is militarily feasible. Subsequently negotiations can be justified specifically for the purpose of impressing Indian determination on the Chinese mind while in the meantime maintaining the tempo of military preparation in case action is necessary to recover Ladakh. The Chinese declaration very meaningfully provides that Peking reserves the right to attack again if Indian troops regain the positions of September 8, 1962. This is in no sense a threat since the right is only reserved and in exercising which the Chinese will again manoeuvre themselves into the same dilemma from which they are now attempting to escape. New Delhi can prove this decisively by making an advance up to the positions of September 8, 1962, when we are fully prepared to do so. All this, however, cannot be accomplished overnight. The Chinese are a patient people and will not abandon their objective simply because one tactic has failed.

New Delhi on its part must repair the many deficiencies and weaknesses that have been revealed. Meanwhile it deserves the

confident support of the nation and should not above all be impelled into hasty action to satisfy the impatience of the Indian people. The new ties that have been acquired with the western powers on the basis of a genuinely realistic understanding of each other's positions and difficulties must be retained and developed over the years during which the Chinese problem will always be with us. Such a posture will persuade the Chinese to display further evidence of their " reasonableness" by agreeing to Indian recovery of the positions of September 8, and thereby compelling New Delhi on its own terms to negotiate. New Delhi must therefore be fully prepared to define the scope and intent of the negotiations that may be necessary not simply because Mr. Nehru is committed to his earlier offer but because time is now on India's side and will enable New Delhi to adopt a progressively uncompromising attitude militarily and politically.

Meanwhile Peking's tactics will be to mobilise international opinion in favour of a negotiated settlement. It will probably as a gesture release Indian prisoners of war and by other means create the impression of unlimited reasonableness. It will certainly not surrender Aksaichin but neither will India and this fact of Indian refusal to surrender will decisively influence China's attitude towards India in the years ahead. This attitude is as vital to us as the territory lost in Ladakh and will determine the shape of China's relations with its non-communist neighbours.

In Search Of A Policy

WHEN the enemy advances relentlessly the problems of leadership and policy are comparatively simple. All the nation's resources must be mobilised and such aid as is available must be earnestly solicited. The only reasonable posture then is one of unconditional resistance. When, however, the enemy does not advance and, on the contrary, withdraws while simultaneously transferring the campaign to the diplomatic level the problems become infinitely more complicated and demand something more than simply massive opposition. The present lull is in this sense a far more critical test of New Delhi's skill and determination than the earlier invasion of NEFA. The position is not one of merely receiving aid and expelling the Chinese, and especially so because New Delhi's policy must operate within very strict limits dictated by a variety of factors.

These are military unpreparedness, a restriction on western aid and Peking's probable motives. To a considerable degree the present crisis is a crisis of unpreparedness and this is a deficiency that cannot be made good overnight by belatedly asking for aid. In other words the Chinese military action acquired the semblance of a major invasion in the degree that India was militarily unprepared. Conversely, if the appropriate policy and military measures had been taken in good time the crisis, if any, would have been contained and limited. This in turn means that the crisis derives not so much from China's intentions as from what New Delhi failed to do.

It should be realised that Peking's offer of a withdrawal is neither deception nor diabolical cunning but something that suits China's interests. It is not India and the western powers or the Soviet Union alone that are anxious to restrict the scope of the crisis. China is equally concerned to do so and has always been since the initial attacks in Ladakh. The Chinese are an extremely rational people and realise that no political or military purpose can be served by seizing extensive areas of NEFA and Assam which cannot be held without provoking massive western retaliation of one kind or another. They did

have reason to believe, however, that military pressure in NEFA would compel New Delhi to accept a negotiated settlement in Ladakh. There is therefore absolutely no reason to anticipate another major Chinese penetration into NEFA since such penetration has already been achieved and has failed to yield Peking the expected political dividends. These dividends, it is calculated, can yet be won by a withdrawal that will increase the pressure on New Delhi to negotiate and compromise. The probability is that despite China's categorical rejection of the Indian proposal Peking will finally accept the positions of September 8, 1962 and thereby bring New Delhi to the negotiation table.

It is this interpretation of China's intentions as well as other global considerations that have impelled the western powers obliquely at least to impose a limit on western military aid. No one and least of all China desires or is planning for a major war — a fact that was rather obscured in New Delhi by a failure correctly to interpret China's motives and by the desperation over the extent of military unpreparedness. The "shopping list" which New Delhi sent to Washington after the second major reverses in NEFA was presumably so extensive that the U.S. Government was taken aback. It reflected not merely the extent of India's military requirements but also the Indian assumption that a major war was in the offing. The British and American missions to New Delhi were organised precisely to correct this unhelpful perspective and assess the situation for what it is.

Apart from the realisation in Washington and London that China's objectives were limited the West could not obviously afford to commit itself to unlimited aid for economic and political reasons. This should have been obvious enough to New Delhi although the impression had been created over the years that the West was always eager to acquire the privilege of sending arms aid to India and thereby compromise the carefully protected and delicately nourished non-alignment policy. It can now be seen that the West is not in the least interested in this policy and will provide aid only in the degree that it is necessary to counter the Chinese manoeuvre at the level prescribed by Peking. If the Chinese increase their military pressure the West will correspondingly increase the tempo of

aid so as to enable India at least to hold and maintain its front line. If, on the other hand, Peking relaxes its military pressure and switches its tactics to the diplomatic level the West will restrict military aid to the minimum and scrupulously refrain from entangling itself in the political complexities of the dispute.

This desire to avoid excessive commitment is responsible for the western insistence that New Delhi should come to terms with Pakistan. This is a complicating factor which New Delhi has failed to handle with skill and determination. Whatever the inadequacies of New Delhi's Pakistan policy in the past it is plain enough that New Delhi cannot agree to " anything that involves an upsetting of the present arrangements " as the Prime Minister emphatically and properly pointed out in the Lok Sabha. Why then did New Delhi commit itself to a joint statement agreeing to negotiations to remove outstanding differences between the two countries? Since as of now there is absolutely no conceivable basis for such negotiations their failure will immediately be exploited against New Delhi by Pakistan and those in the West who, however sympathetic otherwise, are hostile to India on the Pakistan issue.

An understanding with Pakistan is certainly desirable but is neither possible at present nor essential for the security of the sub-continent. If, as there is ample reason to believe, China's objectives are limited and Peking itself is somewhat relieved at having successfully escaped the dilemma caused by its military successes in NEFA there is no major threat to the sub-continent as the West itself is fully aware. New Delhi's answer should therefore have been to restrict its request for western aid only to what is essential to enable the nation to hold its front lines and firmly to inform the western powers that no *rapprochement* with Pakistan is possible at present. This would have prevented false hopes, clearly defined the extent of western aid, deprived the West of the opportunity to revive the Pakistan issue, and placed Indian policy on the foundations of a clear assessment of the true shape of the China crisis. It is by no means certain that western generosity extends to the point where it is willing militarily to help India to recover the lost territories in Ladakh. That in any case will be a long-term undertaking which in turn is the main reason

why New Delhi must learn patiently and skilfully to play for time without exaggerating either the Chinese threat or the scale of western generosity.

For what the West has done there is undoubtedly enormous gratitude but its attitude cannot be expected to be otherwise than what it is. The China affair is only one comparatively minor aspect of the larger problem of the West's relations with the Soviet Union which is itself a major aspect of the even greater problem of international peace. Every facet of Indian policy falls into its proper perspective only when the shape of the Chinese manoeuvre is clearly seen. This is quite essential and the failure to achieve it is responsible for the bewilderment and drift of which there are still many traces in New Delhi's posture. Chinese inscrutability is therefore only an excuse for our failure to assess Peking's motives correctly.

The British and American missions, having made their own assessment, were scrupulously anxious to avoid interfering with Indian policy or influencing New Delhi's estimate of the situation. Despatching a " shopping list " to Washington and various envoys to the non-aligned powers are make-shift measures and do not add up to a policy assessment. Of course the Chinese are slippery customers. Of course they are undependable. Of course their case can be legally refuted. All this can be taken as read. What is now necessary in the plainest terms is a coherent foreign policy into which China, Pakistan and the West can be fitted consistently and in full conformity with the national interest.

Playing It Cool

At a time when non-alignment is at a discount the Colombo powers have shown that it is still capable of being animated by a sense of vigorous purposefulness. That is, indeed, very helpful since there has latterly been a tendency both in India and abroad to dismiss non-alignment in either of two ways. The first to which foreign opinion appears to be partial is to react with a sort of built-in sneer by pointing out cynically that non-alignment has succeeded in soliciting and obtaining aid from both East and West. The second is unthinkingly to reject non-alignment as a failure or to defend it rather apologetically which is, surprisingly enough, what the former advocates of non-alignment in New Delhi have been doing. Yet the truth is surely that this policy deserves neither the built-in sneer which pictures Mr. Nehru as a devastatingly cunning leader who has managed to get the best of both worlds nor the laboured justification of those who seem to have lost their confidence in this policy.

In these days when several reputations have been shattered and many deficiencies have been uncovered there is a greater need than ever before for some basis of conviction. The alternative will be bewilderment and drift. Non-alignment can provide this basis provided its advocates do not lose heart and provided, moreover, they realise that its failures were due not to any inherent inadequacies but to the manner in which it was conducted. Non-alignment was pictured in the past both by its advocates and opponents as an inability to decide, a reluctance to act, an evasion of responsibility and a rejection of force under any circumstances. Events have shown that it need not be anything of the kind and that simply defined non-alignment is a refusal to join military alliances and equally a refusal to assume that a conflict between the communist and non-communist worlds is inevitable. For the rest it is inconsistent neither with receiving military aid nor with exercising its right of self-defence.

Non-alignment if not successful during the Menon-Nehru period is certainly not yet a complete failure. It needs to be

refurbished and reshaped without the myths and fantasies that have obscured its true character. When Mr. Nehru in a television interview appeared to suggest that non-alignment had failed in relation to China did he mean that this policy had been compromised by the receipt of aid from the West? If so, he was less than just to a policy for which he himself has been mainly responsible. This inclination — or so it seems to be — obliquely to accept the western estimate of non-alignment should be firmly resisted in the conviction that this policy remains as valid as ever before.

The successful conclusion of the first phase of the Colombo conference reflects a situation in which the forces in favour of a reduction of tensions are gradually gaining the upper hand. Britain and the United States have already suggested that earlier estimates of Chinese intentions were greatly exaggerated. The Soviet Union has also, with equal clarity, refused to consider the dispute as a major cold war event that could escalate into war. The Colombo powers on their part with sources of information both in India and China apparently believe that the basis exists at least for a successful cease-fire and preliminary talks. Mr. Nehru himself seems to share this view to the extent of conceding that the Chinese will not in his opinion return in force and that the problem is, as it has always been, a border dispute and not a major war.

Clearly the balance of opinion is in favour of abandoning hostilities and transferring the problem to the level of talking and negotiating. This is particularly so not because any of the powers concerned, including China, have been conscience-stricken enough suddenly to acquire a preference for peaceful negotiation but because talking is consistent, as it happens, with everybody's interests. It is as simple as that and has nothing to do with the fantastic theories that have been concocted to explain away the Chinese withdrawal. The Chinese are withdrawing because they never intended to do anything else and their objective remains, as before, to bring India to the negotiating table. It has been argued, by those who refuse to believe that China is anxious to settle on the basis of Aksai-chin, that since Peking was in complete control of this area the NEFA invasion was inspired by other motives. This point of view ignores the possibility that China's purpose was and

continues to be to transform *de facto* control of Aksaichin into a *de jure* situation. In this sense Chinese diplomacy boils down to justifying and obtaining recognition for a *fait accompli*. Peking acts and thereafter diplomacy takes over.

Yet the circumstances in which New Delhi can now agree to talk with Peking will be quite different from those initially envisaged by the Chinese. China's miscalculation lay in assuming, on grounds which New Delhi did much to prepare, that military pressure in NEFA would impel the Indian Government, with no will to resist, to attempt a compromise at the negotiating table. As things are the mobilisation of the country's strength and western aid, however limited, will enable New Delhi to talk with China on some basis of strength. Off key though it may sound China is probably as anxious as in the past to restore and maintain friendly relations with India provided this can be done without a complete surrender of what it considers to be its rights in Aksaichin. This is something which Indian diplomacy must not hesitate to exploit while unceasingly consolidating the nation's military strength.

It is in this context that the role of the Colombo powers is particularly relevant. A formula which arranges for the withdrawal of Chinese troops to the positions of September 8, 1962, and for a demilitarised zone which does not deprive India of the right to reoccupy lost territory at a later date, if necessary, deserves the very careful and thorough consideration of the Nehru Government. The diplomatic and military setbacks of the past two months have made New Delhi particularly sensitive to the charge of being " weak ". This country has its share of flag-waving extremists who consider themselves to have been right simply because some aspects of the Nehru-Menon policy were proved to be wrong. Against the pressure of such elements New Delhi must remain firm and uncompromising. Talking and negotiating are not always " weakness " and could be in certain conditions a reflection of strength. New Delhi will meet China across the table completely without illusions of any kind, it will play for time which the country desperately needs, it will not compromise on the territorial integrity of Ladakh but it will in the meantime respect the cease-fire without restricting its scope of diplomatic and military activity in the future.

One implication of this is that New Delhi should refrain from creating too acute a sense of crisis. A crisis it certainly is in that the national interest is involved but it is a crisis with which the nation must learn to live without exaggerating it into something it is not. The feverishness with which we have tended to react to the China affair must be replaced by a calmer and more reasonable assessment of the situation. Peking will probably be not unresponsive to the overtures from Colombo and on this ground alone New Delhi cannot afford to isolate itself from the increasing pressure in favour of some kind of negotiation. It should be remembered that the cease-fire is not a settlement and that no surrender of Indian rights will be involved if India faces China across the negotiating table.

Asking for a clarification of the Chinese proposals is not the only way of playing for time. The entire process of arranging a cease-fire and a demilitarised zone to be followed by talks to reduce tensions can be extremely time-consuming. Peking, of course, is well aware of this but since the alternative of force has failed it will attempt to achieve a compromise by a display of excessive reasonableness. New Delhi's answer should be not to reject talks but, as the American language so expressively has it, " to play it cool." The problem is not simply one, as some of Mr. Nehru's critics maintain, of receiving an avalanche of aid from the West and expelling the Chinese. Non-alignment as it really is must be resuscitated so as to enable New Delhi to have a coherent point of view and to demonstrate that if India has not surrendered to Communist China it has certainly not in any sense " sold " itself to the West.

Pipe-dreams From Harvard

In all their references to the Kashmir issue the western powers have scrupulously avoided any word or phrase implying, however remotely, the existence of some kind of diplomatic pressure. Yet the truth — politely evaded by everybody concerned — is surely that western aid, now that the immediate crisis is over, has acquired a very complicated and tiresome " string " of its own. No one has been crude enough to say in so many words that the pace and extent of aid will depend on Indo-Pakistan relations but the message of what Mr. Harriman and Mr. Duncan Sandys have had to say and more particularly of the Nassau communique is quite unmistakable.

It is something to which New Delhi must respond with a nice balance between firmness and adaptability. Any indignant disapproval of what the western powers are attempting to do would be misplaced and unfruitful. Here again there is the very familiar tendency to swing from one extreme to another — from eloquent gratitude for prompt western aid shortly after the NEFA invasion to the beginnings, of which there is now increasing evidence, of outraged condemnation of the western attitude. Neither of these extreme reactions is particularly helpful in that both are based on a number of suppositions.

These are that the Chinese action in NEFA automatically gave us the right to expect and the western powers the obligation to provide massive military aid; that the scope of such aid is influenced primarily or exclusively by Indo-Pakistan relations; and that India cannot be effectively defended without a *rapprochement* with Pakistan The belief — and it is one that dies hard in New Delhi — that the western powers are only too eager to compromise non-alignment by pouring massive aid into this country is mainly responsible for the bewilderment and anger with which New Delhi has reacted to the western insistence on a Kashmir settlement. It is a belief that reflects an obsessive desire to protect non-alignment from enemies conjured up from the past. New Delhi has yet to be persuaded that nothing could interest the western powers less, in this

context, than undermining non-alignment, enticing India into the western camp or exaggerating the conflict with China into a major crisis. The fault here lies in demanding and expecting massive aid when there has never been and there is not even now anything to suggest that such large-scale aid is being considered. It is unreal if not infantile to criticise the West for its failure to live up to expectations for which there was never any foundation.

The Soviet posture over Cuba, the increasing strain on Sino-Soviet relations and the general reduction of international tensions have created conditions in which a realistic *rapprochement* between the eastern and western blocs has become something more than a possibility. The West clearly has no intention of upsetting this delicate balance of possibilities by engaging itself more than necessary in the Sino-Indian conflict. Furthermore, the Macmillan and Kennedy Governments are in no position to switch on or switch off military aid without regard to pressure groups and conflicts of opinion in their own countries. It is enough and something to be thankful for that in a crisis the West will provide what is absolutely essential " to counter aggression." This, in fact, is what New Delhi should expect and ask for and nothing more since anything more will not only not be forthcoming but a request for it will immediately be countered by references to the Kashmir problem.

The decisive factor, of course, in determining the flow and size of aid is the western estimate of Chinese intentions. It is this rather than the absence of a Kashmir settlement that has impelled the western powers to restrict aid and transfer the emphasis to Indo-Pakistan relations. Even if a Kashmir settlement were achieved overnight it is most improbable that aid will flow more liberally than it is doing at present. Kashmir therefore is a vast irrelevance, acquiring a significance only to the extent that the threat from China has been exaggerated into something it is not. This is not an invitation to complacency but it does illustrate the need to answer a challenge at the level at which it is posed. To the feverish demand for a Kashmir settlement the answer should therefore be that a problem cannot be solved by ignoring the presence of another. If New Delhi's case in Kashmir means anything — and it undoubtedly does — it cannot overnight be abandoned simply because China

has chosen to create a crisis in the north. Certainly one of the obligations of foreign policy is to avoid situations of this kind but once there is such a situation the solution is most definitely not to attempt to compromise under the pressure of a new crisis.

Mr. Nehru is therefore entirely correct in emphasising that the political *status quo* in Kashmir cannot be changed without the danger of enormous complications which New Delhi is not prepared to accept. This is a point that has not been clearly conveyed to the West and has indeed been rather obscured by New Delhi's willingness to revive negotiations with Pakistan. A more appropriate course would surely have been tactfully and firmly to resist the western pressure for negotiations on an issue the solution of which is not essential for the defence of this country. As things are the failure of Indo-Pakistan negotiations will have unfavourable repercussions in the United States which in turn will create further problems for New Delhi. The balance of international opinion on the Kashmir problem is already against India for reasons that have nothing to do with the merits of the case. This situation will be aggravated when negotiations with Pakistan yield nothing more than a further instalment of frustration and bitterness.

One of the more serious errors of diplomacy is to insist on something that is neither feasible nor possible, however desirable it may be. American pipe-dreams on the subject of Kashmir are well-intentioned but disastrously naive and are at least in part probably designed to satisfy an ally which has been over-critical of U.S. aid to India and to silence the pro-Pakistani section of opinion in the United States. There is no reason why New Delhi should entangle itself in a manoeuvre that is meaningless and inevitably will turn out to be quite fruitless. These realities can be seen in perspective when the present crisis is deflated to its proper size which is what the western assessment of the situation has already done. New Delhi has nothing to gain by ignoring or refusing to accept the implications of this assessment. They can in fact provide the basis of a policy of neither expecting nor demanding liberal western aid and thereby evading the artificial pressure for a Kashmir settlement.

In a sense New Delhi has, over the Kashmir issue, become a victim of its own exaggerated interpretation of the China

crisis. Harvard pipe-dreams have contributed their share of unreality to the total picture and it is meaningful that the United States rather than Britain is responsible for the fantasies that have been seriously submitted as a solution for Kashmir. By agreeing to negotiations New Delhi has aroused false hopes, encouraged some degree of pressurising and invited the charge of bad faith when it belatedly refuses to accept any change in the Kashmir *status quo*.

There is a danger here of deflecting attention from the China problem. This problem will probably not be a major military one although everything must be done within the resources available to guard against any further threat to the nation's security. The fact that massive western aid has been and continues to be something of a myth has a bearing on the methods which New Delhi must adopt in dealing with the cease-fire. A cease-fire is not a solution or a settlement of the problem and therefore allows some margin for compromise and adaptability. This in turn means that New Delhi should, as much as possible, associate itself with the efforts of the Colombo powers to bring about a formal cease-fire. Any attitude of non-co-operation will isolate New Delhi from a group of powers which is not necessarily unfriendly because it has, for various reasons, refrained from unconditionally endorsing the Indian case. Short of compromising its basic sovereign rights New Delhi must " go along " with the Colombo bloc before Peking, in a calculated display of " reasonableness," does the same and gains a further victory in psychological and diplomatic warfare.

Letting The Dust Settle

THERE is more than a little to be thankful for in the fact that Mrs. Bandaranaike's mission to Peking and New Delhi is being conducted at so leisurely a pace. For India there is an obvious equation between time and the capacity to prepare but the present lull offers several other opportunities for reappraisal in which the major powers as well as Communist China should be equally concerned. Everyone is clearly interested for reasons of his own in letting the dust settle before the next and extremely critical phase of the China affair is opened. As the dust settles the true shape of the crisis becomes so much easier to trace and in consequence the policy appropriate to the occasion also becomes so much less controversial.

The question that surely penetrates to the heart of the problem is how critical is the present crisis? Any exaggeration of the emergency is as unhelpful as an underestimation of it. The crisis is not major in the sense that no full-scale unqualified war is involved. It is not minor in that basic sovereign rights are the subject of dispute between two of the largest countries in Asia. Truth lies somewhere betwixt and between and defies simple definition. Yet it has possibly set the pattern for the kind of peripheral conflicts with which the communist bloc might attempt to gain its objectives in the future. It is certainly a technique of diplomacy to which the Chinese might resort as and when it suits them and for which New Delhi must be prepared as a permanent responsibility.

At the global level President Kennedy's defence policies already reflect an appreciation of what may be described as the technique of limited military engagements. Hence the concept of an American nuclear " shield " as a sort of insurance against escalation and a willingness-cum-ability to answer a military challenge at whatever level it occurs. This restores conventional weapons to a position of respectability in the armoury of defence and it is reasonable to visualise the possibility of limited engagements which by mutual consent are kept well short of a nuclear conflict. Such " wars " will not be — as

earlier wars were — a replacement of diplomacy by the use of force. They will, on the contrary, add a new dimension to the practice of diplomacy in which the threat and use of conventional force will be an inherent part of the tactics of diplomacy. In this light the NEFA invasion can more readily be seen for what it was — a political-cum-military manoeuvre inspired by very clear and specific objectives.

References to Chinese "jealousy" of India, to Peking's desire to "humiliate" New Delhi and to a supposed diabolical Chinese Communist plot to "dominate" Asia are a rather feeble attempt to explain away something that makes sense only when the framework to which it belongs is found. They are, moreover, inadmissible in that they assume an incredible degree of Chinese immaturity. Peking's actions and policies, it should immediately be conceded, are not dictated by petty jealousies, unrealistic ambitions or occasional fits of temper. Another assumption which too often serves as a red herring is that Peking is indifferent to international opinion or to Indian friendship and goodwill off key though this may sound at the present time. One aspect of this is Peking's careful cultivation of the Colombo powers and another is the fact that the *de facto* control of Aksaichin by China is, from Peking's point of view, not enough.

Not enough not because the Chinese have, at this stage, further territorial ambitions but because they are intensely interested in retaining Aksaichin as well as the friendship and goodwill of the Indian Government. Such eating one's cake and having it appears to be incredible now but — as the Chinese saw it — it was not so impossible an objective not too long ago. The Nehru-cum-Krishna Menon line of policy certainly did everything possible to persuade the Chinese that India was prepared to compromise and settle the affair in the interests of Panchshila and Sino-Indian friendship. Whatever New Delhi may have intended in those days Peking's manoeuvre did not yield the expected results primarily because it did not seriously consider the factor of Indian public opinion. Under the pressure of this opinion New Delhi did some very unexpected things. It asked the United States for aid, it renounced Chinese friendship and it mobilised the country despite a serious sacrifice of certain aspects of the five-year

Plan. It also miraculously reconciled at long last non-alignment with a determination to fight. All this was not anticipated by the Chinese as it certainly was not by many in this country, but Peking's objective remains for the Chinese as valid as ever.

The *de facto* objective is the control of Aksaichin and such additional territory in Ladakh as is essential for its defence which the Chinese have already achieved. The *de jure* objective with which Peking is now primarily concerned is to obtain recognition and acceptance of the new *status quo* since this is a necessary part of the programme with which the Chinese set out when they initially seized Indian territory in Ladakh. This in turn means that the substance of the dispute is as much *de jure* as *de facto* and that so long as New Delhi refuses categorically to surrender its title to Ladakh the complete Chinese objective will not have been achieved. This will be a kind of resistance other than military that will frustrate Peking even if India is unable for several years forcibly to re-take its lost territory in Ladakh.

Military inaction therefore should not be equated with weakness and a clear distinction must be made between negotiations for a cease-fire which is definitely in the Indian interest and negotiations for a substantive settlement of the dispute. On the main point that Indian territory cannot be bartered away simply because a more powerful neighbour has seized it there can be no two opinions. It is not merely a question of the nation's territorial integrity which is important enough to rule out compromise; it is also a question of the entire future of Sino-Indian relations. Peking's attitude to these relations will be coloured by the extent and manner of Indian resistance. There is no reason as yet to suspect that New Delhi is considering the possibility of a compromise when tempers have cooled sufficiently but there is also the contrary danger of New Delhi surrendering to the pressure of those critics who unthinkingly agitate for " forthright " action. The Government is, for obvious reasons, unduly sensitive to the charge of being " weak " and a misplaced desire to prove otherwise might impel it to be unnecessarily obstructive over the cease-fire. That would be a serious tactical mistake. It would alienate the Colombo group of powers, provide Peking with further

material for its peace offensive and postpone the formal cease-fire through which much-needed time can be gained.

New Delhi must therefore have the courage clearly to indicate that no dramatic political or military action is necessary or possible and that a firm insistence on Indian rights should be accompanied by the utmost resiliency in relation to methods and tactics. A further logical conclusion which New Delhi will surely find worth considering is that ministerial statements calculated to create an exaggerated sense of crisis are unwise and inappropriate. A calm, realistic exposition of what is and what is not possible is something which the nation will immediately understand and to which it will respond. The alternative will be to create a kind of war hysteria and to arouse expectations that cannot easily be fulfilled. Fierce attitudes and jingoistic postures are no substitute for the strength that derives from a true assessment of the enemy and his motives.

New Delhi should not hesitate to take the country into its confidence so that public opinion is neither complacent nor excessively expectant but is adjusted to the implications of a problem that will not be solved for many years. The crisis, in other words, is serious but not critical which is why, as Mr. Galbraith has said, the American interest in a settlement is much less than it is in India. Any massive American aid would, furthermore, be inconsistent with the latest defence concepts that are beginning to emerge as much in Moscow as in Washington. These are complicated and far-reaching considerations and need to be thoroughly digested during the present lull for which we must thank Mrs. Bandaranaike's discreet and deliberately paced handling of a tricky situation.

Illusions And Realities

WHEN the Prime Minister declared on October 25, 1962, that until the " severe shock " of the Chinese attack in the North East Frontier Agency " we were getting out of touch with reality in the modern world and we were living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation," he could have more correctly gone on to add that the " we " referred specifically to himself and his immediate associates. That he did not do so was a reflection of his inability at that time to understand how this " artificial atmosphere " was created and sustained over the years since the Chinese occupation of Tibet. It was also a reflection of New Delhi's invariable tendency to associate the people and the nation as a whole with the shortcomings of which it alone was primarily guilty. For those who had neither the inclination nor the opportunity closely to watch at every stage the interplay of Chinese action and Indian reaction in Ladakh and NEFA, the full extent of the artificiality by which New Delhi's policy was burdened cannot be easy to grasp.

For one thing both on India's part and on that of its critics there was a singularly unhelpful obsession with the non-alignment policy. This obsession derived from the conviction shared equally by both parties that a vigorous and purposeful policy of containing the Chinese was inconsistent with non-alignment. It is a conviction that dies hard and, despite all that has occurred, has yet to be declared irrevocably dead. On the one hand was the implication that the Chinese could not be effectively resisted without a drastic modification of the non-alignment policy and on the other — in a sort of oblique endorsement of this proposition — was the refusal to believe that this policy, like any other, has every right to defend itself without depreciating its own validity. Deprived of its moralistic overtones and the many misconceptions that have distorted it, the non-alignment policy is simply in its essence a refusal to join any military alliance and therefore to engage in the kind of cold war with which the name of the late Mr. John Foster Dulles is associated.

During the fifteen years of Indian independence New Delhi has assiduously projected abroad an image of itself that is inconsistent with true non-alignment and to which India has remained faithful only at the cost of having to sacrifice the national interest. Hence the suggestion even among India's friends that the use of force in Goa seriously reduced New Delhi's status in world affairs. It need not have done anything of the kind and if it did, the responsibility lies with New Delhi itself in that it constantly, by comment, inaction and moralising, created the picture of a government the sole objective of whose policy apparently was to preserve its reputation as a peace-loving nation anxious, above all, to avoid entanglement in the cold war.

The definition of non-alignment that emerges from such a woolly and anaemic background may be expressed in terms of what this policy does not do. It recoils at the very thought of any kind of commitment. It rejects the use of force in any circumstances. It avoids language at which anyone may take offence and it is constantly fearful that it might be thought "un-Gandhian." This image was accompanied by the unshakable belief in New Delhi that its "voice" in world affairs was an accomplishment to be treasured and protected regardless of any other consideration. Much was loosely said about India's "moral stature" as much by unthinking observers abroad as by Indian spokesmen themselves.

It was assumed that this "morality" and the peaceful inclinations that derived from it had obtained for India an impressive fund of goodwill and respect abroad. Distinguished visitors to New Delhi politely and fulsomely paid tributes to this intangible asset that had been acquired over the years. When less starry-eyed critics at home suggested that this was no substitute for a foreign policy, Mr. Nehru and his associates dismissed such criticism by pointing to the wonderful foreign testimonials they had received. Why should anyone complain when the foreigners themselves think so highly of our morality?

It was, of course, difficult, almost impossible, to reconcile this image with what the pressure of unrelenting events compelled New Delhi to do in Goa. The inconsistency lay not between non-alignment and military action but between

such action and New Delhi's very special concept of the non-alignment policy. This concept was and is at the heart of the " artificial atmosphere " which Mr. Nehru himself has now learnt to deplore. New Delhi's " voice," thanks primarily to Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon, has been very much in evidence in relation to a wide variety of international problems including Berlin, disarmament, the control of nuclear weapons, Cuba and Laos and it has been supposed that this " voice " has been respectfully heard. Often when both the blocs could not agree and the immediate problem was therefore reduced to evolving an innocuous resolution, Mr. Krishna Menon feverishly addressed himself to this utterly unfruitful task in fulfilling which the only requirement was a more than usual degree of verbal legerdemain. Severely watered down resolutions meaningful only to the extent that they reflected an agreement to postpone disagreement and in formulating which India played a major role were triumphantly flourished as evidence of New Delhi's " voice " in world affairs.

In the result when the national interest called for the use of force New Delhi hedged and hesitated and dithered. Finally when it acted almost the entire world criticised its action as hypocritical in terms of the image New Delhi itself had so carefully created. One aspect of this disastrous projection was Panchshila or the five principles of peace (non-aggression; non-interference; recognition of each other's sovereignty; mutual help; peaceful co-existence) which Mr. Nehru and Mr. Chou En-lai announced with appropriate fanfare in 1954 and were naively accepted as a true reflection of Peking's intentions. Thereafter followed a period during which adulation of China and everything Chinese based, incidentally, on an incredible ignorance of what was really noteworthy in the Chinese achievement completely dominated New Delhi's China policy. A sense of false Asianism of which Bandung was an expression helped this process forward and, in addition, western and particularly American hostility towards communist China, by a process of reaction, elevated Peking in Indian eyes to the status of an Asian power struggling to build up and protect its independence against the wiles of western cold war imperialism.

New Delhi's own vision of a socialistic pattern of society predisposed it in favour of a China engaged as India was in the difficult task of national rehabilitation. Anyone who, however tentatively, as a matter of discretion recommended a rather more critical study of Chinese motives was firmly dismissed either as a warmonger or as a western stooge or as an incorrigible reactionary. It was in this state of mental confusion that New Delhi received the first shock of the Chinese invasion of Tibet. It was, however, conditioned to react in the only way it could. It deplored China's action, stopped short of outright condemnation, evaded the use of the word " aggression " and refused to advocate Tibet's case in the United Nations. Here again the objective was to preserve undamaged New Delhi's concept of non-alignment and scrupulously to avoid any association with western criticism of China's violation of Tibetan autonomy. Nothing could be gained, Mr. Nehru pointed out, particularly for the Tibetans, by agitating against the Chinese.

In this obsessive preoccupation with the negative aspect of avoiding the cold war and preserving a reputation for morality and peace, New Delhi failed to assess the implications of the Chinese presence in Tibet in terms specifically of the Indian national interest. The image emerged unscathed but the first step had been taken by China in the gradual process of nibbling away at India's northern frontiers. When three years after the event, during which Parliament and the country remained blithely unaware of what the friendly Chinese had been up to, it was suddenly disclosed that a considerable area of Ladakh had been lost to Peking, there was among the people an initial reaction of bewilderment and alarm. One of Mr. Nehru's first declarations was characteristically to the effect that India " would steadfastly adhere to her policy of non-alignment " and even more characteristically Mr. Krishna Menon, the then Defence Minister, ventured to point out that despite the " intrusions " by Chinese troops he hoped that Indian-Chinese friendship would not be jeopardised.

One of the first Chinese encroachments as reported in the first White Paper occurred in Garhwal in August 1954 but was the subject of a protest in an Indian Note dated September 24, 1956. The corps commander at Jammu reportedly informed

New Delhi some time late in 1956 or early in 1957 that the Chinese were constructing a road across the Aksaichin plateau. These unmistakable indications of a rapidly diminishing Chinese interest in Panchshila were disregarded and, on the contrary, New Delhi politely suggested that the Chinese must have absent-mindedly strayed across the border — a suggestion that was coldly ignored by Peking. Both New Delhi and Peking spokesmen referred to the " thousands of years " of friendship between the two countries and the Chinese Ambassador on May 16, 1959, proposed that " a big fuss " by the " broad masses " and the " governmental authorities of our countries " would not be in keeping with so unique a friendship. Since the nation's leaders referred to the lost areas in Ladakh as a " patch of territory," emphasised the importance of peaceful negotiations and chose to dilate on the subject of Sino-Indian cultural relations from the days of Buddhism, the Indian people were far from being in the grip of a sense of crisis.

At this point the Chinese calculation obviously was — and they had every reason to think as they did — that after the preliminaries of registering pain and disapproval, New Delhi would, under the spell of its self-created image, and for the cause of Sino-Indian friendship, accept a compromise settlement — a settlement that would, moreover, leave the Chinese with the road they had built across Aksaichin. International opinion at this stage was not unduly agitated and the Indian people were satisfied to take their cue from Mr. Nehru. All was therefore set for peace and the restoration of Sino-Indian amity. Then came the next shock of the brutal massacre of an Indian police party approximately 40 to 50 miles within Indian territory in Ladakh. It is possible that the officer in charge of the Chinese patrol acted on his own initiative and it is equally possible that instructions from Peking were mainly responsible. In either case this was, from the Chinese point of view, a major error deriving from Peking's abysmal ignorance of the role of public opinion in a democracy.

For the first time since independence the Indian press was able to mobilise public opinion for a cause that could be readily understood. Overnight the possibility of a compromise evaporated as it had not earlier when Indian patrols were " arrested " on their own territory by Chinese detachments

in August 1958 and July 1959. It became gradually obvious to the Indian people, accustomed hitherto to leaving " foreign affairs " to Panditji and the knowledgeable ones in New Delhi that in the vast regions of the north the Government of India knew little or nothing of what was going on. If the pressure of public opinion made compromise impossible New Delhi nevertheless had no intention of adopting the alternative of a firm diplomatic and military containment of the Chinese. New Delhi's primary concern then became one of pacifying public opinion by a skilful technique of, on the one hand, deploring and criticising the Chinese action and, on the other, of recommending a calm and dispassionate attitude towards the crisis. Anything else, it was suggested, was uncivilised and immature and therefore incompatible with the country's traditions.

Thereafter followed a policy of nursing back public opinion into a frame of mind sufficiently " reasonable " to enable New Delhi if possible to come to some understanding with the Chinese communists. The " friendly tenor " of Mr. Chou En-lai's message in October 1959 was enthusiastically noted and Peking was informed that no military operations would be started while the dispute was being discussed through an exchange of correspondence. The problem, Mr. Nehru re-emphasised, could be settled peacefully. There was no indication then, as subsequent events have proved, that a serious assessment of Chinese motives and of how they could be effectively countered was being undertaken. Asked to explain why China was behaving as she was, Mr. Krishna Menon advanced the theory that Peking was being provoked by " a policy of encirclement."

New Delhi clearly pictured itself even at this point, particularly in the international field, as a champion of communist China, an interpreter of its motives and as a sort of more articulate " big brother " who would explain Peking to the outside world. Accordingly there was no " major idea " behind the Chinese " incursions " and Mr. Mao Tse-tung appeared to confirm this when he informed a delegation of the Indian Communist party that the border affair was a " temporary phenomenon."

To what extent New Delhi was still a captive of its own image was revealed, perhaps inadvertently, by Mr. Nehru

in a letter to Mr. Chou En-lai. He pointed out to the Chinese Premier that in its anxiety to promote a peaceful solution New Delhi did not publicise the Chinese invasion of Ladakh, thereby exposing the Government to the " sharp but legitimate criticism " of both the Indian Parliament and press. Here was a deliberate intimation to Peking that despite New Delhi's belief in a peaceful settlement and in Sino-Indian friendship public opinion might compel it to adopt an increasingly uncompromising attitude. Those who refused to believe in the face of the evidence that New Delhi could be so incredibly naive took refuge in the supposition that Mr. Nehru was cunningly playing a waiting game, playing for time while taking the necessary military measures and initiating the appropriate diplomatic moves. It can now be seen that New Delhi was not guilty of any such cunning and that in the event India was politically and militarily unprepared for what was to come.

Longju in NEFA, at which one of the earliest Chinese " incursions " occurred in 1959, became for that reason symbolic of Chinese aggression. New Delhi disclosed in November, 1959, that it was not proposed to retake it " at present." Two years later it remained untaken firstly because of a Nehru-Chou " agreement " under which India pledged itself " in the interests of peace " to refrain from recovering its own territory and, secondly, because the attempt to retake it would be a " major undertaking." It was dismissed as consisting of " a few huts " and therefore of no military importance.

To the suggestion that Indian territory and therefore sovereignty was important, irrespective of the territory's economic or military significance, New Delhi had no answer. The entire purpose of this soft-pedalling of Chinese aggression was to restrain public opinion which in turn could be justified only if in the meantime the ground was being prepared for a vigorous and constructive policy towards the Chinese threat. There was, however, no evidence of any such policy in the making. Mr. Menon, the then Defence Minister, in the meanwhile, advised the nation that military self-sufficiency was his objective, that the people should trust New Delhi, that the Indian army was better equipped than at any other time, that ordnance production had increased rapidly, that Chinese aggression should be liquidated by peaceful processes, that the

McMahon Line was a name he did not like, that New Delhi intended to remain friendly with China, that Panchshila had caught the imagination of the Asian people and that if the Tibetan issue had not been referred to the U.N. this was because India wished to protect Tibet from the cold war.

The next stage in this fantastic drama of unreality assumed the unbelievable form of a team of " experts " from the External Affairs Ministry in a solemn exchange of views with Chinese counterparts on the historical and documentary evidence relating to the northern borders. Every conceivable repository of ancient documents and maps was ransacked with commendable zeal and shortly thereafter Indian Notes of protest contained abstruse references to the Upanishads, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana and to a variety of Sanskrit sources. Every little tedious academic discrepancy as between one document and another was pounced upon with glee by the " experts " as a substantiation of their case. After nine months of this sort of thing, a bulky report was born proving the validity of India's claims which undoubtedly it did but which singularly failed to impress either China or international opinion.

Implicit in this laborious and legalistic justification of a border that required no justification whatsoever was the conviction that the Chinese could finally be persuaded by patient reasoning to understand the justice of India's stand. The obvious sincerity with which New Delhi held to this view did not, however, strengthen its policy or invest it with any purposefulness. The dispute with China was not to be and could not be resolved in a court of law in which evidence could be marshalled for one case or the other. Nevertheless when Mr. Chou En-lai submitted a scheme of demilitarisation that would have conferred definite advantages on the Chinese in Ladakh it was welcomed in New Delhi as a " conciliatory gesture " although unacceptable. When Chinese aircraft violated Indian air space Indian Government spokesmen expressed the belief that these violations were " accidental " and Mr. Krishna Menon unnecessarily pointed out that the planes could not in any case be easily identified.

Often indeed there was a strange discrepancy between New Delhi's White Papers and the statements in Parliament by the

Prime Minister and Mr. Krishna Menon. The Papers are well-documented and detailed evidence of Chinese aerial and territorial aggression. Yet in speaking of the same incidents, whereas a White Paper would describe them as " very serious matter " that might lead to " very unfortunate consequences," Mr. Nehru would dismiss them as " minor " and " very petty " which was exactly what Peking itself was expected to say. One White Paper accused Peking of aerial violations on 52 occasions but Mr. Nehru considered it proper to point out that often the aircraft could not be identified. Even in late 1959 the Prime Minister referred to Ladakh as the place where a road " is supposed to have been " built and conceded that the Ladakh border was a " matter for debate and consideration." Here plainly was a man so inherently honest and objective, politician though he was, that he could not bring himself to abandon the notions he cherished, against every unpalatable reality, regarding China's policy and its intentions.

These notions persisted well into 1961 and were responsible for the decision to send the Secretary-General of the External Affairs Ministry, Mr. R. K. Nehru, to Peking on his return from a visit to Outer Mongolia. Nothing had occurred to suggest that the Secretary-General's presence in the capital of a country that had been denounced as an aggressor would yield anything helpful. Yet when critics pointed out that it was hardly appropriate for so high-ranking an officer of the Government to approach the Chinese leaders in Peking for purposes that were not at all clear, New Delhi sought respite in the fiction that Mr. R. K. Nehru would " discuss " and not " negotiate " the border dispute. A further dash of fantasy was injected into the affair by the official claim that Mr. Nehru would confine his activities to paying " courtesy calls " on the leaders of the Chinese Government.

As could be foreseen this display of " courtesy " towards a people indicted of duplicity and aggression left Peking quite unimpressed. All that Mr. Nehru apparently did was to inform his Chinese hosts that India could not negotiate until Chinese aggression was vacated. There was here, as there was from the earliest days of the Chinese seizure of Indian territory in Ladakh, a persistent inability to grasp the implications of Chinese psychology, motives and methods. This failure was

responsible for the Nehru-Chou discussions in New Delhi in 1960 during which a wide variety of Indian Ministers anxiously, and rather without co-ordination, tried their hand at bargaining with the Chinese Premier.

From this futile exercise emerged the equally futile decision that further documentation was necessary, that there was a need to reduce tensions and " tranquillise " the border and that there was a " greater understanding of the views of the two Governments." The joint communique and the Chinese Premier's press conference which embodied these decisions and proposals were, however, most revealing from another point of view. If Mr. Nehru continued to believe in China's *bona fides*, despite the increasing number of " intrusions," and his occasional outbursts of indignation, the Chinese leaders on their part continued to believe, though with a greater basis for their belief, that New Delhi could be persuaded into becoming more " reasonable."

To the question what the Chinese motives could possibly be Mr. Nehru had no answer to offer except to say at one time or another that there was no " major idea " behind the aggression, that he did not know, or that the Chinese were " traditionally expansionist." This was an inadequate substitute for a careful appreciation of the what and why of Chinese action. Consequently Indian policy was reduced to nothing more than a series of *ad hoc* reactions to one point of Chinese initiative or another and also to a vague expectation that Peking, in a spasm of conscience-stricken guilt, would wake up to the error of its ways. Yet China's objectives and tactics were not too difficult to read provided one's vision were not obscured by images and complexes and inhibitions. Out of the Chinese conviction that India was more than slightly disposed towards peaceful compromise — an impression which, as has been seen, New Delhi did nothing to remove and much to confirm — sprang the further Chinese conviction that strong and relentless pressure, military and political, would hasten the Indian Government along the path towards compromise.

If New Delhi was indeed really firm about rejecting a compromise that would impinge on Indian territorial integrity it constantly gave the impression that it was not. And this impression in turn encouraged the suspicion that New Delhi

was in fact something less than firm and that its occasional declarations of a refusal to surrender were a concession to public opinion which in the course of time, it was thought, could be persuaded to calm down and accept a settlement in the interests of peace and Sino-Indian friendship. This is how the situation must have looked to observers in Peking and one of the first reliable indications of the Chinese response was available in the Nehru-Chou communique. This referred specifically to the need to avoid further clashes in the border area which should therefore be " tranquillised " on the basis of the *de facto* situation. Consequently the victim of aggression was to agree with the aggressor who remained on the territory he had seized to refrain from any action that might shatter the " tranquillity " which was considered desirable.

The Chinese forces would consolidate and New Delhi would avoid sending patrols into its own territory so that a crisis could be prevented. Thereafter this " tranquillity " was exploited by Peking by propagating the advantages of a peaceful settlement in the calculation that meanwhile New Delhi would succeed in lulling Indian public opinion into complacent reasonableness. Peking therefore combined threats of more action with offers of peace and New Delhi, on its part, caught between its inclination to settle and the difficulty of doing so continued to dither ineffectively.

The ancient Chinese classical books on the art of war prescribe that when the enemy is hard pressed in a fort or castle or is surrounded it should be allowed one but only one avenue of escape. If this avenue is blocked and denied to the enemy the only alternative it will have is to fight with desperate fanaticism which benefits neither the defenders nor the attackers. Conversely if one escape route is available and the enemy is subjected to intense and relentless pressure the probability is that the escape route will be taken to the advantage of both parties, with the defenders escaping and the attackers triumphant. The " escape route " which Chou En-lai has constantly offered India is negotiation and compromise that will leave the Chinese what they immediately require — a formal and permanent recognition of Peking's right to the territory it has seized in Ladakh.

It followed that the Chinese would be encouraged in these tactics by every Indian indication of a willingness to compromise and negotiate and proportionately of an unwillingness to react resolutely in a spirit of defiance. The substance of what one minority group of critics in India has been saying is that such resoluteness consistently and steadfastly displayed would have been not only fully consistent with non-alignment but would have also impelled the Chinese to reconsider their tactics. The Chinese are a realistic as also a resilient people with a vast capacity for adapting themselves to actualities.

The actuality of Indian determination without the slightest trace of any compromise was never impressed on the Chinese mind and it is to this fundamental weakness that Peking reacted with characteristic ruthlessness. If all the things that were said about negotiations and peace had not been said, if Mr. Chou En-lai had not been welcomed in New Delhi, if the aggression had not been dismissed as an " incursion," if the crisis had not been soft-pedalled in every way, if Mr. R. K. Nehru had not paid " courtesy calls " in Peking, if the Prime Minister and Mr. Krishna Menon had not constantly appeared almost to apologise for the Chinese and if we had refused to " tranquillise " the border and sent in whatever patrols were available deliberately to keep the border " alive," the Chinese would have been convinced that there was no possibility of India's taking the " escape route."

Here New Delhi's answer was that the alternative was a major war and New Delhi, indeed, accused its critics of advocating such an aggressive war. This was an innocent or deliberate distortion of the critics' point of view. A critic, mindful of Chinese psychology and of how it was reacting to New Delhi's indeterminacy, would suggest stronger action. He would thereupon be denounced as a warmonger and a representative of " vested interests." Shortly afterwards a White Paper would be issued containing a detailed picture of Chinese villainy and this would be followed by a chorus of indignation and the triumphant claim that Chinese duplicity had been finally " proved." This duplicity was evident from the earliest days of the crisis but did not deter Ministers from constantly advising the people that Chinese perfidy could no longer be doubted.

Except for a minority of communists the entire country was without doubters of any kind but New Delhi continued to preoccupy itself, in between references to negotiations and the morality of peace, with " proving " on the basis of documentary evidence what had already been proved by Chinese action itself. It was evident that Government was not living up to the implications of its own White Papers and the general trend of official speeches was to emphasise the so-called cultural and historical relations between India and China rather than to suggest that the Papers were the basis on which a new policy should be formulated.

The alternative to New Delhi's policy, such as it was, was not and is not war. A vast number of things could have been done between these two extremes but the unquestioning assumption that the only available alternative was war failed to take into account the Chinese attitude towards the crisis. What was there to suggest even remotely that the Chinese were willing to undertake and were prepared for total war? On the contrary what could clearly be seen without unnecessary speculation was China's desire to settle for Ladakh and that everything else was designed — the threats, conciliatory gestures and diplomatic moves — to realise this objective. It is a purely limited objective and has nothing to do with any long-term grand strategy Peking may nourish for the final subjugation of India. This being so there was and there is even now no question of a major war and by constantly reiterating this as the alternative, New Delhi was either completely deceived or was attempting before September 8, 1962 to restrain public opinion and confound its critics.

Some misguided critics did appear to advocate war. But those who did not and had many other pertinent things to say were either ignored or were considered to have been effectively answered. The Opposition in Parliament often spoke in many different voices and although the points of criticism were sometimes similar or identical they were inspired by motives that varied according to party lines. The Prime Minister was able, excellent parliamentarian and democrat as he was, to ride the storm without any basic deviation from his policy of " restraining " public opinion while responding to it within the limits of his sense of discretion. Mr. Nehru

added for good measure that a " major conflict between India and China for the possession of ' a few mountain peaks even if the peaks are beautiful ' " would be disastrous and he continued to maintain that all that had happened was not a " precursor of anything more serious." " Petty " incursions had occurred but this was nothing extraordinary " as there was no demarcation of the border in certain areas." Subsequently a nation-wide quibble was launched, New Delhi maintaining that in certain areas the Chinese were not in " occupation " but in " control " with the obvious intention of creating the impression that control was not as fearful as occupation.

Because Government had not equipped itself with a framework of policy to which Chinese initiative could be referred and from which an immediate and consistent response could be derived, New Delhi was in effect blindly groping forward along a path of which it had no knowledge. For this reason every communication from the Chinese was assessed out of context for itself alone and considerable importance was attached to its " tone." By such intangibles was New Delhi's mood and actions and calculations swayed in one direction or another. From time to time the Chinese " tone " was said to be aggressive, friendly, conciliatory, moderate and so on — clutching at straws in the absence of a well-formulated point of view.

Meanwhile Chinese tactics were becoming progressively less obscure. Early in 1960 Peking tentatively offered a settlement on the basis of what it described as " the historical background and the present actual situation " which could be and was interpreted as a willingness by China to extend some kind of recognition to the McMahon Line provided New Delhi wrote off the territory lost in Ladakh. It was a kind of bargain which the Chinese had reason to think could be acceptable to New Delhi and if their calculations were frustrated the reason lay in their ignorant underestimation of the role of the Indian press and public opinion. New Delhi was far from convinced that uncompromising firmness was the real answer but it was also aware that it could not afford to compromise. When therefore Mr. Chou En-lai's tempting baits were refused the Chinese reiterated a threat at which they had earlier hinted

— to advance south of the McMahon Line. This was the great and compelling pressure which Peking had held in reserve in the hope that Indian public opinion would relapse into complacency and thereby enable New Delhi to arrive at a " realistic " settlement. No one obviously in the External Affairs and Defence Ministries in New Delhi looked ahead in terms of what appeared to be Chinese tactics and the probable development to which they appeared to be leading. In 1959 itself Mr. Chou En-lai obligingly clarified what he had in mind when he claimed 60,000 square miles south of the McMahon Line incorporating NEFA and substantial areas of Assam. New Delhi, of course, declared emphatically that the McMahon Line would be defended but this was unaccompanied by any specific action to convince the Chinese that the Indian Government meant what it said. This declaration, it can now be seen, was made in the belief that such defence was in any case unnecessary since it was further believed that the Chinese had no intention of creating serious trouble in NEFA. The Prime Minister expressed the view that he did not anticipate " any further serious border developments that might lead to a clash." It was claimed that NEFA was adequately protected and that the Indian forces enjoyed definite logistic and other advantages that would enable them to repel a Chinese attack. It was absurd, New Delhi said, to " rush at each other's throat for two miles of mountainous territory where no one lives." What was unfortunate and which both the Prime Minister and Mr. Krishna Menon deplored was that the Chinese notes were " impolitely " worded.

Puzzled or disappointed by New Delhi's inability or reluctance to accept the " escape route " the Chinese nevertheless pressed forward with the tactics from which they have still not deviated. A massive attack on NEFA, more serious than any attempted hitherto in Ladakh, it was reasoned, could add considerably to the pressure to which New Delhi had been subjected over the years. According to the Indian concept of non-alignment and the image of itself it had created — the Chinese reasoned — Mr. Nehru would find it difficult firstly, to resist and secondly, to seek aid from the West. Resistance, moreover, would involve a drastic modification of the Plan and according to New Delhi's own terms seriously jeopardise

the non-alignment policy and cause widespread political and economic dislocation.

It is here that the role of the Soviet Union in the Sino-Indian dispute becomes particularly relevant and revealing. Russian forbearance over the years in refusing to support China and in obliquely indicating its sympathy for India was interpreted in New Delhi as another triumph for its policy and, by international opinion generally, as one aspect of the ideological differences between Moscow and Peking. Whereas New Delhi's interpretation was tragically incorrect — the policy of neutrality and avoidance of the cold war was responsible, it was argued, for Russia's negatively helpful attitude — the other and more general interpretation was incomplete. The Soviet desire that there should be no major conflict between China and India was and is fully shared by Peking. Peking's objective is the limited political one of a negotiated settlement with the strategically important areas of Ladakh, totalling approximately 16,000 square miles, firmly in its control. If this could be achieved — and the Chinese appeared confident of achieving it — there was no reason to anticipate either a prolonged crisis or a rapid deterioration of Sino-Indian relations.

This was reinforced by the evident partiality in New Delhi for negotiations and for a policy at all costs of maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union and through its supposed good offices of restoring peaceful relations with China itself, thereby saving India's "image" and New Delhi's concept of non-alignment. Later Mr. Krishna Menon was to say that among the things that needed to be saved and for which Sino-Indian friendship was essential was socialism and the socialistic way of life.

Clearly the cards were favourable, as the Chinese saw it, for a major and drastic deployment of new pressure on the Indian Government. It is as such pressure, with this specific motive, that the Chinese troops invaded NEFA in force. This pressure, it was planned, would be accompanied by an appropriate diplomatic manoeuvre. The Soviet Union had stood all these years at the sidelines implying that its good offices were always available and thereby keeping alive New Delhi's hopes that a settlement would finally be possible. Having

Moscow available in this role was a distinct advantage to Peking although the Soviet Union might not have been entirely happy over the single-mindedness with which the Chinese were increasing the pressure from one stage of the crisis to the next. When therefore the NEFA invasion occurred the Soviet Union reasoned, as the Chinese had earlier done, that by increasing India's sense of helplessness New Delhi would be compelled to take the " escape route." In this sense Soviet pressure was added to that of the Chinese, and Russian diplomatic activity in New Delhi was a reflection of Mr. Khrushchev's anxiety that India should accept what was presented as the only remaining alternative. It was also a reflection of the Soviet fear that India would not only reject the " escape route " but would — contrary to all the evidence which New Delhi itself had provided — accept the other alternative of seeking aid from the West.

To New Delhi's embarrassment China was able successfully to mobilise the Bandung-Belgrade powers under President Nasser's leadership in favour of a negotiated settlement. It was able to do this all the more easily in that most of these powers were under the impression —thanks again to India's " image " — that peaceful negotiations on the basis of compromise were precisely what New Delhi itself would wish. Nevertheless even at this late stage New Delhi remained true to form and the response to the Chinese challenge in NEFA was rather more confused than it would in any case have been because of the absence abroad of Mr. Nehru. In the event the confusion was compounded by the shocking state of military unpreparedness in a sector where the Indian people had been assured all the necessary measures had been taken. Mr. Krishna Menon had promised that he would not " expose a single soldier to undue risk without properly preparing for it." Yet as the Chinese penetrated into NEFA and it was daily becoming evident that the Indian forces were suffering, for no fault of their own, serious reverses, Mr. Krishna Menon considered it desirable to leave his post in New Delhi and inform an audience in Bombay approximately 700 miles away that the arrangements in NEFA " were found to be inadequate by later events." He thereafter made much of the fact that China had " apparently " prepared for this aggression over a long period. He

was willing to disclose that he as the Defence Minister nursed a grievance against the Chinese for having so naughtily prepared for the invasion while talking of peace. Nowhere in this was there the slightest trace of an acknowledgement that his personal responsibility for the arrangements that were subsequently " found to be inadequate " was an extremely serious one.

Mr. Nehru, on his part, was rather more honest in conceding that the Chinese " had all the time led us to believe that they had agreed to the McMahon Line as the border." In Bombay as well as earlier in Delhi Mr. Menon's view was that the " socialist society " was at stake, implying to the astonishment of the nation, that Indian socialism and democracy depended upon the " goodwill " that was essential between the peoples of India and China. Even by September 17 the full measure of the crisis had not been comprehended. Mr. Nehru was away in Ceylon presumably fortified by assurances from the Defence Ministry that all was well and by Mr. Menon's promise that Indian troops would actually open fire " if necessary." When the truth of India's military weakness could no longer be hidden Mr. Nehru finally acknowledged — although he could not resist associating the entire nation with New Delhi's past folly — that " we " had been living " in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation." As though to deprive the critic of his sting New Delhi immediately acknowledged its failures and errors with the implication, of course, that everyone and not simply New Delhi alone was guilty. Henceforth, it was suggested, the Government would be fully alive to the " new realities " but it was sadly evident that the " awakening " to these realities was yet incomplete. Bewildered and possibly shattered by a development which the sheerest novice in world affairs could have foreseen. New Delhi again thoroughly misinterpreted Chinese motives by declaring a national emergency and creating an atmosphere of total war. What had been apologetically dismissed as " an incursion " had graduated, according to this fantasy, into a major invasion. The proposal was made on all sides that there should be no " recriminations " and that this was not the time for a *post mortem*. Whereas earlier the people were told not to get excited because what the Chinese were doing was not very serious they

were now asked not to criticise and to forget past errors because what faced them was a major war.

National unity, discipline and sacrifice were emphasised by the very Ministers that had brought the country to this pass and the people's wholehearted response has been one of the few extremely encouraging and confidence-inspiring factors of the present situation. A more cautious and realistic estimate of Chinese tactics with a reasonable degree of military preparedness would not have required the declaration of a national emergency. The areas the Chinese had seized in NEFA are as territory meaningful only to the extent that they can serve as a base for a deeper penetration into the subcontinent. Since the Chinese objective is the limited one of a political compromise settlement for Ladakh the seizure of border territory was basically a political move calculated to increase the pressure on New Delhi. The sudden application of such pressure and the equally sudden withdrawal of pressure was, as India should have learnt by now, characteristically Chinese. All the factors that may be reasonably deduced from a careful reading of Chinese motives and tactics reinforce the view that the Chinese NEFA invasion was a kind of shock treatment, applying an incredible degree of pressure, thereby creating confusion, bewilderment and embarrassment, to be followed by an equally abrupt withdrawal of pressure at a moment of China's choice. The excessive psychological mobilisation of the country and conditioning it to what is described as a major war will leave it unprepared, as also New Delhi itself, for what the Chinese may attempt to do. Since the invasion in terms of pressure has not yielded results the abrupt withdrawal of forces when India has been keyed up to the pitch to offer total and prolonged resistance could be enormously rewarding for Peking. Mr. Nehru is still a genuine man of peace. There is still a reluctance to accept aid from the West, there is the fear that the Plan will be seriously compromised, that the socialistic pattern of society will not be achieved and also the feeling that the economic and political consequences of a sustained crisis will be beyond New Delhi's control. The Soviet Union, though somewhat suspect, is still available as a friendly mediator and the major western powers, however friendly disposed, would not consider a settlement

unwelcome if only as a step towards a larger *rapprochement* between the communist and non-communist worlds. The situation will therefore be heavily stacked in favour of a peaceful compromise even perhaps involving some concession of Indian territory.

It is at this point that Mr. Nehru must decide, in comparative isolation, calling upon all his resources of courage and determination, once and for all to confound Chinese tactics and impress on Peking India's complete and unconditional refusal to discuss the problem until the Chinese aggression is entirely vacated in all sectors. That Peking will be unlikely to surrender its areas of control in Ladakh only confirms what should have been obvious from the beginning — that India must adjust itself to an indefinite period of tension in the north, a waiting game at which the Chinese are adept and at which India must also become equally adept. Anything else will confirm Peking in its present tactics and beliefs, and encourage it in its policy of probing every Indian weakness with unrelenting diplomatic and military pressure.

Critics In Disarray

WHAT can usefully be said about the Lok Sabha debate on the Colombo proposals? Mr. Nehru was very much more coherent and restrained than he is on occasions of this sort. The Opposition, on its part, was weighed down with an obsessive suspicion — with no rational considerations to support it — that New Delhi's policy is in substance if not in appearance one of undiluted appeasement. This is obviously in part a carry-over from the recent past when New Delhi could legitimately be charged with failing to meet the Chinese challenge with the determination it required. In part also it derives from a national indignation that cannot be easily placated but which also tends to obscure the facts as they really are. Suspicion and indignation have their uses in a debate but not to the point where they do not require a sizing of common sense and reason. In the event the Opposition failed both within and outside Parliament to probe Mr. Nehru's policy at some of its weakest points.

There appears to be in the first place a remarkable unawareness of the need to adapt tactics both to a changing situation and to those limitations that are not the less real for not being explicitly acknowledged. What was appropriate before September 8, 1962, need not necessarily be and probably is not relevant today. If New Delhi's policy is to stand firm, as it undoubtedly is, the manner in which this is to be done will vary from one situation to another. This failure to relate tactics to a given situation is responsible for the unreality and emptiness of much that Mr. Nehru's critics have had to say.

So far as can be gathered from the slogans, declarations and indignations on which the Opposition has placed its case its demand is simply that New Delhi should not negotiate anything, including a formal cease-fire. By implication it is suggested that generous western aid will enable India not only to reoccupy the areas vacated by the Chinese withdrawal but also to recover the lost territories in Ladakh. This is the demand so virulently expounded by those who innocently fail to see that a policy, however desirable, cannot operate in a vacuum.

Certainly no one will fail to applaud if territory can be recovered and the Chinese can be expelled but simply to emphasise this need is neither a policy nor a valid criticism of what Mr. Nehru proposes to do. It does seem that these critics have very characteristically forgotten or ignored two rather unpalatable truths. These are firstly, that there is neither the fact nor the promise of generous western aid and, secondly, that the Indian Army suffered extremely serious reverses in NEFA from which it needs every opportunity to recover. Both these truths are plain for everyone to see and it is extraordinary that those who made so much — and quite rightly — of the military reverses in NEFA should now choose to ignore their implications. It is no less remarkable also that those who presumably regard western military aid as a solvent of all our troubles have failed to realise that it is not as easily available as they light-heartedly assume.

Can they be so singularly naive as to suppose that New Delhi has simply to whistle up aid from a West eager and prepared to provide all the military assistance for which it is asked? This concept is quite out of date valid though it may have been in Mr. Dulles's day when western military aid was a major instrument of U.S. foreign policy.

Mr. Nehru's critics who think otherwise and fondly suppose that they are " pro-western " may find that they are out of step with Washington itself. New Delhi realised this when the western powers did not respond as expected to the rather exaggerated shopping list it submitted during the unnerving period of the NEFA crisis. The Opposition in contrast remains outdated, living in a world that no longer exists and which pays no attention to such terribly significant developments as the Sino-Soviet rift, the increasing Soviet partiality for co-existence, the corresponding American desire to come to terms with the communist bloc on the basis of mutual strength, and the recognition that in this context non-alignment has a special validity of its own. These factors together add up to a global wind of change which is beginning to blow away the mildewed concepts and suppositions of the cold war.

The Sino-Indian dispute and the manner in which it is to be resolved cannot remain unaffected by and isolated from these developments. Mr. Galbraith was, therefore, impelled to say

that his Government would not regard negotiations with the Chinese as unwelcome provided these could be arranged consistently with India's rights and interests. At the no less inhibiting level of the nation's military limitations the same conclusion is reinforced. India cannot at least for another three years undertake any military campaign with absolute confidence. What is certain — and here there is sufficient reason to be thankful for western generosity — is that western military aid will be available in a crisis with the clearly restricted objective of holding the Chinese should they be so misguided as to launch another massive invasion. This according to the western estimate is unlikely but the insurance against any repetition of the NEFA reverses has been considerably strengthened. More than this India has neither the right nor the reason to expect or demand.

Western assurances of aid in a crisis and the proposed cease-fire, therefore, enable New Delhi to gain the time so essential for all that needs to be done. There is a promise of this in the Colombo proposals which cannot probably at the present time be bettered from the Indian point of view. They will enable Indian troops — if New Delhi chooses to exercise its right — to advance right up to the McMahon Line with the exception of Longju and the Thagla Ridge area. These two points can either be demilitarised or be occupied by civilian administrators from either or both parties. In the middle sector the *status quo* will remain with Peking committed to a cease-fire it can ill afford to ignore. In Ladakh a Chinese withdrawal of 20 kilometres will make possible both demilitarisation and disengagement and the establishment of civilian posts, Indian and Chinese. Peking's objections are that Indian forces in NEFA should not advance to the McMahon Line despite the Chinese withdrawal and that in Ladakh the area of disengagement should be administered exclusively by Chinese civilians. These clearly are bargaining points the importance of which should not be exaggerated. It is customary practice for the Chinese to drive a hard bargain and to create the impression of concessions even in a manoeuvre that is as much in their interest as in that of New Delhi.

A basic right cannot be compromised or surrendered. That is policy and here the Opposition and Mr. Nehru are in complete

agreement. When and how it should be asserted is tactics which in turn must be related to the current situation and its limitations. It is slightly less than moronic to condemn the Colombo powers when they proved to be so extremely helpful and simply because they would and could not denounce Peking as an aggressor. China's obstructive tactics over the cease-fire are probably designed to create the impression that the few remaining difficulties can be removed by direct negotiations between New Delhi and Peking without the mediation of the Colombo group. New Delhi's answer should be, and indeed appears to be, that the Colombo powers must be associated with every stage of the negotiations for a cease-fire. Nothing could gladden Chinese hearts more than a tendency in this country to criticise the Colombo group and reject its good auspices.

The conditions are, therefore, more than promising for a deliberately controlled and time-consuming process of negotiations for a cease-fire and the reduction of tensions. It does not follow that negotiations on the substantive issue are inevitable or necessary. Does Mr. Nehru think so? It is on this point that the Opposition could have undertaken some useful probing if only to obtain clarification of New Delhi's intentions after a formal cease-fire has been achieved. Indian determination has been impressed on the Chinese mind but it needs to be further reinforced by evidence of a categorical Indian refusal to negotiate away Indian territory. On this point Mr. Nehru appears to be as adamant as his critics would wish him to be but the Chinese as well as his critics require to be firmly persuaded that a cease-fire is not a prelude to a compromise settlement. However, for the time being at least New Delhi can legitimately lay claim to the support and encouragement of Indian public opinion.

Saying It With Maps

ONE of the extraordinary offshoots of the NEFA crisis is an increasing preoccupation with publicity by officials and non-officials alike. It is in part inspired by the conviction that New Delhi's political failures were in turn and in some measure due to a failure in public relations. Governments and foreign opinion were not appropriately sympathetic because the propaganda machine at India's disposal was inadequate and from this could be derived the comfortable implication that all or nearly all would have been well if the Indian case had been effectively publicised and explained. Hence the development of what can only be described as cartographic diplomacy which obliges every Indian diplomat and official representative to be thoroughly armed with all the relevant maps.

This is perhaps not too surprising since the genesis of the Sino-Indian dispute can be traced back to a quarrel over maps. Maps must moreover figure prominently in a difference of opinion over territory. Yet it does seem that this obsession with the maps-cum-publicity theme reflects a serious distortion in the official perspective. A problem or a crisis or a policy failure cannot be wished away or minimised by publicity however cunning or skilful. Those in New Delhi who think otherwise must be credited with the sincerity with which they express their point of view but the impression they consequently create — that New Delhi's China policy was and is sound if only it had been adequately explained — is a disastrous one.

Knowingly or otherwise this tribe of publicity experts has caused an extremely delectable red herring to cross the path of Indian public opinion. This particular herring is seemingly all the more convincing in that Indian publicity has been weak, ineffective and inefficient. The flaw lies in supposing that in this lay the primary cause of our diplomatic discomfiture and in further implying that policy errors were of comparatively minor importance. The temptation to develop this line of thought to the conclusion that the Indian case is simply a matter of maps and documentary evidence must be firmly

resisted. This fallacy has played too dominating a part in New Delhi's policy and was responsible among other things for the experts' report on the border dispute — a voluminous compendium of historical and cartographical material that can never be effective either as propaganda or as policy. Certainly the right maps and information should be available if and when they are required and India's publicity representatives abroad must be given every facility to function efficiently within their limited sphere. Whatever defects there are can be quietly removed since the problem is primarily one of organisation. Yet the fuss that has been created over public relations is out of all proportion with their real value and — this is surely the main point — threatens to obscure the otherwise obvious truth that effective publicity derives from effective policy.

Is it seriously suggested that the reactions of the East European countries or of South-East Asia would have been far more helpful than they are if New Delhi's publicity problems had been more competently handled? Is it also suggested that if Peking's lies and distortions are exposed for what they are international opinion will immediately endorse the Indian case? The supposition here appears to be that the frontier dispute and Peking's proposals are so complicated that the clarification of what is supposed to be obscure is the main objective of Indian policy. This is surely singularly naive since it is more reasonable to assume that the majority of governments who find it necessary to react to the Sino-Indian dispute will do so on the basis of their own expert opinion. Maps, however beautifully coloured or competently executed with every relevant detail, cannot transform critics into friends or materially alter the policies of other governments. Otherwise the business of diplomacy could be transferred entirely to the public relations officer.

According to the Chairman of the Communist party the governments of the East European countries would have better appreciated the Indian case if publicity had been energetically pursued. According to the Minister of State for External Affairs " misunderstanding " in South-East Asia has been removed with the " aid of maps ". And according to the Indian High Commissioner in London British public opinion has been inadequately served by New Delhi's publicity system. Surely

the implications of these statements — apparently endorsed by a wide variety of opinion in this country — need to be seriously challenged. In the first place foreign opinion in a given crisis cannot be substantially influenced by the propaganda of the moment. Its attitude will be formed by the kind of image Indian policy has created of itself over many years — an image that cannot be modified or ignored or dislodged or justified overnight according to convenience.

Those who have been encouraged to believe by the image of Indian policy that this policy is pacifist, non-violent, accommodating, moralistic and virtuous will now find it difficult to reconcile so ridiculous an image with New Delhi's attitude towards the border dispute. They encountered a similar difficulty during the Goa crisis. Over the years the morally superior qualities of the non-alignment policy have been dinned into their ears until seemingly it was inconceivable to any foreigner that India would, in certain circumstances, use force to protect its own interests. Over the years also Indian spokesmen preached the moral advantages of non-entanglement to the countries of South-East Asia whose particular problems and difficulties were neither understood nor appreciated in New Delhi. No attempt was made actively to offer an alternative to the cold war and military alliances. The tendency indeed was to suppose that South-East Asia had been contaminated by SEATO and it was therefore not the responsibility of Indian diplomacy to modify this situation in any way. The thankless task of mediating between western and communist interests in this area took no account of the greater need to cultivate South-East Asia from the strictly Indian point of view. The many years of appeasement towards communist China did not, moreover, create a climate in which South-East Asia could be responsive to Indian interests when New Delhi was overwhelmed by the China crisis.

With an irony of which it was obviously unaware New Delhi then began to lecture South-East Asia on Chinese duplicity — a quite superfluous proceeding in an area which has had every reason to understand and suspect the Chinese long before New Delhi recovered from its attack of bhai-bhaism. South-East Asia is more familiar than India is with Chinese psychology, methods and ruthlessness, and no purpose can now be served

by informing the world of Chinese duplicity much as though this were a recent Indian discovery. Clearly then publicity, however otherwise efficiently managed which in this case it is not, will be at a serious disadvantage if the policy of which it is only one aspect is quite unrealistic. An intensive programme of multiplying and maintaining economic and political ties with South-East Asia can yet redress the balance but this is a matter of policy and not of maps and publicity.

There is an equally acute and accompanying need to improve the level of diplomatic representation in an area where it has been most inadequate. The scale of values by which diplomatic appointments abroad are governed in the External Affairs Ministry should be thoroughly revised so as to shatter at least the unquestioned assumption that postings in Europe and the United States are the " prizes " that recognise talent and efficiency. All will not be well by simply flourishing maps and documentary evidence since the unpalatable facts of international conduct are quite otherwise. Governmental attitudes, and this must be taken to include the Chinese, will be influenced not by explanations and arguments and patient reasoning according to the rules, but by policy and the action that flows from it. Foreign opinion and precisely that section of it which is now disillusioned may applaud the morals and principles with which New Delhi clothes the non-alignment policy. It is, however, an applause which though flattering to some egos in New Delhi does not by one whit advance the national interest.

"I'm All Right, Jack"

WHAT are the Chinese up to? Why have they not accepted — as was generally thought they would — the Colombo proposals and brought India to the negotiating table? These are questions to which no easy answer is available but this does not surely mean that it is simply a matter of open speculation and fearful prediction. Mr. Nehru has implied in so many words that what the Chinese will do is anyone's guess and Mr. Chavan, rather more confidently, anticipates a second major Chinese attack. Between these extremes of refusing conjecture and expecting the worst there is room for an assessment of probabilities. It is no business of the External Affairs Ministry to base its policies on predictions with or without the aid of the stars. Intelligent anticipation, however, is essential to meaningful policy and is certainly far more beneficial than a reluctance to look into the immediate future.

When the Prime Minister argued recently that the Chinese are in a dilemma in that if they reject the Colombo proposals they will be " in the wrong " and if they accept them it will be " to their disadvantage " there was in his attitude more than a trace of rather disturbing complacency. Having supposedly gratified the Colombo powers by accepting their recommendations *in toto* is New Delhi under the impression that it has achieved a diplomatic triumph? There is here something that resembles an I'm all right Jack attitude which in the circumstances is disastrously inapt. The Defence Minister's assumption that the Chinese will return is an excellent one in so far as, in military affairs, it is always wise to expect the worst. It is not, on the other hand, an acceptable basis for policy and is as questionable as Mr. Nehru's supposition that the Chinese have been confounded.

Bearing in mind the logic of what the Chinese have attempted to do why have they not accepted the Colombo plan? Peking's objections to both the plan and the clarifications which New Delhi subsequently obtained are frivolous and insubstantial. In Ladakh China claims the exclusive right to maintain

civilian posts in the area vacated by its 20-kilometre withdrawal. India insists and the Colombo group agrees that this right should be shared by both parties. In NEFA Peking opposes any advance by Indian forces to the McMahon Line and reserves Longju and the Thagla Ridge area for settlement by direct negotiations. New Delhi naturally finds any restriction on its right to reoccupy vacated territory in NEFA quite unacceptable. There is nothing in these differences that reflects a basic clash of interests: Indian civilian posts in the vacated area in Ladakh is a minor concession which the Chinese can easily afford and a clear recognition of India's right to reoccupy territory in NEFA does not necessarily mean that this right will be immediately exercised. China's non-co-operation, therefore, cannot be convincingly explained in terms of cease-fire differences that are insignificant and can be resolved without hesitation.

There are three courses open to the Chinese in the present situation. Firstly, to play along indefinitely with the current stalemate. Secondly, to return in force in an attempt to "chastise" India. Thirdly, to accept the Colombo proposals and pursue its objectives across the negotiating table. These alternatives do not give Peking as generous a latitude as might superficially appear. Peking today can have absolutely nothing to gain by returning in force and committing itself to another campaign for which there is no rational military objective. How far and to what purpose will the Chinese forces penetrate into India? The only conceivable political objective — that of pressuring New Delhi into compromise negotiations — can now be seen to be thoroughly untenable. Soviet disapproval and the near certainty of generous western aid in an emergency as also the realisation that military pressure will only increase India's determination to resist — these together are a compelling argument against another major offensive.

The assumption that China did what it did to demonstrate its strength and drive India into the western camp and thereby expose its non-alignment policy as a sham does not accord with the facts and ascribes to Peking the motives and behaviour of an adolescent. China's military strength was most unmistakably demonstrated long before the NEFA invasion and as for the claim that Peking committed thousands of troops in a

strenuous campaign simply to discredit non-alignment it just does not ring true. Over the years during the Menon-Nehru period China encouraged and perpetuated the concept of non-alignment from which it derived the five principles of *panchshila.*

If, moreover, India had been written off as an imperialist stooge, why should Peking attempt at such enormous cost and effort, to transform *de facto* into *de jure* control of the territory it has seized in Ladakh? Having taken what it wanted there was from this point of view nothing more to be done. Yet Peking was willing to go to enormous lengths to bring about a *de jure* settlement. How else can this be explained except in terms of a Chinese desire to normalise relations with India and recover the goodwill and friendship it has lost. The question then remains why, if this is so, Peking remains seemingly reluctant to approach the negotiating table. One possible answer surely is that negotiations under the Colombo plan will be quite different from those which the Chinese hoped to achieve when they invaded NEFA. When India unexpectedly asked for and received western aid, when Indian opinion asserted itself with vigour and determination, when contrary to expectations in China and elsewhere non-alignment was successfully reconciled with military resistance Peking must have realised that military pressure was no longer an effective political weapon.

Instead of negotiations with a broken and harassed India the only kind of negotiations that became possible were those from which Peking could not expect to extract any substantial benefit. Mr. Nehru and other official spokesmen said nothing to encourage the illusion in Peking that the cease-fire talks would lead inevitably to compromise negotiations on the substantive issue of the dispute itself. New Delhi has hinted that the final stage of substantive talks may never be reached and that in the meanwhile India reserves the right to use force and strengthen its army. To whom are these remarks being addressed? To the Chinese or to Mr. Nehru's critics? If to the critics the entire purpose of New Delhi's internal policy is to placate the opposition by suggesting that a formal cease-fire and negotiations for the reduction of tensions will not lead to any kind of concession or compromise and calculating, at the same time,

that as time passes Indian opinion will be less uncompromising on the question of some kind of territorial adjustments in Ladakh. If the insistence that India will not compromise is aimed at the Chinese they will have ample reason to question the usefulness, as they see it, of negotiations under the Colombo plan. Hence their tentative acceptance in principle of the plan and a reluctance to reveal their hand at the present time.

Whatever Mr. Nehru's shortcomings in the past he has, possibly without being aware of it, acquired a certain unpredictability which if it puzzles his fellow citizens is equally bewildering to the Chinese. On balance the probability is that Peking will agree to negotiations in the conviction that, whatever Mr. Nehru's intentions, these negotiations can be graduated by easy stages into talks on the substantive issue. The Prime Minister sometimes appears to believe that cease-fire negotiations must necessarily be followed by substantive talks which, however, is not consistent with the categorical assertions of an Indian refusal under any circumstances to accept anything less than the total evacuation of the Chinese from Ladakh. Is the latter for home consumption only? China does not know and neither do we. The tendency to sit back, therefore, and say we're all right Jack simply because New Delhi has accepted something which Peking has not and international opinion is not unsympathetic is to invite further complications. A clarification of its own intentions, an assessment of Peking's reactions and a rational look into the future will better equip New Delhi for the moment when Peking abruptly agrees to negotiate.

Ferment In S.-E. Asia

A POLICY, if it is all that it should be, contains within itself the terms in which it responds to a given situation. Mr. Nehru has often said that non-alignment reacts " on merits ", presumably meaning that New Delhi will not be influenced by preconceptions of what should or should not be done and particularly by cold war assumptions of any kind. This was a healthy and useful principle as far as it went at a time when the cold war was the source of the world's major tensions. It was inadequate in that simple rejection of the cold war did not provide a measure against which judgments, assessments and calculations could be made. This was one reason why non-alignment, as it was practised before the China crisis, operated in a vacuum. It was visualised apparently in the role of an aloof and fiercely impartial judge, sitting on a pedestal without prejudice or commitment and allowing the evidence to present itself.

Yet the truth is surely that any policy, including non-alignment, is definitely partial and involves commitment if only because it is the business of a government to conduct its foreign policy in support of what it conceives to be the national interest. Non-alignment must therefore react, it must judge, it must assess and it must calculate — all with reference to specific national interests and objectives. Has New Delhi, chastened by its China experience, displayed any capacity to do these things? It appears not since we have before us today a rather staggering example of this kind of inadequacy.

There has been a revolt in Brunei, leftists have been arrested in Singapore, Indonesia has threatened military action, the Philippines has made certain territorial claims, the project of Malaysia faces an uncertain future, U Thant's special representative has been sent to study the situation, SEATO and the Association of South-East Asian States are sagging under the strain, and the whole of South-East Asia is seething with new forces in conflict. This region, it needs to be said without disrespect to the countries involved, is India's backyard the peace and stability of which are much to be desired. It is very

much New Delhi's business to work actively for these objectives holding nothing sacrosanct except the Indian interest. The China affair should have hammered this lesson home if nothing else but the extraordinary unresponsiveness of New Delhi suggests that its special brand of non-alignment is once again practising its famous impartiality. When Singapore's Prime Minister visited New Delhi last year he appears to have extracted some kind of an Indian approval of the Malaysia project. How approving was this approval if any and to what extent is it reflected in policy, again if at all? The country does not know and, one suspects, New Delhi does not either.

Approval or disapproval are surface responses when what is needed is something specific and purposeful. Malaysia, for better or worse, is the most meaningful development in post-war South-East Asia. If all goes well it will be born by August 31 with a population of approximately ten million under the leadership of the Malayan Prime Minister Abdul Rahman. It will consist of a federation of Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei. Obviously it cannot be said that New Delhi is being asked to react to something of passing moment irrespective of whether Malaysia, as it is presently envisaged, is finally established. The problems of South-East Asian stability, co-operation and development, and the Chinese communist threat to these, are involved. Will Malaysia be a heavy disguise for British " imperialism "? Is its entire purpose anti-communist and therefore anti-Chinese? Will the British bases in Singapore seriously qualify Malaysian independence? Does the federation offer prospects of Malayan-Chinese racial co-operation?

A simple answer may not be possible but the questions need to be asked and answered. The alternative will be — and it is one which New Delhi appears to have chosen — to ignore it all and take no part in shaping events. Here is no awareness of an obligation to decide and to act and to influence. Are we again to awaken belatedly to realities as we did after NEFA, having lived in a comfortable apathy while events and developments marched past unnoticed? Some glimmerings of a recognition of the need to cultivate South-East Asia penetrated New Delhi's bureaucratic strongholds during the China crisis but have not so far produced anything resembling a policy for

South-East Asia — a policy in which all such outmoded concepts, inhibitions and shibboleths as western imperialism, neo-colonialism and the cold war have absolutely no place.

A world in which General de Gaulle rebuffs Mr. Macmillan and shakes hands with Dr. Adenauer, in which a Canadian Government collapses because of defence policy differences with the United States, in which Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Mao Tse-tung conduct an increasingly acrimonious dialogue, in which Mr. Kennedy finds his allies far more troublesome than his ideological enemies, in which communist parties and governments denounce Peking for its aggressive policies and in which a Soviet-Western Europe *detente* is not dismissed as a fantasy — in a world such as this how can one continue to parrot about western imperialism and the cold war? Those who do have been left behind by a world rapidly moving ahead into new shapes and situations that cannot be explained in terms appropriate to a Dullesian past.

Admittedly New Delhi must walk delicately in an affair in which Indonesian and Filipino susceptibilities have been so unambiguously displayed but there are certain intractable facts that cannot be wished away. These are that with the formation of Malaysia Britain's last major colonial possessions in South-East Asia will be liquidated, that the new federation will be a factor for stability, that its possibilities will be something considerably more than as an anti-communist front, that it will be a courageous and imaginative attempt to solve the Malayan-Chinese racial problem, and that it squarely faces the possibility of western defence collaboration without prejudice to its independence. The factors of power rivalry and personal ambition and of political opportunism operate as much in South-East Asia as elsewhere and are responsible for the opposition Malaysia has encountered so far. The point is not that there is opposition since the areas involved contain a Chinese population of approximately four million many segments of which maintain rather equivocal ties with the Chinese mainland. It is rather that such opposition can be influenced or diminished by a policy that acts positively and is animated by clear objectives.

Although New Delhi is not above congratulating itself occasionally on its status and prestige in world affairs it is

curiously unable to estimate its influence at its true worth. India has the means as well as the right to make itself felt in a matter that is as much its concern as anyone else's. The fear of treading on anyone's corns is, if not contemptible, the surest way of ensuring that policy is reduced to reacting tentatively after and not before the event. It is a total surrender of responsibility under the guise of maintaining objectivity. New Delhi's policy failings are reflected in the quite unrealistic structural framework through which it operates. China, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim are under the charge of the Foreign Secretary but many of the countries of South-East Asia fall within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Secretary.

One result is that no overall policy for the entire region is possible and the problems of co-ordinating Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth considerations become insoluble. The Indian posture in Thailand has no meaningful consistency with, for example, New Delhi's posture in Burma or Indonesia. A new ferment is beginning to make itself felt throughout the entire region. Is it too much to ask of New Delhi that it firstly notices what is happening and secondly helps to shape it, to harness it and to exploit it in whatever way will serve the Indian interest?

A Leaky "Umbrella"

MR. NEHRU has said that there is no question of establishing foreign air bases in India. Mr. Galbraith has said that there is equally no question of imposing these bases or anything else on an India reluctant to accept them. This, we must hopefully presume, is the end of the " umbrella " controversy. It only now needs to be asked why this controversy ever occurred — a question that requires some kind of an answer partially because the affair has increased the area of misunderstanding in Washington but mainly because it does suggest that New Delhi's ideas on western military aid and Chinese intentions remain obscure and equivocal. The West is willing to provide aid in an emergency but is not over-eager to do so. New Delhi is willing to accept such aid without having to ask for it too clearly or to receive it in a manner that does not even remotely suggest a definite commitment. Giving and receiving could never have been so complicated in the affairs of nations and one must, therefore, consider whether this absence of definition and clarity is deliberate.

One receives the impression that in a moment of what is now considered hasty action during the NEFA crisis New Delhi asked for generous western aid and, since then, has been obliged to go through the motions of welcoming and yet not welcoming the possibility of such aid. If this has irritated U.S. opinion it has puzzled even those in this country who completely endorse Mr. Nehru's view that non-alignment should not be abandoned or modified. There appears to be broadly two reactions to the idea of western military aid — unconditional advocacy of its acceptance irrespective of whether it is available and, alternatively, a tendency to recoil at the very thought of substantial aid. The first school is conveniently labelled anti-non-alignment and the second consists of those who constantly feed on the suspicion that their political virginity is being threatened. Fortunately it is possible to have a third school which maintains that aid must be related firstly to availability and secondly to needs. It is surely as simple as

that and has nothing whatsoever to do with threatening or protecting non-alignment. Not too long ago it was hinted, if not said, that western aid was " disappointing." Yet the possibility of increased aid provokes indignation and dismay despite the fact that the possibility is at present quite theoretical. Aid that is neatly packaged and labelled available when wanted and for the asking is neither politically nor technically feasible. This explains why up to a point it is difficult to distinguish between emergency and long-term aid. The convenient assumption is that whereas the first will be politically stringless the second will not.

Having descended upon India the foreign missions will view the scene, make a mental note of what is needed, quietly withdraw, and arrange to help if necessary and when the signal is given. According to this theory aid will spring miraculously into being without any such unpleasant procedures as asking or giving or collaborating. Yet the unpalatable truth is that aid must be negotiated, arranged and justified by reference to probable needs. The point is not that there should be more or less aid but that if needed it should be clearly defined and straightforwardly received. New Delhi tends to bristle when the word " umbrella " is used but is rather more accommodating when the terms " air armada " or " air shield " are substituted. Clearly it is influenced by the very private images these words create in its mind and of which Washington is quite unaware. The political difference between an " umbrella " and a " shield " is negligible and insignificant.

The technical complexities — improvement of air fields, radar installations, maintenance facilities and a communications network — are identical in both cases and, for quite some time, will require the presence in India of foreign personnel. The alternative will be to develop the Indian Air Force at an expenditure of several hundred million dollars over many years without any assurance, even then, of reaching or passing the level of Chinese air power. In either case dependence on the West cannot be wished away and there are certain compelling political objections. It is not that foreign technical personnel in India will constitute a " base " or that non-alignment will be compromised. It is rather a question of whether such elaborate defence measures over many years over and above

what is possible by self-help within the limits of the country's economic and technical resources are essential. New Delhi's position appears to be to object to commitments that do not exist and yet to toy with the idea of a defence arrangement which, it is pretended, will not involve a very real commitment. Non-alignment will not be affected and if a defence shield is necessary foreign personnel will also be necessary and a commitment will inevitably follow. New Delhi in other words cannot have it both ways although it is trying very hard.

Everything finally hinges on what the Chinese are likely to do and how New Delhi proposes to handle the border problem. These very basic considerations cannot be separated from the overall question of what aid if any should be asked for and at what price. Washington can be believed when it says it has no interest in establishing a base or that its aid will be stringless. A commitment need not take the form of a military alliance or of political conditions. It is more subtly expressed as a special relationship and, by so strenuously appearing to protect a non-alignment that is not threatened, New Delhi has successfully deflected attention from this truth. Mr. Nehru obviously realises this fully and is, therefore, the victim of a conflict between the need to ensure air protection and the need to avoid a commitment which is far more real than the imaginary commitments New Delhi is constantly fighting.

It is a conflict that can be resolved by asking and answering the question what the Chinese intend to do. For how long are we to base our calculations on a vague anticipation of a massive Chinese attack? To be vigilant and, therefore, to be reasonably prepared is one thing. To be continuosly preparing for the worst to which there is no limit is quite another. At what point can it be said that we are prepared for the worst? A military competition with China is impracticable and absurd which means that beyond a certain stage of preparation dependence on western power is unavoidable. Whether such dependence demands elaborate defence measures — as an " umbrella " or a " shield " or an " armada " or whatever else it may be called — is entirely a political question for an answer to which New Delhi must once again study the probabilities of Chinese policy.

The West will withhold aid, give it generously or limit it according to what New Delhi asks for and to what the West

itself considers feasible and necessary. It is a two-way traffic of exchanging clear ideas and mutual adjustment. Such a healthy relationship will not be possible if " umbrella " controversies create misunderstanding and highly emotional reactions are substituted for clear thinking. A detailed and forthright explanation of the reasons for the U.S.-Commonwealth air missions would have made any controversy unnecessary. It would have deprived many of the opportunity precisely to create such a controversy. It would have avoided misunderstanding in Washington and it would have enabled Indian policy to settle somewhere at the right level between on the one hand demanding and expecting too much and on the other appearing to reject all aid while hoping it will miraculously materialise.

A policy is never inherently wrong. It is enough that it is unnecessary. The calculation of what is necessary is the process by which a policy is shaped — a process of which there is today little evidence in New Delhi. As it is there is a demand for more aid, a refusal to accept it, a suspicion of any aid, a willingness to accept it, a reluctance to ask for it and an inability to decide if it is necessary. It is once more an example of the type of dithering and drifting that has already cost us so much.

Where Is The Goal?

ONE of Peking's minor successes in its encounter with New Delhi is the skill with which it has impelled the Indian Government almost to reduce its policy to a kind of guessing game. Will the Chinese attack in spring? Will this attack be a major one or will it be confined to shallow penetrations along the order? Is it Peking's intention to "humiliate" India or simply to pressurise New Delhi into negotiating a *de jure* settlement for Ladakh? These are questions that continue to be asked and if some of the available answers are wilder than the rest Mr. Nehru's reaction is also not particularly helpful. When Mr. Nehru confesses that he cannot "say what the Chinese motives are in not accepting the Colombo proposals" it obviously does not mean that he has failed to consider the probable alternatives of Chinese action. His refusal to commit himself is not surprising since the consequences of dogmatically assuming China's *bona fides* are still with us. As a politician, quite apart from his role as the nation's leader, he cannot afford to risk another assumption that is liable to be disproved overnight.

Another reason, of course, is that the Prime Minister, like the majority of us, honestly does not know what the future holds. There is an irreducible minimum of the unknown in relation to any political problem and this applies as much to the question of Chinese motives as to any other. The point is not so much that the China affair is particularly bewildering as that it is no more bewildering than any similar problem involving relations with an aggressive neighbour. New Delhi therefore cannot claim any special indulgence because "enigmatic" China is the source of its troubles. In other words simply to declare that China's motives cannot be known, that we can only guess and that consequently it is safer to expect the worst is to display a dangerous sense of purposelessness.

Is such negativism all that New Delhi is capable of in an emergency about which it constantly reminds the people? If this were, indeed, a legitimate posture governments need not burden themselves with a foreign policy beyond presupposing

and preparing for the worst. This is, in a sense, a variation of the earlier tendency — during the days of Mr. Krishna Menon — of assuming the best and not preparing. The one is as undesirable as the other in that both involve a suspension of one's critical faculties and therefore an evasion of the responsibility to define one's objectives. It is not enough to be prepared for whatever the Chinese might do. Such vigilance must be accompanied by a vigorously constructive and positive outlook with a particular goal in view.

What is the goal of New Delhi's China policy? Simply to resist China militarily? Unconditionally to regain the lost territories in Ladakh? To restore good relations with Peking without a compromise? To reject any possibility of an understanding and therefore to reconcile ourselves to an indefinite period of hostility? Although India has lived with the China problem for so many years and it has suffered the shock of the NEFA reverses no clear answer to these questions has emerged. If we are to be " tough " are we economically capable of it and is such toughness the most effective answer we can offer to the Chinese challenge? It is possible, though rather unlikely, that these questions are being debated in New Delhi and that Mr. Nehru's references to the possibility of another Chinese attack are an attempt to encourage a sense of emergency. If so there is here a colossal and a disastrous underestimation of the national intelligence.

Public opinion, particularly after NEFA, does not require to be mollycoddled in this fashion by a Government not entirely guiltless of unjustified complacency in the past. It is rather ridiculous to base an entire nation's morale on an anticipation of another major Chinese attack and that this possibility should be constantly emphasised by Government speakers without any rational justification to support it. The implication, of course, is that if the expected attack does not materialise morale will correspondingly suffer. The equation is unreal and unconvincing and yet it is one that New Delhi is attempting to establish. There cannot, on the other hand, be a more reliable basis for morale than a policy inspired by specific objectives. If the Chinese attack the nation will resist to the best of its ability and preparations to that end are being made. But this is not the limit of New Delhi's responsibilities. The nation and therefore

the Government must be equally prepared for a military attack that does not come — a sort of attack in being that can be sometimes far more damaging than an actual invasion. Yet by repeatedly stressing the Chinese military threat New Delhi has deflected the nation's attention and perhaps its own from the equal and perhaps greater possibility of a Chinese diplomatic offensive.

Friendly western powers can provide the weapons to enable us to resist an invasion. They cannot provide us with the means with which to fight a diplomatic campaign. Yet all the evidence that is available suggests that New Delhi's manoeuvre of supposedly placing China in a position of having to accept something which it is reluctant to accept and therefore will not accept is liable to misfire. Peking's refusal so far to accept the Colombo proposals does not mean that there is anything in these proposals inconsistent with Peking's interests. The supposition in New Delhi that there is nothing more than that is responsible for the almost complacent belief that Peking has been entrapped in a dilemma.

According to this theory India will benefit since a Chinese rejection of the Colombo proposals will place Peking in the wrong and alternatively an acceptance *in toto* will be a triumph of Indian diplomacy. This is unconvincing in that the dilemma is quite unreal. Peking today can, any time it considers it advisable to do so, accept the Colombo proposals *in toto* without any damage to its interests and with the further advantage of being able to represent such acceptance as a major concession to peace. The initiative, as before, lies with the Chinese but not necessarily the advantage provided New Delhi prepares itself and the nation for the dangers of diplomatic negotiation. Liu Shao-chi's recent speech, the behaviour of the Chinese delegation at Moshi, Peking's decision not to establish civilian posts in certain frontier areas, hang together as one consistent trend towards the negotiating table and an avoidance of any major military entanglement. When India was fully prepared for negotiations China used force. When India today is equally fully prepared for force there is every likelihood of China using the methods of negotiation.

Hence the meticulous thoroughness with which the Chinese have conducted their withdrawal, the extraordinarily mild

reaction of the Chinese delegation at Moshi to the rather overdone tactics of India's non-official representatives, and the almost frivolous and insubstantial objections to the Colombo proposals — so-called objections that can disappear overnight and confront India with the rather unsettling prospect of prolonged negotiations. The two points of difference between the Colombo plan and the Chinese attitude are that in NEFA Indian forces should not advance to the McMahon Line and in Ladakh India should refrain from setting up either civil or military posts in the areas evacuated by the Chinese troops.

Both are insignificant since in NEFA India has at present neither the need nor the means to advance up to the McMahon Line and simply retains a right to do so which — as Peking is aware — New Delhi will not exercise for quite some time. In Ladakh a number of Indian civil posts will not seriously threaten Peking's supposed interests in this area which therefore means that far from having rejected the Colombo proposals Peking is poised at the extreme edge of accepting them. New Delhi's insurance against the dangers of negotiation is the feeble self-assurance that negotiations can be divided into three neat stages — for a formal cease-fire, for the reduction of tensions and presumably for a discussion of the substantive issue. The Chinese are among the toughest and most skilful negotiators in the world and it is unlikely that negotiations will unfold according to New Delhi's convenience. How they should be conducted and with what purpose are points about which some clarification would be gratefully received by the people. After all on the diplomatic front neither western generosity nor western arms can help us very much.

Lest We Forget

MR. CHAVAN was somewhat less than adequately prepared when " indignant members " in the Lok Sabha pressed him for an answer to their questions on the inquiry into the NEFA reverses. Even on the most charitable view the Defence Minister's performance was hesitant and unconvincing on a matter which, both in its substance and its implication, is of far-reaching importance. What happened in NEFA was a shock, a ruthless tearing away of illusions, an abrupt revelation of unsuspected weaknesses, an almost paralysing confrontation with realities as they are. In this sense it was the most noteworthy, significant if unhappy development of the period after independence. Mr. Nehru welcomed it very characteristically as a necessary step towards national maturity which tended to ignore the fact than an unnecessarily heavy price was being exacted for growing up. The point is, however, that the nation and the people were more than superficially shaken and it was in that context of chastened realism that the Prime Minister agreed to hold an inquiry into the NEFA reverses.

Since then China's voluntary withdrawal, the Colombo group proposals and the *de facto* cease-fire have naturally tended to deflect attention from the NEFA inquiry and encourage a convenient forgetfulness of those dark days in October last. Those who raised the question in the Lok Sabha did eminently well by Parliament and by the people whom they represent. Yet all that the Defence Minister was able to say amounted to a rather feeble justification of a policy of saying nothing. The Government had not yet " applied its mind " to the question whether the national interest was involved, the Defence Minister had not got the information asked for and the inquiry was nothing more than a " military appraisal ". Is there here any evidence of an emergency about which so much is currently heard? Mr. Chavan does not know but he cannot tell even if he knew and, besides, the Cabinet has yet to decide and the purpose of the inquiry is not to punish anyone.

The one most encouraging aspect of this murky affair is the indignation with which the Lok Sabha reacted. This definitely cannot be the end of the affair and especially so since the Defence Minister's attitude leads us to consider some other rather fundamental questions not directly related to NEFA. Where precisely can the Government legitimately draw the line of secrecy without impinging on Parliament's right to know? Can the national interest be invoked to withhold the terms of reference of an inquiry? Should not Cabinet consultation and responsibility be adequate to ensure an early decision on matters of principle? It should perhaps be conceded in fairness that the Defence Minister's difficulties arose, at least in part, from a failure by the Cabinet as a whole to function consistently with the principle of joint responsibility.

What are we to infer? That the Cabinet has not yet, even at this stage, discussed and decided the question whether the terms of reference of the NEFA inquiry should be disclosed to the nation? That it has been discussed and there is a reluctance to inform the people? Or that all this is simply an item of information secreted in Mr. Nehru's own very private mind? The terms of reference are not to be lightly dismissed not simply because of the subject of inquiry. It is desirable to know — in a democracy let us remind ourselves — how far the Government is prepared to go in conducting an inquiry of this kind. Nothing could be a greater distortion of the truth than the theory that the NEFA reverses were due exclusively to military incompetence. Their roots were far deeper and can probably be traced to a policy that was either intrinsically wrong or was misapplied.

No one, with any sense of responsibility, would necessarily insist that the Government and the administration, in an orgy of self-criticism, should participate in a sort of mass confessional. Nor is a witch-hunt likely to carry us any forrader towards efficient leadership. All that is required is an assurance that what was wrong has been put right, that the NEFA debacle has helped to substitute new ideas for old, that some positive lessons have been learned from what happened in the past. This sense of assurance cannot be created unless the executive learns more courageously to take Parliament into its confidence and provide it with such information as will enable

it intelligently to understand and discuss public affairs. If the NEFA inquiry is simply a military one is not Parliament entitled to ask why it is so restricted? If the purpose of the inquiry is not to punish anyone is not Parliament also entitled to ask why this is so? In terms of its liveliness, vigilance and knowledge, Parliament has noticeably matured since the NEFA crisis but there has been no corresponding awareness of the new climate by the administration.

It is probably true that if certain military-cum-political matters had not been surrounded by a lot of idiotic hush-hush and Parliament had been enabled to discuss them openly the country would have been spared the humiliation of the NEFA setback. There are a number of other related points to which, should the Cabinet " apply its mind ", the country would undoubtedly benefit. There is, for example, a persistent inability or reluctance to exploit the advantages of co-ordination. Indeed co-ordination is often sacrificed because of a compromise between conflicting ministerial interests. How else can one explain the extraordinary and confusing diffusion of responsibility for defence production? A Minister for Defence Production within the Defence Ministry is apparently answerable to both the Ministers of Defence and of Economic and Defence Co-ordination. Yet the Defence Minister is responsible for the overall control of Defence Production but is nevertheless required to heed the directives of the Minister of Defence Co-ordination.

This, to say the least, is hardly an arrangement that recommends itself in an emergency, particularly in relation to a sector the neglect of which has already cost the country so much. Co-ordination in fact has become a new kind of fetish as though it involved something over and above the normal functions of a group of people. Membership of a group or cabinet implies co-ordination which is not therefore a particular virtue to be acquired by special effort. The Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, the Defence Minister and the Minister for Economic Co-ordination have naturally in varying degrees a direct interest in defence production but this is not a peculiarity of the Indian Cabinet alone. What is peculiar here is that co-ordination has become an almost primary objective and not production which co-ordination is supposed to serve.

Shortly we will have the spectacle of Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari and Mr. Chavan proceeding to the United States where Mr. Patnaik is already present on a mysterious errand. New Delhi is very competently represented in Washington by an ambassador of more than usual ability. Are all these people, perhaps to be aided by Mr. M. J. Desai who is also scheduled to go West, to discuss defence production, western aid and the air " umbrella "? Mr. Krishnamachari, it is said, will discuss the " umbrella " is so far as it impinges on production but what of Mr. Chavan whose responsibilities definitely relate to the " umbrella " and somewhat less certainly to production? One would suppose that, however complicated the subject may be, one and only one high ranking Minister whoever he may be will be quite able concisely and knowledgeably to discuss India's defence and economic requirements. Why, then, this high level exodus to the West, except that it is a reflection of a faulty structure and system at home?

Mr. Krishnamachari himself whose Ministership of Economic and Defence Co-ordination has not saved him from his own problems of co-ordination with other Ministers was provocatively forthright and very honest when he reportedly claimed recently that he had insufficient work, that New Delhi has yet to acquire the art of doing things quickly and that projects are often governed by political considerations. Mr. Krishnamachari was perhaps letting the side down but what he said certainly needed to be said. The Ministers for Co-ordination, Defence, and Defence Production are persons of outstanding ability but they are also victims of a system riddled with flaws. One very minor but helpful step towards better things would be for Ministers to answer more questions more frankly in the Lok Sabha and for all of us to keep the NEFA debacle firmly stamped on our minds.

Through Chinese Eyes

MR. NEHRU'S confirmation of a Chinese military build-up in Tibet gives a particular edginess to the question whether the Chinese will return in a second large-scale invasion. New Delhi's course is perfectly clear — to prepare for every eventuality which is what we need to do and is being done with a newly acquired realism. Militarily and politically the emphasis is very correctly on preparation but this does not remove the need to consider the alternatives with which the Chinese are faced and make a mental note of what is most likely. The Chinese are certainly not more predictable than others and their actions will finally be influenced by factors, many of which are internal, of which we cannot have any definite knowledge. Nevertheless the unpredictable element can be reduced to the unavoidable minimum by attempting to visualise the situation through Chinese eyes.

Broadly Peking can choose from three possible courses or a combination of them. It can stage another major invasion. It can organise restricted military incursions. Or it can accept the Colombo proposals *in toto*. The build-up in Tibet suggests that the first course is the likely one but is it anything more than a calculated suggestion? An authoritarian government that can attack and withdraw as political convenience dictates can similarly concentrate and disperse its forces for reasons not exclusively related to military tactics. There can be only three objectives in a second major Chinese attack: firstly, to seize and hold territory; secondly, to terrorise India into negotiating on China's terms; and thirdly, once again to demonstrate China's military power preparatory to accepting the Colombo proposals.

Short of total war to which the only conclusion can be the defeat or victory of either India or China a military advance involving the seizure of vast tracts of territory will create enormous difficulties for the aggressor. Presuming that the Chinese can advance at what point will they halt? Halt they must since a major war is not on the agenda and territory that is seized in this way is meaningful only in so far as it serves as

a base for a further advance. Otherwise it rapidly becomes an intolerable problem with multiplying difficulties of occupation and defence. If, then, territory is no inducement can it be said that there is any political gain for the Chinese in a second attack? When NEFA was invaded Peking evidently thought that it would yield a specific political advantage — that India would be pressurised into a compromise settlement at the negotiating table. This was a miscalculation and the Chinese are unlikely to miscalculate again. The NEFA attack was a political manoeuvre. Another such manoeuvre will consolidate Indian unity, increase New Delhi's determination to resist and immediately stimulate the flow of western aid into a generous avalanche. It is difficult to see these developments as anything but extremely disadvantageous to the Chinese.

There is, in addition, another factor which Peking cannot easily ignore. This is that bewildered and rather chastened by the failure of its NEFA manoeuvre Peking has been attempting, in so far as its position will enable it, to repair the damage which its international relations suffered after October 1962 and more particularly its relations with Asian States including the Colombo powers. It cannot lightly dismiss these relations as irrelevant or unimportant and yet nothing can irreparably damage them more certainly than a second major invasion that can yield neither political nor military advantage.

What of the second course — that of minor incursions along the border? This is less unlikely, particularly if the intention is to follow it up with an acceptance of the Colombo proposals. Communist governments and even more so the Chinese believe rather naively that demonstrations of strength are often more effective than its use. It is based on an underestimation of non-communist and, in this case, of non-Chinese psychology. Minor incursions will be a useful display of Chinese power but without the disadvantages of having to seize and control large areas. Power expressed in this way will not invite the charge of aggression and will not expose Peking's *bona fides* to ridicule if it is immediately followed by an acceptance of the Colombo proposals. Such a seeming combination of power and generosity would undoubtedly appeal to the Chinese as a means by which to arrive at the negotiating table with the psychological advantage on their side.

What of the third course — that of an acceptance of the Colombo proposals without any preliminaries? This is a minor variation of the second course and is also not impossible. Chinese power has been amply demonstrated to the satisfaction of even the Chinese themselves. Further incursions, however restricted, will strengthen and not weaken Indian morale and a subsequent acceptance of the Colombo formula could be interpreted as a climb down by the Chinese. How much more preferable it would be, as Peking sees it, to avoid any military activity and unconditionally accept a formal cease-fire when the concentration of troops in Tibet appears to indicate quite otherwise. This concentration is in itself a demonstration of power which does not require another incursion or two to make it more convincing. The relief, even gratitude and possibly even bewilderment with which a sudden Chinese acceptance of the Colombo plan will be received can easily be turned to Peking's advantage.

A question that is rarely asked in the speculation over what the Chinese will do is what have they to lose by acceptance? The difference between the Colombo proposals and China's objections is negligible. The proposals allow Indian troops to advance to the McMahon Line in NEFA whereas the Chinese question their right to do so. The proposals provide for Chinese and Indian civil posts in Ladakh in the area evacuated by the Chinese whereas Peking objects to Indian posts of any kind. Are these objections, from any point of view, so fundamental that China is willing to play an apparently obstructive role and thus postpone or make impossible the negotiations on which it has obviously set its heart? Or have we here an attempt to make the Colombo proposals appear to be far less acceptable than they actually are and thus enable Peking abruptly to change its posture into seeming reasonableness? It does seem that the balance of probability is tilted in favour of negotiations which further means that the bellicosity of the recent Notes to which Mr. Nehru has referred is not conclusive evidence of what we may reasonably anticipate.

Peking, moreover, is not so scrupulous or high-principled as to imagine that negotiations, when initiated, will necessarily need to follow the formula prescribed by the Colombo powers. Nor will it consider Mr. Nehru's desire to discuss the cease-fire

and the reduction of tensions before substantive negotiations as a compelling imperative. Peking's scope for aggressive diplomacy will therefore be considerably enlarged if talks are started and which it will certainly not be if the folly of another attack is committed. Since the border dispute will be a long-term problem the presence alone of Chinese forces in Tibet will be a useful political factor from the Chinese viewpoint which they can exploit inside or outside the negotiating room.

There is finally the not unimportant factor of the irrational element in all political calculations. Which is another way of saying that in so far as the Chinese are unpredictable their actions cannot be predicted but in so far as they are predictable as other people are the attempt to assess and anticipate probabilities must be made. This is all the more essential in that the Chinese continue to retain the initiative and are in a position to set the course and the pace. The build-up of Chinese forces in Tibet is a threat, if indeed it is one, that can be foreseen. The threat implicit in the build-up of diplomatic manoeuvre cannot be foreseen so easily. It can be answered adequately when the time comes only if New Delhi is equipped with considerable forethought and calculation.

All Is Not Well

SHORTLY after independence the foreign service was rapidly infiltrated by a certain type of creature the flavour of whose habits and prejudices is contained, if rather inadequately, in the label " glamour boy." This is a permissible exaggeration in that it involves a truth characteristic of all caricature. The genus glamour boy is represented by one who can distinguish one cocktail from another, conduct himself presentably in any drawing room, and is supported in his exertions by a wife equipped with the correct English accent. The foreign service has done better than this over the years and there has been a slow but determined shifting of emphasis from glamour to solid worth. Yet there lingers in the External Affairs Ministry a curious inability or reluctance to jump the gap between the immaturity of the past and the responsibilities of the present.

Those who recently assailed the Ministry on various grounds were both justified and unjust — justified in the specific points they made but unjust in their general attitude of almost indiscriminate condemnation. A foreign service requires time and experience before it can be sized by a very necessary sense of tradition. The point is not that it is imperfect — what is perfect in an underdeveloped country? — but that the degree and nature of the imperfection should be understood. Both Goa and the China crisis have, in their different ways, exposed the weaknesses of a service which is unable fully to answer the needs of a rapidly changing international situation. To begin with policy making, such as it is, appears to be concentrated exclusively at the highest level in the person of Mr. Nehru himself. A policy can be expounded only in the most general terms and is, therefore, a perspective by which a nation's stance and attitude are governed. It is the final word so far as it goes but it is not as final as New Delhi sometimes appears to assume.

A definition of non-alignment is the beginning and not the end of our troubles — once again as illustrated by the Goa and China problems. A definition is simply a theory but

becomes a meaningful policy when contact is achieved with reality. Non-alignment as defined by Mr. Nehru or any other Indian leader is one thing. It is quite another when its behaviour is meticulously analysed in given situations. A failure to appreciate this truth is responsible for a system which allows excessive concentration of policy making in one person, Prime Minister though he may be. Ideas — at this level all too theoretical, idealistic and philosophical — percolate to the lower levels without a counterforce of less theoretical ideas from the lower to the higher levels. An extremely wide range of opinion is possible on how non-alignment should behave in relation to a particular issue. This is the sphere in which lively and stimulating debate on the basis of expert knowledge is absolutely vital.

Non-alignment is not something that has been classified, understood, ticketed and, therefore, dead. It is on the contrary potentially a positive force with unexpected resources and an adaptability that must be rediscovered from time to time. Yet all that seems to happen is a dreary reiteration of the theory of non-alignment. Why is this so? Primarily because Mr. Nehru believes that he knows best which, possibly, he does. What is desirable is that others also in the Ministry and the service should be encouraged to think, to analyse and to assess in a co-ordinated system of feeding the final policy makers with the ideas and information they require. The procedure and atmosphere will be quite unlike those usually associated with the Ministries of the Government of India. It is for this reason that the bureaucrat and the mental qualities of the Indian civil service can have only a minor role to play in a meaningful foreign service. Here we have the second reason for the top to lower flow of theory, unconditioned by a contrary or lateral movement of ideas.

The bureaucrat faithfully and meticulously implements but does not participate in moulding what is to be implemented or in deciding precisely how implementation is to occur. His is not to reason why but simply to do and retire. This, however, is simply not good enough. It was responsible, among many things, for a perfectly ridiculous Note to the Chinese shortly after the loss of Aksaichin in which the Indian protest was based on the submission that the Chinese had entered Ladakh

without appropriate visas. Here was the bureaucratic machine loyally clicking its way to a conclusion according to the regulations. Another bureaucratic hazard to which the Ministry often succumbs is a sustained and naive belief in the force of legal rectitude. Evidence and the skilful marshalling of it — an undoubted asset in a court of law — are confused with the infinitely more subtle requirements of diplomacy.

A refreshing wind of change is the only answer to a kind of paralysis of which Mr. Nehru himself is perhaps unknowingly a victim. It is in such a hot-house atmosphere in which well-tried administrative procedure is abjectly worshipped to the neglect of policy and ideas that the shibboleths of the past have survived. One of these is the assumption — real though not often articulated — that meaningful diplomacy must necessarily be oriented towards the West. Linguistic and cultural affinities between the educated Indian and Britain are a partial explanation of an unthinking and automatic application of western values to situations which, being Oriental, can be grasped and evaluated only in relation to their own values.

Hence the intelligent young Indian diplomat with an Oxford background — still considered the ideal norm — cannot meet a fellow Asian diplomat or, for that matter, a western diplomat as a thoroughly Indian and, therefore, Asian diplomat. He is undoubtedly more at home and has far more in common with a confrère from an English-speaking country than with a Japanese who speaks Japanese or a Burman who speaks Burmese or a Thai who speaks Thai and all of whom have, compared to the Indian, an inadequate knowledge of English. One extension of this curious and thoroughly indefensible cultural prejudice is the scramble for postings in the West, and particularly in the English-speaking countries. Washington or London or failing these a west European posting is preferred to one in Moscow or in Peking, West Asia or South-East Asia. Political favourites or those who require to be "compensated," for some reason or other, are "rewarded" by western postings considered preferable according to an artificial scale of values. Those who are shunted off to less desirable Asian capitals tolerate their lot as a temporary affliction and look forward to the day when they can legitimately claim a "promotion" to the West.

Mr. Nehru was undoubtedly correct when he informed the Lok Sabha the other day that non-servicemen as heads of missions abroad have been disappointing. But the same can also be said of servicemen which suggests that merit is not the monopoly of either group. Greater dedication to and interest in the job in hand are essential before the foreign service can meet the progressively complicated needs of the new India. In the majority of cases heads of missions simply mark time before their next transfer. Anyone who has suffered the deflating experience of meeting them will sympathise with Mr. Nehru for having to read their so-called " reports." The abler among them are ineffectual for no fault of their own in that they also are victims of a system where initiative and originality are severely discounted.

They are often served, for example, by information officers who despite many years of service have not been absorbed into the foreign service and are, therefore, disgruntled and disinterested. Thorough reorganisation of the Ministry's divisions on a rational basis, very selective appointment of personnel and more liberal administrative procedures will be helpful but not enough. Only a new philosophy and outlook can shake the Ministry out of its repetitive motions and revitalise it into a Ministry where the capacity to think is as highly appreciated as the capacity to do. One possible first step could be to encourage a higher level of collaboration between the Ministry and outside agencies such as the School of International Studies, the School of African Studies, specialists in the newspaper world and in the universities. But the essential thing is to realise that not all is well in the External Affairs Ministry.

Great Expectations?

AMERICAN presidential advisers who periodically embark on " inspection " tours are now a commonplace. They are, like the H-bomb, though definitely not so disastrously, a part of the international scene. Nevertheless Mr. Rostow's recent visit to New Delhi cannot be so easily dismissed and stimulates some questions on the present state of Indo-U.S. relations. This state is to begin with, not exactly what it was a few months ago when India was hard pressed by the Chinese advance in NEFA. There does appear to have been a subtle, yet by no means slight, modification of the U. S. attitude towards New Delhi and its possible role in South-East Asia. The extent and character of this modification have probably as yet not been fully defined or are in the process of acquiring some sort of a recognisable shape.

In October and November 1962, when Indo-U.S. relations were dominated by an extravagant shopping and aid list hurridly submitted by New Delhi at the height of the crisis, Washington's mood was clearly one of generous responsiveness. This was accompanied by a reluctance to accept any kind of a commitment that would involve it in a situation which it had not fully understood. American assessments were by no means certain that the Chinese threat was as serious as it appeared to be. Washington, moreover, was inhibited by the uncertain equation between Moscow and Peking, by the desire to encourage a *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union and by the fear that excessive commitment in India would impel the Soviet Union to intervene. The force of these factors has diminished coincidently with the Chinese withdrawal and the disengagement of Indian and Chinese troops along the border.

Since the immediacy of aid and crisis are no longer in the forefront Washington has obviously turned its attention to the long-term implications of the Sino-Indian situation. Not how many planes or how may guns but what India is expected to do and how she is expected to behave in relation to China. In other words a stage has been reached in Indo-U.S. relations

where little is frankly said but much is dangerously assumed. What, precisely, are Washington's expectations? There is probably no question here of the " pressure " of which the U. S. Government is so unjustly and easily suspected in this part of the world. There is, however, a very definite danger of a fundamental misunderstanding arising from a situation which neither Washington nor New Delhi ever expected would arise — one in which the U. S. Government offers military aid and the Indian Government accepts it. There are, on the face of it, no " strings " since it is simply not done these days to offer aid that is tied to political conditions. Yet the United States does expect, if not a return, at least certain consequences to flow from the new relationship formed between the two countries since the Chinese aggression.

When Washington asks for a " clear picture " of India's long-term attitude towards China what exactly does it mean? When it expects India's defence and diplomatic activity to mobilise Asian opinion and impress this opinion with the fact and reality of the Chinese challenge what is Mr. Kennedy thinking of? When it is suggested that India's determination to face this challenge in its " true perspective " is doubtful what, again, has Washington in mind? There is in all this the disturbing possibility that American expectations have no relation whatsoever to what New Delhi can ever be willing to provide or do. For this New Delhi is perhaps inadvertently at fault by obliquely endorsing the view that the Chinese invasion has inevitably caused a sea-change in Indian policy. Certainly there is today, even if belatedly, a more realistic understanding of China and its motives and certainly it is now realised that non-alignment can resist aggression and accept the aid of friendly powers without jeopardising its true character. But these lessons have been learnt without creating the additional necessity of having to adopt any new and unwelcome role in Asia.

Nothing so obvious as an identification with the western bloc has been suggested or implied by Washington. Yet references to India's role in South-East Asia, to the need for a " true perspective ", and to a policy by India of setting an example for the other Asian States appear to anticipate some fundamental adjustments in Indian policy. Apparently Mr. Nehru's

reaffirmation of the non-alignment policy has not been seriously received in the belief that, whatever New Delhi may say, the facts of the situation will compel it thoroughly to re-examine its future Asian role and adapt it to the new conditions created by the Chinese threat. What, however, are the facts, compulsive or otherwise?

This latest miasma of misunderstanding is threatening to arise primarily because both New Delhi and Washington are inclined to interpret the Chinese threat as something other than what it is — the United States since it has yet been unable to discard its earlier obsessive anti-communism and New Delhi since it has still to recover from the shattering experiences of October-November last year. The American phrases that have helped to bring about an unhelpful exaggeration of the truth include such grandiloquencies as the Indian " way of life ", the factor of " non-communist thinking throughout Asia ", India's task of " setting the pace for the rest of the Asian peoples ", and so on. Have we not here the seeds of another, less obtrusive yet real enough, crusade against communism primarily, but also against China to the reality of which Washington has never reconciled itself?

New Delhi has acquired, even if belatedly, a new and permanent awareness of China's mischievous potentialities. This does not mean that India can ever agree to a role that identifies it with a group of Asian powers in unconditional hostility towards Peking. Some of the truths of Mr. Nehru's earlier utterances need to be repeated even though the Prime Minister himself has not done so in the present climate of opinion. One of these is that China, communist or otherwise, aggressive or peaceful, is a neighbour with which somehow India must learn to live. It is a geographical truth that cannot be wished away, however convenient it may be to do so if it were possible. Admittedly in New Delhi's own interests it must transform non-alignment into a very much more positive force than it has been and it must, in its own way, mobilise the support and co-operation of the other countries of South-East Asia. This will be or should be an extension of the non-alignment policy and cannot be related, even if indirectly, with what Washington expects India to do or the aid which the United States chooses to provide. Visions of a devious and

infinitely cunning Chinese plot to dominate India or Asia, thrilling theories of an Indian " way of life " threatened by an aggressive ideology from the north, interesting academic parallels between the Indian and Chinese race for economic development — all this sounds plausible but is liable to turn into so much fluff when thoroughly examined. Is it not possible that the bare unvarnished fact of the matter is far more simple than Mr. Rostow and his egg-head colleagues would wish it to be?

This is that China set out to seize, and successfully seized, Aksaichin in Ladakh in the conviction, truly and sincerely held, that India would not react as it did and that, therefore, a compromise settlement could be easily achieved? This was the original intention and there is no reason to believe that it has been altered in any way. When, however, exaggerated theories are built on this slender foundation Indo-U.S. relations will become unnecessarily complicated, with expectations pitched too high and consequently incapable of being satisfied. This is by no means to minimise the reality of Chinese intransigence but short of an outright surrender, the impossibility of which India has already fully demonstrated, New Delhi's policy is, very rightly, to work for an understanding with a powerful neighbour.

If this is not possible soon, as it probably is not, the alternative is patience, vigilance, adaptability and calm determination. It is most certainly not to set an ideological example for other Asian States to follow or to lead them in any kind of crusade or to interpret the Chinese aggression in the " perspective " most palatable to the United States. Unconfirmed rumours of so-called " friendlier " relations between New Delhi and Taipeh are the kind of absurdity on which the American imagination only too easily feeds. American generosity, Washington's tact, its willingness to overlook some tactlessness on New Delhi's part, its anxiety to be helpful, are a source of considerable encouragement to the Indian Government and the Indian people. But the perspective that will finally govern New Delhi's role in Asia must be its own and must spring from non-alignment itself. Otherwise the alternative will be frustration, bitterness, and misunderstanding between two countries with recently acquired ties that promise much in the years ahead.

It Is Happening Here

NOTHING is so dangerous as a platitude. Since its theoretical truth is regarded as self-evident it is also assumed that it is an accurate reflection of what actually exists. Such a platitude is the declaration which comes often and easily to the lips of Ministers that a free press is essential to democracy. This is never questioned for the valid reason that it is true but the good faith with which it is accepted spills over and forms the further supposition that the press is, indeed, free and that the government, in its attitudes and policies, is informed by a spirit of democratic liberalism. This supposition, at least in this country, can now no longer be confidently upheld. It is not unusual, even in the strongholds of liberalism, for politicians to dislike the press. The right to dislike is as fundamental as any other right and should not be withheld even from politicians. What is unusual is that an entire Government adopts an attitude riddled with inconsistencies, anti-liberal prejudices, favouritism and even vindictiveness — all this while mouthing the platitude of a free press.

Let it be perfectly understood that not all newspapers or journalists are as responsible as they should be which is what can be said with equal justification of businessmen, politicians, lawyers or policemen. The press must be allowed its imperfections as others are allowed theirs. It is only when this margin of imperfectibility is arbitrarily narrowed and exploited against newspapers that there is reason for alarm since, in that event, something more than the interests of the press will be involved. Does New Delhi realise that it has come dangerously near this point? Two examples out of many over the years may be given as an illustration of the jaundiced vision with which New Delhi balefully regards the press. A member of Parliament recently asked the Minister for Information and Broadcasting whether there was " any order that no new paper should be given newsprint for more than 10,000 copies." The Minister's reply was that there was no such rule and that the Registrar of Newspapers had been given a " general guidance "

from which Government was free to depart on the " merits " of each case. It is difficult to believe that there could be anything more cavalierly indifferent to logic and impartiality than this. Is not a " general guidance " that successfully prohibited the launching of any newspaper with more than 10,000 copies an " order "? Does the Government think that a vague " general guidance " is adequate for the regulation of an industry in which the free flow of information is so closely involved? If the Government considers that each case must be judged on merit, why is there a " general guidance "? If exceptions are to be made, why cannot the circumstances that justify an exception be written into the so-called " general guidance "? Since there are no answers to these questions it must be assumed that the single instance in which " merits " impelled the Government to set aside the " general guidance " and sanction a quota of 25,000 copies was nothing less or more than plain favouritism.

Every honest newspaperman whose interest in journalism overrides his interest in ideology will wish any newspaper that can successfully persuade the Government to release additional newsprint equal success in its career. The point is not simply one of injustice to those whose claims have been brushed aside. It is that official favouritism among newspapers raises issues of unquestionable importance in a democracy where free speech is supposedly respected and encouraged. Can it be honestly said that all newspapers which receive favours from the Government will in any sense remain as objective as they are supposed to be? Will they be critical of those who have granted them a special privilege? Will they not be inclined to regard Government policies with a kindly eye? Those with the necessary character and independence will not be corrupted by special favours but the Government will be responsible for creating a situation in which the balance will be heavily weighted against incorruptibility.

The second example was provided, as it often is, by Mr. Nehru himself. During the A.-I.C.C. session he announced that " the way certain newspapers gave publicity " to " personal attacks " on individuals was " wholly undesirable and objectionable." This is the latest of an extremely long series of disparaging references to the press during the past seven or eight

years. A Government that has repeatedly asked the press to be " restrained " has itself exercised little restraint in the choice of its adjectives in denouncing newspapers and newspapermen. Critical articles have been dismissed as " erudite and pompous," the press has been accused of " wrong interpretations," journalists have been described as obstructive, irrational and even deliberately dishonest, the press, it has been claimed, is shot through with " evil tendencies," editors, it has been said, do not " shout " enough, editorials are too " anonymous," comment is " injurious to the national cause," leader writes are no longer capable of " restrained thinking and writing," newspaper policies are based on " hunches," criticism is " general " and not " specific," newspapers are the " jute press " and have developed into a monopoly.

All this adds up to a formidable indictment but how much of it is true, how much has been proved and how much is at the level of slogan-mongering? By repeated disparagement of the press the Indian public has been conditioned to applaud when any Minister or politician, communist or Congressman, mouths the hypnotic words " jute press " and " monopoly." There is immediately an automatic suspension of original thought and a situation in which the press can co-operate with the party in power to make Indian democracy more meaningful than it is, is reduced to one in which Government-press relations are blighted by mutual suspicion and favouritism. Let us examine the charges which the Government so artfully revives from time to time.

Monopoly? How many newspapers must someone own to attract this charge? No single person or agency, save in a totalitarian state, owns and controls all the newspapers, magazines and weeklies in a given country. We have here, therefore, a characteristically loose usage of the word " monopoly " to mean chains of newspapers that do not by any means include all newspapers. The objection, them, is not to a monopoly but to a chain which is a helpful clarification if only Ministers would recognise it. A chain is not possible unless it is a success which further means that the Government objects to any successful enterprise. It is customary elsewhere abroad to prohibit the unfair practices that enable the less scrupulous to acquire a chain of newspapers. But this again is a distinction which the

Government has not bothered to make, preferring the easier way out of penalising success and efficiency. On these grounds a successful grocer's shop which attracts and, therefore, " monopolises " the available custom in a neighbourhood will be similarly objectionable.

The only answer to a chain is another chain and more chains thus making possible healthy and lively competition in which there is a sustained conflict of different views and ideas. The final arbiter is someone New Delhi has consistently ignored — the newspaper reader who has the freedom — rather we suppose that he does — to buy and read the newspaper of his choice. A chain, Mr. Nehru complains, is controlled by a " few individuals " but is this not true of the Government, of every commercial enterprise and of any public utility? The Government itself by the fact of being in power is a gigantic monopoly and this may be said without a slovenly and incorrect use of the term.

A newspaper is answerable to its reading public and when this public, for any reason, refuses to respond to a given chain or newspaper that chain and that newspaper will immediately collapse. The role of a newspaper is not, outside its news columns, to reflect the opinions of either the people or the Government. It is simply to reflect its own opinion, carefully and responsibly considered. The Congress party has a right to its opinion, the communists have a right to theirs and, incidentally, express them in a number of publications numerically superior to that of any other group. Why deny the right of the private sector to express its view? What is precisely meant when we speak of a newspaper's policy? Nothing else except that it has a certain outlook on public affairs within the framework of which it judges every issue. This is what the Congress does, what any organisation does, what any individual with an opinion does. No newspaper can express every possible opinion under the sun. If the reader finds its opinion objectionable his right not to buy and read comes into play which means that the reader's freedom is the only real democratic safeguard against an irresponsible press. A cheap press can thrive on the gullibility of the reader but on this point a threefold comment is the only answer — that a cheap press is better than a controlled one, that gullibility can be removed through

education and that the influence of the press that is not cheap is far greater than that of one which is.

It is the newspaper whose journalistic habits are governed by tradition and the policy that derives from it which is more important than the " few individuals " who have properly submerged themselves in the institution to which they belong. The average newspaper reader and the majority of Ministers can have little idea of the anxious scrupulosity with which responsible editors attempt to remain faithful to the tradition of the institution to which they belong while serving the interests of the people and, therefore, of the nation. It is these people whom the Prime Minister has dismissed as having a mental equipment " slightly above zero." It is some of these people who many years ago warned the Government and the people of the Chinese threat, of the inadequacies of New Delhi's China policy and of the dangers of a non-alignment wrongfully applied. It is these people who continue to support the Government over the China issue while reserving the right to criticise and comment within the limits of national security. It is these people who have repeatedly asked New Delhi to define what is and what is not objectionable under the emergency so that they could co-operate — as they sincerely wish to do — without relinquishing their right to criticise and comment.

During the present crisis one newspaper, a member of the so-called " jute press," drew the Government's attention to a report from the newspaper's special correspondent which had been passed by the censors and officially approved but which the newspaper concerned considered undesirable. The Government hurriedly and belatedly though not very thankfully agreed with the newspaper and suppressed the report. On other occasions some highly placed in New Delhi were reported as making irresponsible comments abroad but which were, in the editor's discretion, and fortunately for the individuals concerned, not passed for publication. Cases of this kind are not few and are a continual part of the burden which a responsible editor is asked to shoulder. New Delhi in fact should be thankful that some editors do not, as Mr. Nehru has recommended, " shout " and " thump " much as though a newspaper were an egoistic extension of the editor concerned. It should perhaps be noted that the editors of what is known

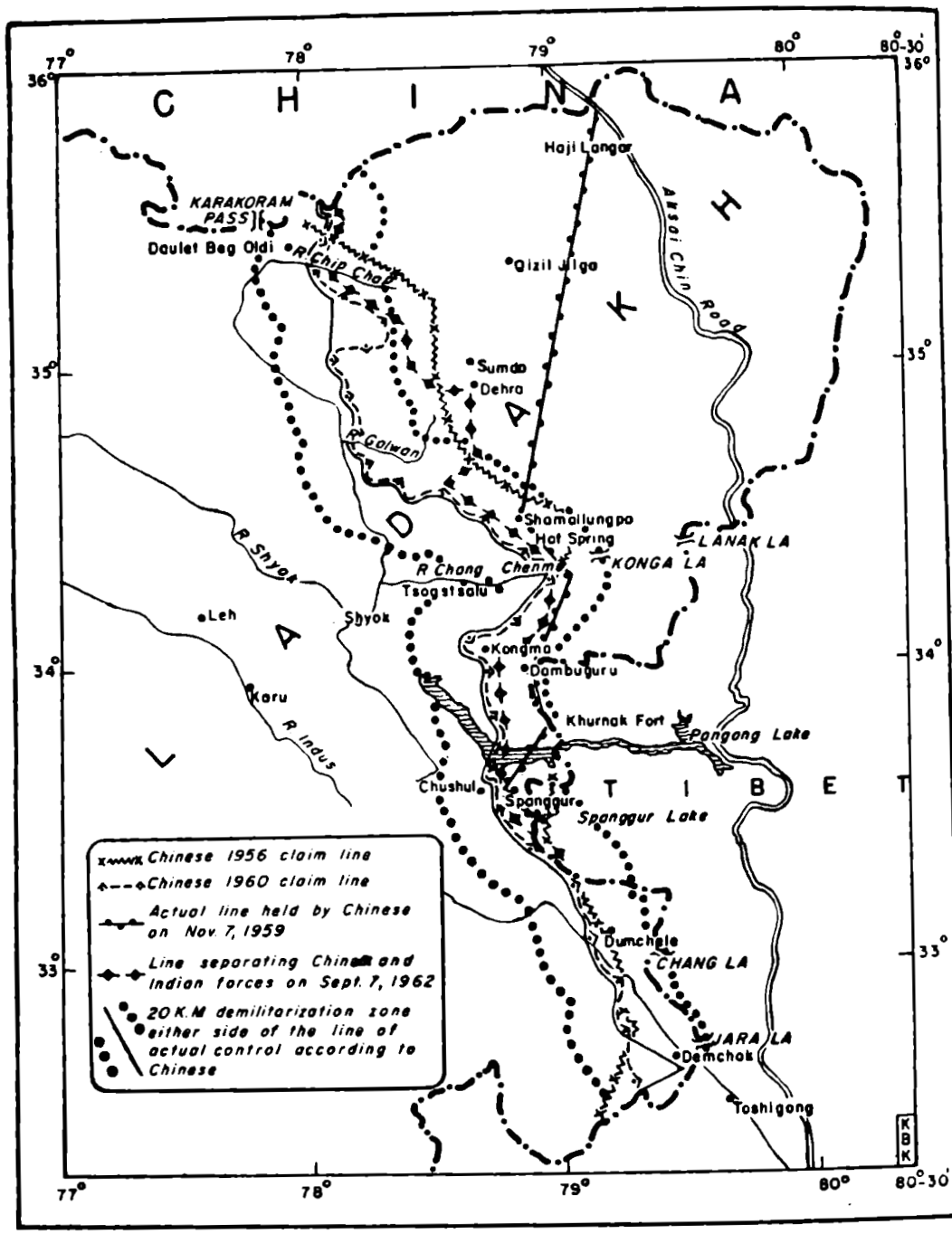
as the sensational press are well-known individualists who do " shout " and " thump " but that the editors of that section of the press which is governed by tradition and policy are as self-effacing as they can possibly be.

It is the newspaper which speaks and not its editor and the " anonymity " which Mr. Nehru deplores is perhaps the one single greatest safeguard of a healthy press. It is not for nothing that Ministers are always anxious to be informed not what a newspaper has said but which member of the staff is responsible for the comment. Anonymity here concentrates attention on the paper and the standards it seeks to uphold. When the press recently concerned itself very rightly with the question of party funds, Mr. Nehru's reaction was that the press was guilty of making " personal attacks." Perhaps some papers edited by editors who " shout " and " thump " were more personal than they should have been but the condemnation of the entire press with the possible exception of one paper that is distinguished by the special privileges it has acquired is so sweeping that it almost paralyses the capacity for rational retort. All that can be done is hopefully and wearily to point out that Ministers in their ministerial capacity are not " persons " and cannot be distinguished from the policies with which they are identified. Many newspapers have discussed the question of party funds, concentrating on the larger public issue and not on individual Ministers but these also have been swept aside as " objectionable."

Can newspapermen and others be blamed for fearing that these developments are a prelude to controls — through a newsprint policy that does not distinguish newspapers from any other commodity — quite inconsistent with a genuine democracy? Can it be that government identifies the national interest with its own which is not always justified, that New Delhi has become increasingly intolerant of criticism, however sincerely and constructively offered? Can it be also that New Delhi intends, by professing solicitude for the smaller papers, to discriminate against the stronger and, therefore, more independently critical newspapers and build up a press dependent on the favours it can offer?

It should perhaps be remembered that the greatest of all press freedoms is freedom from government interference and

prejudice. It is no exaggeration to say that unless the present trend of constant vilification is replaced with a genuine understanding of what newspapers are for the press alone will not be the loser.



Up China's Street

In relation to things Chinese there is a general inclination never to accept what appears on the surface. There is, consequently, what may be described as the possibility of a double deception. The Chinese say that they will not attack which is immediately interpreted as a very strong possibility of another attack when it is not improbable that Peking means precisely what it says. Mr. Chavan must unquestionably continue to do what he is doing to strengthen the nation's defences although the extent to which this can and should be done is not entirely unrelated to an appreciation of China's motives. The point is — and this is not in the Defence Minister's province — whether another kind of defence is not as vital as that associated with the accumulation of military weapons.

This defence is both psychological and political, requires no aid or advice from the West, does not necessarily involve a sense of emergency and, above all, cannot be suddenly acquired. If it is necessary the Chinese will not hesitate, as they have never done, to deceive. If necessary also and when it is consistent with their interests they will not hesitate to declare their intentions. Speculation, in any instance, on whether the Chinese are being truthful or deceitful is unprofitable unless what they say is related to our own estimate of China's interest. A coincidence between such an estimate and what the Chinese say means that what they say is likely to be the truth. An inconsistency, on the other hand, would suggest that deception is being practised.

What are we to conclude from the various statements that have been made, directly and indirectly, regarding China's intentions? These include the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Subandrio's view that Peking will soon accept the Colombo proposals; a commentary in the *People's Daily* emphasising that China has no desire to attack India again which incidentally implies that Peking was undeniably guilty of attacking in the first place; the declaration by Marshal Ho Lung, vice-chairman of the National Defence Council that "it is our firm and

unshakable stand to settle the Sino-Indian boundary question peacefully" and that if India is unwilling to negotiate now Peking "will wait with patience"; and, finally, the joint statement by Liu Shao-chi and President Sukarno. If these "feelers" and assurances are intended to deceive the presumption on their part is that India can be lulled into a misleading sense of security and, on India's part, that China is capable of committing the same mistake twice — that of underestimating Indian determination. Both are unlikely given the fact that India and China are, if nothing else, fully aware of their own interests.

Mr. Nehru referred the other day to "various political reasons" that tended to make another attack "improbable." These reasons are the fluctuating equation between Peking and Moscow, the pointlessness of another deep military penetration into India, the immediate and limited objective of a settlement in Ladakh, and the increasing need — from China's point of view — to cultivate South-East Asia and recover such goodwill as it lost in October-November 1962. The decisive factor, of course, is that Peking will have nothing to lose by accepting the Colombo proposals although it has created the impression that it has. The stage, it does seem, is being prepared for one of those grand gestures of seeming goodwill at which the Chinese are adept. Not to accept what is acceptable until the right context for acceptance is available is very much up China's street as a reading of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* suggests today and suggested, with astonishing sophistication, approximately 2,300 years ago.

What we have today is a skilful preparation of the context in which, as we can see, Liu Shao-chi and Chen Yi are playing a leading role. Without doubt the Chinese are putting their best foot forward in South-East Asia which is hardly consistent with another major military campaign, the earlier one having failed completely to fulfil China's expectations. A patient cultivation of South-East Asia, particularly on the eve of Mr. Ali Sabri's arrival in China, will create the conditions in which it is possible the Chinese could make a decisive and forceful move on the diplomatic chess board. Since China's purpose has always been, even during the October-November invasion, to bring India to the negotiating table its overall manoeuvre will

be helped forward if, with the psychological advantage on its side, Peking accepts the Colombo proposals with all the appropriate gestures.

The Liu-Sukarno communique's moderation is not entirely due to China's considerate regard for Indonesia's position and an anxiety to avoid anything that might embarrass Jakarta. The two points which constitute the substance of the joint statement are precisely the points which China would wish to stress — that the Colombo proposals have " created a favourable climate conducive to a peaceful settlement " and that there should be no foreign intervention in the Sino-Indian dispute. There is an obvious inconsistency in not accepting proposals that have created a " favourable climate ", the inference being that they are not so unacceptable as they have been made out to be. The reference to foreign intervention reflects Peking's dismay over the prompt and generous aid which the West has provided and its fear that New Delhi will accept a commitment prejudicial to its non-alignment. Ironically, both the West and the Chinese continue to misunderstand non-alignment, assuming that western aid must necessarily and basically modify it. Ironically, also, the Chinese having supposed initially that India would not, under any circumstances, solicit aid from the West now suppose that such acceptance and non-alignment are irreconcilable.

The implication here is that Peking does not favour any further deterioration in Sino-Indian relations to the point where — it assumes — India will irrevocably join the western camp. This moreover means that Peking considers it desirable that India should continue to be non-aligned and that friendly relations should be restored. Peking, then, is not so indifferent to its relations with its neighbours as we may sometimes be led to suppose. This is a point that can be exploited in the Indian interest provided the ground work is done to prepare for the day when negotiations are unavoidable. Are New Delhi's defences, diplomatically speaking, being as carefully built up as those of the army? Nothing that Government spokesmen have said or the Opposition has said in Parliament suggests that this aspect of the China problem is being attended to as thoroughly as one would wish. If negotiations start what will India's tactics be? Are we willing to restrict talks to the

finalisation of a cease-fire or do we consider the substantive issue a legitimate issue for discussion? Can we conclude that China has learnt its lesson, as India has its own, and that, consequently, a state of mutual non-interference if not of cordiality can be restored?

These are questions of high policy which cannot be answered when they are raised by events. There is no alternative but to anticipate and answer them as best we can, bearing in mind that if under the Colombo proposals substantive negotiations are opened India will have conceded to China what Peking has always wanted. The failure of the October-November invasion will then be transformed into a victory which is the meaning of the Chinese precept that in certain conditions a withdrawal or an advance can equally serve the same purpose. Mr. Nehru is commendably firm in refusing to surrender or compromise but negotiations are, even in the best of circumstances, a slippery business. The moral of which is that military preparation is not enough and must be accompanied by appropriate thinking and planning at the level of political strategy.

A New Perspective

SINCE the crisis of October–November last year U.S.–Indian relations have been bedevilled by the complexities of military aid. It is now fairly clear that receiving aid is as complicated a business for India as it is for the United States in giving it. The picture today is by no means clear and Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari's coming visit to the United States is intended to clarify what has been obscured by a number of factors having nothing directly to do with the simple fulfilment of a strictly military need. It does, however, seem to be a reasonable assumption that whereas India's strength on the ground promises to be not too unsatisfactory there is a very definite divergence of views between New Delhi and the western powers on the question of a supersonic air force. This is a point of particular interest since it involves something more than the provision or non-provision of a special kind of aircraft. It will have a bearing on the colour and pattern of Indo-West relations and — more importantly — on the kind of posture which India will be enabled to adopt towards communist China in the next decade.

The case for and against supersonic planes can be and presumably has been argued at the exclusively technical level but though necessary such discussion can never be decisive. The considerations on the basis of which the western powers apparently conclude that a supersonic air force is both unnecessary and superfluous are in themselves quite valid. There is much to suggest that the Chinese have no intention to launch another major operation, there is the difficulty of persuading Congress that the entire complex of aid essential to support a supersonic air force is justified, there is the pressure of the Pakistani lobby, and there is finally the conviction that should an emergency arise the United States will not hesitate to intervene at any appropriate military level. Individually and collectively these are considerations which the United States cannot reasonably be asked to ignore. Is it then to be deduced that there is no case whatsoever for a supersonic Indian force? The answer must be a firm negative if the political

implications of such a force are considered at their proper worth.

New Delhi's case has perhaps been needlessly weakened by relating its request for supersonic aircraft to the supposed possibility of a second Chinese attack within the next year or so. Since, for reasons that have already been analysed and are gradually being accepted by observers everywhere, this possibility is negligible a supersonic air force can and must be justified on other grounds. As a beginning it should be helpful to distinguish between immediate and long-term aid and decide to which of these categories supersonic aircraft belong. If the purpose of immediate aid is the limited one of enabling the Indian forces at least to hold their own is or is not a supersonic force essential? This is a modest enough objective and any force unable to fulfil it ceases to be meaningful.

The American and British missions appeared to accept this view during the initial stage of their survey of India's air needs. It seemed undeniable at that time, as it seems to be even now, that in any major operation the Chinese lines of communication will be the most vulnerable provided India is equipped with the necessary aircraft and equipment. Nevertheless for the political reasons already mentioned the western powers avoided the obvious conclusion and toyed with the idea of an "air umbrella." Yet can such an umbrella, even if technically feasible, be possible without unacceptable political commitments by both India and the western powers? An umbrella together with an unwritten obligation to intervene when necessary may or may not be militarily effective but is politically very much more questionable than a specific aid programme that begins at one point and ends at another. An umbrella will be a continuing relationship not the less politically loaded because rather undefined. The provision of supersonic aircraft for a certain number of squadrons with the clear object of making the Indian Air Force meaningful will not involve any such ambiguous political relations and will, therefore, to that extent, be in greater accord with non-alignment.

Here the point is, of course, that Washington fully concedes — or does it? — that Indian non-alignment is desirable and that any form of umbrella relationship between New Delhi

and the West may get out of hand and develop into some kind of an alignment. Short of surrendering or jeopardising national interests New Delhi's policy is still to restore peaceful, if not cordial, relations with a country the geographical reality of which is that it is permanently a neighbour. New Delhi must, above all, preserve sufficient political flexibility to enable it, at the proper time, to work for a more realistic understanding with China than was achieved during the Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai period. A supersonic force will not lessen Indian dependence on the West in a serious crisis but an effective force in being will reduce such dependence to a politically negligible factor. China's insistence that the border dispute should not be complicated by third party intervention is one which neither India nor the United States can have any valid reason to resist.

America's own assessment of China's intentions confirms the view that the dispute can and should be contained which means that any progress towards a solution or settlement will be unilaterally conducted between India and China. In such negotiations India will be strengthened if it is supported by a force in being which is meaningful as much as a political as a military factor. Throughout the crisis the Chinese have used their armed forces as a political-cum-military weapon and this New Delhi will be better able to do if its force, is, in a modern context, as independent as it can possibly be. An umbrella, on the other hand, with its assurance of western intervention, will be a source of weakness politically and will restrict New Delhi's political manoeuvrability. It will have the further disadvantage of involving the presence on Indian soil of American and Commonwealth military personnel the political and psychological implications of which will not be helpful. The effect on China of a reasonably strong and militarily independent India which will nevertheless not and never will be a major military power cannot be calculated in terms solely of the border dispute. It will colour the entire range of Sino-Indian relationships for many years ahead which is a consideration far more decisively important than what the Chinese will or will not do in relation only to the border dispute.

Simply to declare that supersonic aircraft are unnecessary and that subsonic planes are adequate reflects a dangerous

unawareness of factors other than the more obvious ones. Certainly India's aid demands should not be exaggerated. Certainly, also, the possibility of another major Chinese attack is insignificant. But will not a certain minimum and effective level of military power enable India to be politically more efficient than it will otherwise be in solving not merely the border dispute but the entire problem of long-term relations with communist China? It should be apparent in Washington that such a course will be very much more in the interests of the non-communist world than one which appears to qualify India's non-alignment and reduce its political flexibility.

The argument that western aid is required because of the danger of a Chinese attack will convince no one and least of all the western powers. It should consequently be the purpose of Mr. Krishnamachari's mission to present a broader picture than has been done of the context in which a minimum level of Indian military strength will be an essential political factor for peace, irrespective of the probability that no early military conflict is likely to occur. The moral of this surely is that New Delhi's China policy as well as its policy on western military aid can be shaped only within the framework of an overall appreciation of China's intentions immediately and in the years ahead. Deprived of such a framework no mission will be able to persuade the western powers to view the Sino-Indian situation in a new and compelling perspective.

A "Way Of Life"?

Is the western assurance, such as it is, that military aid is not " tied " to the Kashmir issue as helpful as it appears to be? A string is not the less a string because it is called something else and the stringless quality of western aid can finally be determined only when, in deciding the quantum and quality of such aid, the western powers remain uninfluenced by the Kashmir issue. It is unlikely that, the relationship having been established, the equation between the two issues will ever be totally ignored. The probability is that Pakistan's quite amateurish tactics, almost indistinguishable from political blackmail, have caused some kind of a revulsion in the West, particularly in the United States. There is, moreover, an obvious American partiality for anyone in difficulties with the Chinese communists.

These are the negative factors which Mr. Nehru has reinforced by his vigorous protests that could impel the western powers to soft-pedal the Kashmir problem. Whether this will be reflected in a speedier and fuller satisfaction of India's defence requirements is problematical and, even if it is, this will by no means be the end of New Delhi's difficulties. A diminishing emphasis on Kashmir will possibly be accompanied by an increasing emphasis on certain " expectations " which, although not a " string ", will nevertheless help to shape the size and character of western aid. Mr. Nehru has been forthright about Kashmir. One could wish that he had been equally blunt before the present series of Kashmir talks was begun. The dangers of misunderstanding and unnecessary irritants would then have been reduced or removed. Will he now be equally blunt about the " expectations " with which Washington appears to be hopefully toying?

There is in this no devious or diabolical plot to subvert Indian independence or non-alignment but there is a sincere and unshakable conviction that those in receipt of U.S. aid must necessarily dedicate themselves to a life-long crusade against the Chinese communist " way of life ". This phrase,

indiscriminately used to indicate an undefined set of values, tends to have a hypnotic effect on American political thought. Congress will not loosen the purse strings for the recovery of Ladakh or for a solution that promise a fair measure of stability along the Sino-Indian border or for any kind of a *modus vivendi* between the two countries. It will, however, be inclined to do so if it is told that the Indian " way of life " is competing with the Chinese " way of life ". The psychology of this need not concern us here except that this kind of supposition which constantly speaks of India as an " alternative " to China can ultimately cause complications far greater than those associated with the Kashmir problem.

Both Mr. Rostow and Mr. Chester Bowles, the Ambassador-designate to New Delhi, have obligingly provided clues to a trend of political thought towards which New Delhi will be obliged very soon to define its attitude as it was obliged to do, rather emphatically, in relation to Kashmir. The dialogue in which this " way of life " doctrine is discussed and explained is highly emotive, liberally sprinkled as it is with such phrases as " free India ", a " South-East Asian vacuum ", " counter-balance to China ", " fighting for the minds of Asians ", " setting the pace for Asia " and " India as the alternative ". What do these over-charged phrases imply and what does Mr. Chester Bowles, whose dynamism is never satisfied unless he has something to sell, hope to sell when he arrives?

The competitive tempo in the West has diminished considerably and the current discussions on an East-West ban on nuclear tests are one aspect of the overall attempt to evolve a mutually acceptable stalemate between the western powers and the Soviet Union. There does not appear to be a corresponding stalemate in Asia where Soviet influence has been almost decisively challenged by communist China. What more appropriate then for the United States than to transfer the competitive tactics of the past to Asia and organise a " containment " manoeuvre against communist China? Not so blatantly, of course, as Mr. Dulles would have done in different circumstances and perhaps with greater justification. Yet it will be as naive, dangerous and unfruitful as the earlier policies of " containing " the Soviet Union. Does Washington consider the " way of life " doctrine a more effective lever than

Kashmir? Mr. Nehru has consistently decried the attempt to elevate India to the status of a "leader" in rivalry with communist China but has he done enough to persuade Washington that he means what he says? Once Sino-Indian differences are inflated into a theory in which an inevitable conflict is predicated on the basis of what are considered to be certain inherent factors in India and China New Delhi's policy will almost certainly come to grief.

It is far less melodramatic but nearer the truth to acknowledge that these differences are over territory, that communist China is a geographical reality which cannot be wished away and that, consequently, the only meaningful object of Indian policy can be to restore relations with Peking consistently with the national interest. This is not appeasement but common sense. This will be obscured if the West insists, however tactfully, on imposing on India the role of an unwilling crusader. What New Delhi seeks from the West are surely two things. Firstly, sufficient aid to enable it diplomatically and in the long term to hold out and to secure a settlement compatible with the national interest. In this sense military aid will be primarily a political weapon. Secondly, a thorough appreciation of the Indian view that a deflation rather than an inflation of the issue will alone help to stabilise South-East Asia. This has nothing to do directly with whether or not the Chinese will attack again. Those who believe that China will not are also liable to believe that the long-term struggle will consist of a clash between two "ways of life."

During the crisis the West, with an eye on the Soviet Union's equivocal relations with communist China and its anxiety to promote a global *modus vivendi,* tended to play it down as less serious than it appeared to be. New Delhi, for obvious reasons, was inclined to do the opposite. Now that the dust has settled the West continues to believe that no crisis is round the corner while assessing the possibilities of a long-term policy of containment in which India is expected to play a leading role. Undoubtedly to accept aid and remain uninvolved in South-East Asia will be as unsatisfactory as any kind of crusading. The vacuum about which American spokesmen have so much to say is real. Can it be that the conference of Indian diplomats in South-East Asia scheduled for May 27 is the first

symptom of a general awakening in the Ministry of External Affairs?

How can firm resistance of China's aggressive policies be built up without reducing the affair to a " competition "? How can such resistance be maintained while keeping the door open for a realistic settlement? How can western aid be accepted without arousing false expectations in Washington? How can relations with South-East Asia be cultivated without necessarily giving this the appearance of anti-Chinese " containment "? Today New Delhi is reaping some of the bitter fruit of having neglected these questions, of having almost washed our hands of South-East Asia because some countries in this region had no alternative but to participate in a western-sponsored alliance. These things must be done on Indian initiative and not at the invitation and direction of the western powers.

Diplomatic co-ordination and insights in South-East Asia must be more intelligent and efficient than they have been and the main object would be to show that the " vacuum " in that area can be filled by means other than military. Meanwhile New Delhi must consider how and when the West can be told that there are no buyers for what apparently it is eager to sell. Such clearing of the air will also, incidentally, be the only basis on which Indo-U.S. friendship can flourish.

A Policy For Sale

LITTLE is as yet reliably known of the T.T.K. mission on which so much in this part of the world will finally depend. It does appear, however, that the Minister for Economic and Defence Co-ordination can confidently mark up one accomplishment to his credit: unlike some of his missionary predecessors to the United States he has, quite unambiguously, based India's case for military aid not on the remote possibility of another major Chinese attack but on long-term considerations that have little to do with Peking's immediate intentions. This is something which should have been done very much earlier but it is as well that Mr. Krishnamachari has done it with an easy flair of which there is all too often a serious insufficiency among our representatives abroad.

Despite an initial reaction of cautious scepticism Washington appears to have responded with some promise of long-term commitments. The process of shaping these commitments will be delicate and time-consuming in that the United States Government is obliged to nurse Congressional opinion at home and co-ordinate its aid with that of its western allies. New Delhi, in turn, as the final beneficiary cannot avoid nursing Washington towards a clearer realisation of how India visualises its role in South-East Asia. One aspect of this task is to define, firmly if necessary, what this role is not. It is not that of a leader in South-East Asia, crusading against Chinese communism. It is not that of a military ally of the western powers and it is not that of a non-aligned power which circumstances have compelled to modify its policy to the point where it is aligned. Of what, then, does India's role consist?

Perhaps Mr. Krishnamachari has at least partially succeeded in removing illusions and clarifying India's long-term policy in South-East Asia. If he has not this is something which can no longer be ignored or evaded. A positive formulation of policy, even if it does not coincide with certain American expectations, will not only remove misunderstanding but will probably stimulate a greater U.S. awareness of what needs to be done

and from which appropriate aid may be expected to flow. To create the impression that India will in all but name function as a western ally in South-East Asia is simply to arouse expectations that cannot be fulfilled. Equally unprofitable would be to denounce these expectations after having aroused them. The most helpful course is, therefore, to explain what India will or will not do on the basis of what it considers necessary to cope with the Chinese problem. Mr. Krishnamachari has seemingly made a useful beginning but it is neither complete nor enough. The task is the extremely difficult one of persuading the United States that India can " contain " the Chinese in South-East Asia without plunging the area into a cold war or jettisoning the possibility of finally restoring co-operative, if not cordial, relations with Peking.

The distinction is one which recognises a position somewhere between an anti-communist crusade and abject surrender. It is to this position that western military aid, if it is to be meaningful, must be related. There is here a rejection of complacency and also of exaggerated fears of an immediate Chinese attack. The first will not stimulate long-term western aid and the second will not, as has already been seen, convince the United States that such aid is necessary in the long term as much for political as for military purposes. An India that is reasonably strong not just for the next month or two months or six months but for five years or more will have a suitable effect on Chinese reasoning and behaviour. This is by no means to justify the principle of an armaments race as a means by which to preserve peace through a balance of power. India's requirements must be limited to the point where in its relations with communist China it will not only be able militarily to hold its own but its diplomacy will become so much more meaningful. This is a well-defined and comparatively modest requirement which Peking will understand but will have no reason to fear.

Only by such a combination of a calculated degree of strength with a scrupulous avoidance of any aggressive crusade can the Chinese be persuaded that the so-called vacuum in South-East Asia is not an invitation to expand. Peking's ideological rigidity which not even the h-bomb has been able to modify cannot be assumed to be a permanent characteristic. Few could foresee, in the days of Stalin, that the post-Stalin

Soviet Union would be as flexible and accommodating as it now appears or wishes to be. Only time and patience can enable similar forces very slowly to achieve an identical qualification of apparently rigid attitudes. Meanwhile, in this vitally important process what can India contribute? It is here that the outlines, however vague, of a probable Indian role can be seen.

The United States, for obvious reasons, cannot participate helpfully in this process of calculated containment quite unmixed with any element of hostility. The Soviet Union's relations with Peking, equivocal as they now are, are equally unhelpful. Despite serious U.S.-Soviet differences the dangers of fanatical conflict have been circumvented but China remains the focal point of an attitude which, if mishandled, could cause tensions and crises as serious as those during the period of Stalin. From any rational point of view it is in the American interest, as it is in that of the world, to bring about the kind of *modus vivendi* in South-East Asia which is also particularly vital in India's national interest. Washington is, therefore, likely to be more responsive to such a policy than is generally assumed. However the responsibility of defining and activating this policy lies squarely with India.

New Delhi alone among the powers can play this particular role in which strength and reasonableness and a desire for peace are equal and basic ingredients. Such an understanding, well beyond the details of planes and guns and ammunition, would truly be an Indo-Western alliance for peace — a type of alliance which, if we can only see it, is fully consistent with the spirit of non-alignment. All this needs to be " sold " to the United States since it is the only basis on which western military aid can be requested and received without jeopardising either non-alignment or the future of South-East Asia. How can Mr. Nehru's recent remarks on Malaysia be reconciled with this policy? The answer is that they cannot.

It is simply not enough for New Delhi, in this day and age, to say that it does not wish to become " involved in the dispute over the federation of Malaysia as we have enough troubles of our own." Such inactivity and evasion of commitment are quite inconsistent with any kind of meaningful Indian role in the future of this area. There is here a serious underestimation

of what India can achieve and of its status without nourishing unrealistic ideas of its " leadership " in Asia. The supposition that non-alignment rejects every kind of involvement is surely both incorrect and unnecessary. It is involved in the preservation of the national interest and, therefore, in the promotion of peace and stability in the region to which the country belongs. It is involved in so far as, at some stage, it must define its attitude in the conviction that such a definition itself will help to shape events towards a desired conclusion. Certainly India has troubles of its own but diplomacy is a recognition that one kind of trouble or another is unavoidable.

The Pakistan problem does not evaporate — much as the western powers would wish — because there is trouble in the north which, in turn, does not justify a " hands off " attitude towards what is happening in South-East Asia. Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines are possibly, as Mr. Nehru says, India's friends but genuine friendship does not consist, as these powers themselves may acknowledge, in a policy of scrupulously attempting to avoid stepping on people's corns. Whether Malaysia is or is not in the Indian and regional interest is a matter of assessment and judgement but these are things that must be done if events are to be shaped by policy and not the other way round.

Time Must Have A Stop

WHEN a successful candidate in a by-election does not belong to the party in power his success is usually interpreted in a wide variety of ways some of which are an incredible exercise in political fantasy. Amroha is an example of this kind of excessive reading between the lines to the point where interpretation lapses into wishful thinking and the battle against Krishna Menon is fought all over again. Fighting Krishna Menon when he is a spent force is an interesting but unprofitable pastime. It, moreover, becomes positively misleading if Amroha is used — as apparently it is — to propagate the conclusion that non-alignment is losing ground, that the China policy is being rejected, that Mr. Nehru is losing his grip and that confidence in the Congress is rapidly diminishing.

This is not the same thing as saying that the Congress is less popular than it was or that its policies are very much more critically examined than in the past. Both these views are a commonplace which did not require an Amroha by-election for confirmation. It is necessary, nevertheless, to challenge the validity of what appears to be a vague, insidious and persistent campaign against the non-alignment policy and the implication that if Mr. Nehru were not with us his foreign policy would not survive for a single day. The question then needs to be asked: is non-alignment acceptable to the people and does it satisfy, as a foreign policy should, the nation's compelling needs?

The answer surely is that for the majority it is acceptable because Mr. Nehru says it is which for them is as good a reason as any. This is part of the Indian scene and its implication is non-political and cannot be invoked to justify either Mr. Nehru's critics or his supporters. There remains the articulate minority one part of which will have none of non-alignment, another supports it in principle but is not entirely satisfied with the way in which it is conducted, and yet another defends it with an intelligent awareness of what it means. The second and third groups tend to merge now and again but are

by no means in basic conflict as both are with the first. These distinctions which have remained fairly constant despite the China crisis cannot be ignored or swept aside in any assessment of whether non-alignment within the country itself is a meaningful concept. A country's foreign policy is seldom the unique possession of a single party. It is shaped by certain irreducible factors such as geography, the national temperament, the nation's economy and — even more decisively — by developments abroad, of friendliness or hostility, over which no one has any direct control. This explains why any change in the party in power does not necessarily involve a change in foreign policy. What usually occurs is a variation of a policy which is a continuity from government to government, serving interests that are not variable and certainly are not modified by anything so transitory as a general election.

Non-alignment is, therefore, in this sense, an expression of what India is and how it is situated. If Mr. Nehru has come to be inseparably associated with it that is something to be deplored and the reasons for this do not detract from or add to its validity. A party cannot acquire a brand new policy when it is elected to power and the suggestion that it can either is dishonest or reflects an extraordinary poverty of muscular thought. The ridiculous simplifications on foreign policy with which the Amroha by-election has been burdened must, therefore, be dismissed as so much hot air released by a heady and unexpected victory at the polls.

This is unfortunate since any significant strengthening of the opposition particularly by men capable of bearing ideas and expressing them will help to elevate the debate on non-alignment to a more constructive level. At this level it will be seen that the task of the opposition is properly to question the method rather than the substance of the non-alignment policy. It should be noted in passing that those who reject this policy *in toto* have never offered any kind of a coherent alternative. An opposition is meaningful in the degree in which certain given facts and factors that cannot be wished away are made the basis for a new interpretation. The relevance of non-alignment can be fully acknowledged without surrendering the right to criticise or abdicating the responsibility of a vigilant opposition. Such criticism, indeed, becomes meaningful only

when non-alignment is recognised for what it is. Thus we have the paradox of a policy whose most intelligent critics are those who endorse it unconditionally.

A policy has an objective as well as a direction. What is New Delhi's objective in relation to China? — a simple question that can be asked without mentioning Krishna Menon or suggesting that non-alignment is the cause of all our troubles. If New Delhi has offered no answer the reason possibly is not simply that it has never been asked although this failing has, of course, enabled it to enjoy the refuge of a convenient silence. It does seem that the failure here is a failure to ask on the part of the opposition and a failure to think on the part of the Government. The immediate tactic, it is very correctly said, is to play for time. Every moment that passes, as Mr. Nehru has said, adds to the nation's strength for the day when a settlement of the dispute can be attempted. This is good sense so far as it goes but at what point will this strength be considered adequate and how will it then be utilised?

Time enables India to make good the negligence of the past but it also enables China to consolidate in the areas it has seized. As time passes the sense of crisis will diminish and Peking will be encouraged to believe that the *status quo* is being accepted, even in India, as the equivalent of a final solution. New Delhi's determination that this should not be so is absolute but what is absolute in the minds of policy-makers is politically valueless unless, through the implementation of policy, it is impressed on the minds of the enemy. Playing for time, though necessary and justified, should not be a cloak for inactivity. Peking is under no obligation to take the initiative since it already has what it wants and it is probable that it will accept the Colombo proposals when negotiations will, in its view, be to its advantage. Otherwise the present stalemate will continue — but for how long and with what cost in terms of Chinese consolidation and a diminishing sense of crisis? Since, moreover, western aid is likely to be very much less than anticipated does New Delhi propose helplessly to play for time and wait for Peking to break the stalemate if it ever does?

Clearly at a certain point time will cease to be an advantage and the burden of initiative will rest on India irrespective of whether western aid, to the extent required, is available. There

is here a somewhat ironical identification of interests between the West and communist China in that both would welcome a *status quo* consolidated by the passing of time. American opinion is strangely contradictory. It is seemingly convinced that the crisis does not call for large-scale aid but, again seemingly, is not unwilling to consider such aid in the long term if New Delhi modifies its non-alignment and becomes what is known as a " rallying point " against communist China. Short of this Washington would prefer a sort of permanent *status quo* as the most convenient solution of an awkward problem. China will agree to this for other obvious reasons which means that the weight of opinion will be in favour of no one breaking the present deadlock. And if the deadlock is not broken at some time in some way New Delhi will be reduced to drifting from one point of helplessness to another.

Do not these considerations and the assurance of western aid in a crisis plus the obvious Chinese reluctance to become entangled in another major military operation justify a policy of gradually reoccupying the areas vacated by the Chinese? Only in this way can the temporary character of the *status quo* be kept alive for the benefit of both Peking and Washington while, far from incidentally, asserting India's right to regain the territory it has lost.

Missions That Failed

MR. T. T. KRISHNAMACHARI claims that he did not carry a shopping list with him on his journey to the West and that the absence of a specific agreement does not, in any sense, indicate a failure of his mission. Admittedly in affairs of this kind generalisation cannot be reduced to detail overnight. This is a process that requires the patient cultivation of an appropriate climate but when every allowance has been made for these necessary preliminaries there is a point beyond which no affair can profitably be allowed to remain in a state of vague generalisation. Yet this is precisely the only outcome of the innumerable missions, approximately seven, that have set out for the West and have returned with nothing more comforting than the assurance that the western powers mean well. There have been as many as a dozen missions of one kind or another from the West to India but with equally insignificant results from New Delhi's point of view.

It certainly cannot be that the three-man Indian defence team, Mr. R. K. Nehru, Mr. Patnaik, Mr. Bhoothalingam, Lt.-General Moti Sagar, Mr. Krishnamachari, not to speak of our ambassadors in the West, who have had the thankless task of asking for and justifying military aid, have in any way been inadequate. On the contrary Mr. Krishnamachari, in particular, appears to have handled his brief with considerable persuasion and skill. His failure, then, as that of his predecessors to the West, is a failure of policy and tactics. However it may be wrapped up in diplomatic euphemisms the failure of the Krishnamachari mission is the equivalent of an unmistakable snub — not because the western powers have any intention of being unpleasant but because New Delhi, through its faulty tactics, has created a situation in which a snub became almost inevitable.

To ask for something which, it has always been apparent, is not available is not only to invite the indignity of a refusal but to fritter away valuable time and energy. Eight months after the NEFA crisis Indian diplomacy has not succeeded in

committing the West to a specific target of military aid. It has not succeeded in justifying its request for supersonic aircraft. It has not succeeded in relating, with conviction, its request for military aid with an acceptable assessment of Chinese intentions. This adds up to rather formidable evidence of diplomatic incapacity and obliges the nation to ask why New Delhi's efforts have been so unfruitful. The root of this inadequacy lies in an extraordinary obsession with the possibility, sometimes expressed as a certainty, of another major Chinese attack.

Mr. Krishnamachari defined the purpose of his mission as that of " correcting certain impressions that a second Chinese invasion was not imminent." Yet he acknowledged almost in the same breath that " he did not know what Chinese intentions were " but that " it looked extremely likely they would come back." Other members of the Government have spoken in the same strain, almost as though this were a guessing game in which the only thing to do was to prepare for the worst. Was this all that New Delhi was able to offer when the western powers asked, as presumably they must have, for India's assessment of China's intentions? Such an assessment is not possible unless the earlier question of why the Chinese invaded NEFA is fully answered. Otherwise the argument regarding the possibility of another invasion becomes entirely irrelevant.

All the evidence — the initial invasion by China of Aksai-chin, the assumption that New Delhi would not be unduly disturbed, the error in attacking an Indian patrol, the obvious willingness to sacrifice its " claims " in NEFA for a settlement in Ladakh, the use of its armed forces to pressurise New Delhi into negotiations — suggests compellingly that the western interpretation of China's motives is rational and comprehensive. There are, then, two reasons why New Delhi should not have resisted an assessment which, from any point of view, is difficult to refute. Firstly, it makes sense as no other theory does and, secondly, it is something about which the western powers have made up their minds. The basis, therefore, of New Delhi's case for more military aid should have been better conceived, substituting for the tiresome reiteration of the possibility of another invasion, a less melodramatic interpretation of what is likely to occur. As things are India's case can be vindicated only by a second Chinese attack which is a kind of vindication

that New Delhi can ill afford. India's military power must be made to depend on what New Delhi rather than Peking is expected to do.

The argument that since New Delhi cannot be certain about Peking's intentions it has no alternative but to prepare for the worst is a gospel of incompetent despair. In the first place, if China's intentions are uncertain New Delhi's presumably are not and it is on this certainty that policy should be founded. In the second, nothing that India can ever do will ensure absolute security against a Chinese attack which means that the country's defence effort must necessarily be considerably less than one hundred per cent effectiveness. How much less is precisely what needs to be determined by considering what is and is not probable. Preparing for the worst is not only not feasible but is something which New Delhi cannot afford.

The country's economy, western assurance of aid in a crisis, technical limitations and other factors including an intelligent reading of China's motives must inevitably restrict the extent of Indian military power. There is neither the necessity nor the desire to compete with China as a military power and, whether palatable or not, final dependence on the West in a crisis cannot be wished away. A meaningful policy must come to terms with these irreducible facts. Such a policy would surely agree with the West that another major Chinese invasion is unlikely but would add as a corollary that in the particular context of the Sino-Indian dispute a certain minimum level of Indian military strength would be of considerable political value. Sufficient power to enable India to hold its own and to undertake probing missions into the territory evacuated by the Chinese will also enable it to negotiate with confidence. How much power will be required for this is a technical detail but is likely to be very much less than the shopping list New Delhi has prepared — a list that bears no meaningful relation to any kind of probability. This minimum level of strength can also be defended in relation to India's role in South-East Asia which is influenced by but not restricted to the Sino-Indian border dispute.

It is a long-term projection designed to make India's participation in South-East Asian affairs more constructive and positive than it has been without necessarily challenging

communist China in any competitive sense. Such a role demands a fairly respectable level of military strength, again primarily as a political weapon. A further advantage to which the United States will not be insensible is that a strong India will not require, whenever occasion demands, to solicit western aid below the point where a serious crisis leaves it no alternative. The western powers, in fact, have nothing to gain by insisting that even well below the point of crisis India should remain dependent militarily on the West. Such dependence will enable the West to gain some cheap propaganda advantage which will be more than offset by an Indian failure to play the kind of role in South-East Asia which it can if it is reasonably strong enough to do so.

It is a role which fully coincides with the western interest and one which New Delhi can fulfil without prejudice at all to its non-alignment policy. Would not these points, carefully analysed and explained, be a more effective brief than the clumsy attempts to suggest that another Chinese invasion is just round the corner? Neither Pakistan nor Kashmir is decisively responsible for western unresponsiveness. Too many voices, many ill-informed and contradictory, activated by no overall policy, have yielded nothing but confusion. Of course the West is friendly and is willing to help but were so many missions necessary to establish what has always been obvious?

Where Are We Going?

IN RECENT weeks there has been a spate of Notes to and fro between New Delhi and Peking. The pattern that emerges is fairly clear and predictable: the Chinese set up an illegal post, New Delhi protests quoting chapter and verse and Peking in turn retaliates with further charges, often accompanied by another incursion or two. This process is being meticulously documented, at least on the Indian side, in lengthy Notes the tone of which is often peevish and querulous. We have here a not unworthy example of counter-propaganda but nothing more. Is it the purpose of official Notes to refute every ridiculous detail of Chinese propaganda or is their purpose to reflect and carry forward the policy of which they are an expression?

The Chinese are aggressive, slippery, unprincipled, cynically indifferent to any standards of international behaviour and quite unconcerned by the inconsistencies in what they say. These are well established facts and if they must be elaborated, emphasised and clarified, that is properly the function of the government's machinery of publicity. A clear, firm refutation of the main Chinese charges is all that is necessary for the purposes of record. For the purposes of policy very much more is required and it is here that there is, it would seem, a serious inadequacy. Where, precisely, is this exchange of indignant Notes leading the country? What could be Peking's motive in making the surreptitious and provocative moves of which it is guilty? What, in other words, is New Delhi waiting for? An acceptable answer is possible only in terms of a policy objective but where and what is this objective?

It is not, as we are all agreed, to conquer China or even to defeat it in battle. It can only be, then, to create a situation in which China will not consider it worthwhile to use its undoubtedly superior military power either to retain the territory it has seized or to confirm the *status quo*. It would be seriously to underestimate the Chinese to assume that they will exercise their power simply because they have it. Before the

October-November crisis in NEFA they had every reason to believe that, even under military pressure, New Delhi would not solicit military aid from the West and that such pressure would therefore, persuade India to negotiate a compromise settlement for Aksaichin. The failure of these calculations has not deflected Peking from its objective which apparently remains, as before, to obtain *de jure* recognition of China's claims in Ladakh. When Peking says that it will wait patiently for Indian " co-operation " it probably means what it says since the tendency of a *de facto* situation is, if not handled otherwise, to develop into a *de jure fait accompli.*

There are several reasons why China can wait patiently for this to happen. Western aid, it is now clear, is severely restricted and contingent on events. The western powers are anxious to bring about a *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union and would consequently welcome any reduction of tensions along the Sino-Indian border. The Colombo powers have obviously shot their bolt and barely disguise their chagrin over their failure to stimulate negotiations. On balance international opinion favours not the rectification of an injustice, not the vacation of blatant aggression, but the preservation of the *status quo.* This is the easy way out for everyone except India. As the days, weeks and months pass the *status quo* becomes, in this way, the equivalent of a peace that suits everyone's convenience except, of course, that of India.

In this situation it was singularly inapt for New Delhi to base its policy and to seek aid from the West on the supposition that the Chinese would launch another major attack. This is precisely what Peking has absolutely no reason to do. New Delhi, without doubt, has the moral support and sympathy of the majority of non-communist states but such support is meaningless against the intractable facts of diplomacy. The western powers will finally be swayed by what they consider to be their interests rather than by any sympathy for New Delhi's predicament. It is only when this unpalatable truth is squarely faced that a meaningful policy can be evolved. At no point will it be possible or desirable for India to seek military conclusions with China which in turn means that such military power as India can muster must be used, as the Chinese have theirs, as a political weapon and not simply as a means to

recover and occupy territory. Given the probability, which is a near certainty, that China will not attack massively again for which, moreover, there is an insurance in the western commitment to intervene in a crisis, it follows that Indian military power beyond a certain point, even if it were possible, would be superfluous and irrelevant.

Either New Delhi must wait for the day when India is strong enough to expel the Chinese which is a day that cannot be foreseen and in waiting for which the *status quo* will be consolidated or limited military strength can immediately be utilised for the specifically political purpose of maintaining tension and preventing any crystallisation of the *status quo*. One of the main purposes of the present emergency, as defined by New Delhi, is to create and preserve a sense of crisis but this is specifically what is not being done by a policy of merely reacting to Chinese initiative. As things are Peking can, not unreasonably, calculate that the provocative infiltration of their forces together with the obvious international partiality for negotiations and the preservation of the *status quo* will discourage New Delhi from going it alone. The temptation for New Delhi will be to assume that since generous western military aid has not materialised, India has no alternative but to adjust itself to the *status quo* and restrict its activity to occasional protests.

New Delhi is not, as Mr. Nehru honestly confessed some time ago, conditioned to resist a course that is seemingly peaceful, accommodating and reasonable. It is not conditioned to initiate provocative action, to create tension, to build up and maintain pressure to the point where China is finally convinced that neither its pressure nor the western reluctance to provide generous aid will impel New Delhi quietly and tolerantly to accept a situation arbitrarily created by the Chinese. There is a deeply ingrained conviction that creating tension is uncivilised and unpeaceful but the proposition that the national interest can be protected without unpleasantness of some kind is quite unacceptable. The western powers have often said that their policy and aid will depend on the Indian assessment of the overall situation and on what New Delhi is determined to do in relation to this situation. This is a truth on which India has yet to act. Immediately after the

October-November reverses and during the period of the Colombo mediators time was a necessary element in New Delhi's strategy, to make good the many serious deficiencies in the nation's security. This is no longer the case.

It is essential to break the present stalemate and confront the Chinese with the choice of having either to accept the Colombo proposals or to retaliate in force. The probability is, as we have seen, that the Chinese will negotiate which, for India, will have the further advantage of unsettling the *status quo* and acquiring a further instalment of time for the next step. Any such initiative must be preceded by a clear idea of how negotiations should be conducted and with what objective. To the question what this initiative should be, the answer is readily available. Throughout the phoney peace following China's unilateral withdrawal from NEFA India has asserted its right to reoccupy the vacated areas. The exercise of this right falls short either of an expulsion of the Chinese forces or of any solution of the border problem but is nevertheless an essential preliminary. Cannot well-equipped patrols be sent into the vacated areas in a sort of probing action for the consequences of which India will be fully prepared?

The factors that inhibit large scale Chinese military action will continue to inhibit Peking. Any major crisis, which is most unlikely, will provoke western intervention while a minor crisis will stimulate western aid and create a genuine sense of emergency at home. In the alternative China may agree to negotiate but if it does not the gradual reoccupation of vacated territory can be completed, thereby politically strengthening India's position and frustrating Peking's attempt to consolidate the *status quo*. It is sometimes argued that the national security cannot be gambled away on probabilities but policy is always a balance of probabilities and a failure to calculate in this way could be far more damaging to the national interest than the consequences of an intelligent gamble.