

THE OTHER BOMBS: FRANCE AND CHINA

The proliferation of nuclear weapons is one of our problems that—long foreseen—is growing to full size. Unless there is possible some international agreements that would inhibit the spread of such weapons, we will soon have passed a point of no return. For this reason the evaluation of the nuclear forces of France and China are of particular significance. Each of these national nuclear forces exists apart from, though still closely allied with, the two great world powers, the U.S. and the USSR.

The evaluation of the French bomb is made by Jean-Marie Domenach, editor of the French monthly Esprit. His article first appeared in the February 19 issue of Commonweal. Arthur Lall, a visiting professor of international relations at Cornell, contributed an analysis of the political effects of the Chinese bomb to the February issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Substantial parts of these two articles follow.

DE GAULLE'S BOMB

The French Parliament has just approved a military budget which includes important credits for the atomic deterrent. And on the same occasion, the Government proclaimed its intention of pursuing to the end its policy of nuclear armament and its plan of testing a hydrogen bomb soon. That nuclear policy is at the root of its quarrel with Germany, which has agreed to the M.L.F. It has become obvious that the atomic striking force is the pivot of President de Gaulle's foreign policy and that he will even withdraw from NATO rather than abandon that policy.

The parliamentary opposition voted against the project. But no one could have foreseen how badly these men would be defeated or how much popular support the policy would have attracted. To be sure, the Communist Party organized a few meetings. The trade unions said repeatedly that the striking force would take away funds needed for schools and hospitals. A league against nuclear armament, founded eighteen months ago under the leadership of Claude Bourdet, held a meeting in Paris. But clearly no one's heart was in it.

Even the French intellectuals, ordinarily so quick to protest against every abuse, have been silent, with a few exceptions. Whereas in England and Ger-

many, scholars and theologians took the lead in campaigning against the atom bomb, in France only one such savant can be cited, the biologist, Jean Rostand—and to the best of my knowledge not a single prominent theologian.

What is the cause of this apathy? At the outset it must be stated that public opinion took no significant part in the debate: nuclear armament had been initiated by the last governments of the Fourth Republic in a sort of secret fashion (and a bad conscience has continued to paralyze the opposition, since its leaders feel that they, also, had some responsibility in the matter). The new weapon was developed, always in shadows, under the protection of the war in Algeria. When the striking force emerged into the light to become a political problem, the French bomb already existed; and even its enemies did not dare to ask that it be thrown into the sea.

As to the intellectuals, their strength had been sapped by the seven years of Algerian war, the long struggle against the army's use of torture and the effort to prevent France from going fascist. Peace in Algeria left the moral conscience of France exhausted, unequal to a new battle against nuclear armament. Moreover, such weapons helped to relieve us of the burden of a traditional army, which for the first time in French history had just attempted a *coup d'état*.

Another even more serious circumstance must be added to all these. The French are not warlike but they have never been pacifists; they even manifest a certain repugnance for pacifism because they have experienced its weakness and its ambiguity. To confine myself to more recent history, the pacifists of the 30's helped to disarm France without preventing the followers of Hitler from arming, and a certain number of these pacifists went over to Hitler's side after 1940, on the grounds that a live sheep is better than a dead lion. That tragic experience, which continues to lie dormant in the European unconscious, should never be forgotten. We have had occasion to test the value of certain convictions; we distrust moralism in politics since it often serves ends opposed to the objectives of politics. We also find it hard to take seriously the demand for unilateral disarmament which has developed in certain Anglo-Saxon

circles; we seem to perceive in it a sentimental protest which goes beyond politics and which seeks to soothe the conscience rather than to succeed. . . .

Most Frenchmen believe, more or less consciously, that it is not their bomb which is to blame anyway. Others began it; on what basis can these nations seek to forbid us from following in their footsteps? It is claimed that the atom bomb should remain the privilege of the two great world powers; but then, why Britain? Above all, why has the United States aided the English to master the atomic weapon and refused to communicate even the smallest atomic secret to the French? The French do not understand why they are reproached for the spread of these weapons when this proliferation began with the preferential treatment accorded Great Britain by the United States. This is also the source of the refusal to sign the Moscow test-ban agreement, which is generally considered to be an agreement of the atomic haves against the have-nots, and which even perhaps presents the rough outline of a twofold hegemony. It is a curious fact that many Frenchmen were more conscious of the threats in the Soviet-American agreement than they were of its promises; for they saw there a revival of the Yalta policy, which ended in the partition and satellization of Europe.

This leads us to the most important argument de Gaulle brings forward in support of his atomic striking force. One nation cannot entrust another with its security. First, because it will never be absolutely sure of being defended when the times comes. The French still have a complex about Munich; they feel ashamed for having abandoned, in 1938, a Czechoslovakia which was as necessary to them strategically then as France herself may be to the Americans now. And since a people which does not accept its primary duty of self-defense is a people that has given up, what part would the French have in deciding the destiny of Europe, their own destiny, if they began by renouncing the burden of their own national defense? Twenty years ago the United States abandoned to the Soviet Union a third of Europe, although at the time the U.S. had a nuclear-weapon monopoly. What would happen if the USSR again became threatening, if American opinion again became isolationist? Europeans must be the first to decide the fate of Europe.

Admittedly France alone and its little striking force are powerless to assure the defense of Europe. But the problem is precisely to "create" Europe, in other words to bring together the resources of the European nations, in order to fashion a new political power of world rank—which means that no European

nation would entrust its protection to an outside power, however friendly. If Europeans continue, each country by itself, to negotiate for American protection, they will never have either the will or the capacity to achieve their own unity. A politically united Europe presupposes, first of all, a common will and a willingness to risk something together. And an autonomous defense is precisely the test of Europe's will.

Such a line of argument moves the French Left, at least that sector of the Left which has always sought the path of a "neutralist" foreign policy, a policy independent of the United States. Actually, de Gaulle proclaims what this Left has already asserted: that the era of the two blocs is over. Neither ideology, nor political order need now entail solidarity with a strategic bloc.

Many countries in Asia and Africa, and doubtless soon in South America as well, opt for a socialist regime: but this does not necessarily align them with the Soviet bloc in the Cuban pattern. Another possibility should be made available to them within the non-Communist world, a model different from the American one—and one which allows them to remain in the free world, while at the same time renouncing free enterprise. And should not Europe herself be at the head of this "third force," whose model would be a mixed society committed to a priority of needs and retaining a solidarity with the poor societies of the underdeveloped world?

I have felt it necessary to reproduce the Gaullist argument because it is too frequently distorted in the United States, where people like to see in it only a shrill demand for power. In doing so, I have probably defended the policy in the direction of my own hopes. I do believe that the era of blocs has ended and that the era of decolonization continues; I think that France should dissociate herself from American policy as pursued in regard to Cuba and Vietnam; I believe that Europe can have a destiny other than that of supplying satellites to the two Great Powers, that our continent is capable of proposing a type of society other than that of the United States. Obviously in this I am close to certain Gaullist arguments, and a number of Left intellectuals in France would have a similar point of view.

But that does not mean that we accept the apologetics for nuclear retaliation, the exalting of national independence for its own sake and a distrust of initiative toward peace, all of which characterize de Gaulle's policy as well. We are convinced that the

striking force has no future: its burden will soon be too heavy for our economy. We understand de Gaulle's unwillingness to take the easy way by abandoning it. But this determination, if applied to France alone, can lead only to the impasse of nationalism.

Would Europe be able again to take on this new responsibility on its own account? The answer depends on all Europeans. But most of them prefer the comfort of American protection to the risks and burdens of European independence. Humiliated, divided, and now hungering after well-being, Europe has not yet found the faith needed for setting itself to rights. Europe rejects the question which de Gaulle puts to it and in a way is right to do so, for he poses it in a provocative manner and within a narrowly national perspective. However, it remains the essential question. If Europe is capable of a will toward autonomous destiny, it will cease to serve as an objective, as a stake for the Great Powers, and will become instead an agent of diversity and *détente*; it will prove the possibility of moving beyond the national phase of political development. Then—with or without the atomic bomb—it will have served the cause of peace, not by words, but by deeds.

Jean-Marie Domenach

THE CHINESE BOMB

The explosion of the Chinese atomic bomb is the most significant military event in Asia since 1904, when Japan defeated imperial Russia. This statement is made with full consideration of other climactic events such as the defeat of the French in Southeast Asia, or the near military retreat of the Netherlands from West Irian. The Chinese test on October 15, 1964, already has produced more political reverberations than any of these events including that of 1904. It has given notice to the world that the successors of the Middle Kingdom are in a position to exercise their hegemony in Southeast Asia.

Of course, the world has greatly changed since the time of the dynastic hegemonies of China. Most Asian countries are "equal" members of a world body—the United Nations—and some have significant ideas concerning their own influence in parts of Southeast Asia. The officials of the "new" Middle Kingdom cannot call the representatives of distant lands barbarians. Although China is proud and imbued with a sense of her own destiny, she is the first major Asian country to adopt a totally foreign ideology as the basis of her own political, economic,

social, and international postures. Finally, and no less important, there are other countries today considerably more powerful than China. Indeed, even in Asia, if Japan were to defy the constitutional interdiction she herself has placed upon the development of nuclear weapons, she could outstrip China in their development. Some of these facts must be known to thoughtful Chinese, and indeed, all of these facts and others which would caution prudence must be quite apparent to the leaders of China.

But China does not have to be very overt in order to assert a degree of hegemony in Southeast Asia. Let us consider some of the developments which have taken place since the Chinese explosion. Cambodia congratulated China, as did North Vietnam. Laos expressed concern—not condemnation. And what of the countries with western orientation? The most significant response came from Bangkok, where the prime minister, General Thanom Kittikachorn, preferred to "wait and see" before commenting. Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Razak said that the Chinese nuclear test had "strengthened the Communist position" in Southeast Asia. Premier Lee Kuan Yew said in Singapore that "this is the first time that an Asian power has emerged as a member of the nuclear club. We do not know whether it will be a force of peace or of world war. We will have to wait and see."

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These six countries expressed sentiments ranging from admiration and respect to concern. We must remember that they are all China's neighbors and are bound to feel that they must live in peace with her. How will these neighbors—relatively small countries—come to terms with a nuclear China? I suggest that the most likely course is the adoption of some form of neutralism. In the past, before the United Nations and before the rapid means of communication with other power centers in the world, I would have anticipated that these countries would have fallen more directly under Chinese hegemony. However, in the present world, it is more likely that developments in Southeast Asia will be toward non-alignment. In such a situation China will not be able to describe her neighbors as runnings dogs of imperialism and reactionary capitalism.

While China has not always treated nonaligned countries exactly gently, it is a mistake to place too much emphasis on China's relations with India. India, and more importantly India under Nehru, was a rival. . . . For these reasons, the case of India must be set apart. A more typical case, or so it must seem to the neighboring small countries, is the treat-

ment accorded to nonaligned Burma by China. This treatment might be described as generally benign and could serve as a pattern for other states of Southeast Asia in their relations with a nuclear China.

I would suggest that such a development need not be regarded as a retrograde step in the peaceful evolution of an independent Southeast Asia. To begin with, we should consider the historic past which, by and large, has been one of greater acceptance of Chinese primacy than would be compatible with a nonaligned or even a neutralist status—the latter is regarded by the nonaligned world as a more supine position and one which most reject for themselves.

Second, I would draw attention to the fact that the only country of Southeast Asia, except South Vietnam, which has been critical of the Chinese nuclear explosion is the relatively well-established non-aligned country, Indonesia. On October 21, 1964, Dr. Subandrio, deputy prime minister, foreign minister, and (at the time he made the statement) acting president of the Indonesian Republic, stated: "Nuclear detonations are unwelcome because they pollute water and air." Subandrio also cold-shouldered the Chinese proposal for a world conference on nuclear disarmament—in doing so exhibited a degree of sophistication which has distinguished the non-aligned more than the aligned in recent years. . . .

Third, what development is likely to be the least divisive in Southeast Asia, and therefore the most likely to result in unified and strong positions? The answer, on any reasonable reckoning, is nonalignment. It would be artificial in the extreme to expect the whole of Southeast Asia to espouse the Western cause (in the international political sense) and likewise to expect them to adopt the Chinese brand of Marxism or whatever it is that the Chinese imagine they are adopting. The remaining course is that of some brand of nonalignment—and I use the words "some brand of" deliberately. The strength of nonalignment is that unlike other contemporary postures it does not require of its adherents (in itself perhaps too strong a word to describe the very loose relationship between the countries of nonaligned persuasion) a rigid uniformity of position. These countries will stand together mainly in any situation that evokes the memory of colonialism—in the context of Southeast Asia, in any situation that creates the apprehension of hegemony, overlordship, or any of the forms of international influence which are loosely called neocolonialism. I would suggest that the Chinese bomb encourages such a development, and is not one which any one should regret. . . .

Will the Chinese achievement set off Asian or Afro-Asian chauvinism? This is possible, but I do

not think it a serious danger. Though the Chinese bomb has received several Asian and African bouquets, it has not been heralded as the harbinger of a new Asian movement to throw off the hegemony of the superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union. In this respect there is more evidence of continental chauvinism in Europe than in Asia. . . .

While this is so, many countries of Asia, and perhaps even more so the more recently independent countries of Africa, are displaying a lack of consistency in their first reactions to the Chinese bomb. . . . There is implicit here a tendency to regard as venial the development of weapons which bring Asia and Africa to the level of the other parts of the world.

In reality this attitude highlights one of the fundamental difficulties in the way of implementing proposals to prohibit the dissemination of nuclear weapons. What the Asian and African countries are saying, among other things, is that it is a good thing that they, too, now have the bomb in a world where others have it. Is this not basically de Gaulle's attitude, and is it not an attitude which is spreading in Western Europe and results in calls for an independent deterrent and an end to dependence on other nuclear powers? In short, in a nuclear age there are two courses which make sense to most people, including, it seems, most statesmen. These two courses are either equal (in kind but not necessarily in quantity) armament or equal (and preferably total) disarmament. If this basic truth were really accepted by the two nuclear giants, they would realize that their nibbling proposals to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons are impotent palliatives; that the only way to handle the enormous problem of the arms race is to get on with the job of disarmament itself. Dr. Subandrio was right when he added—to those same remarks to which we have referred—that one advantage of the Chinese bomb may be that it could make the nuclear club speed up the process of disarmament.

What is more likely is that the nuclear club will do no such thing because the Chinese explosion is not in fact the beginning of a nuclear weapons race among another group of powers. The present members of the nuclear club will be mildly annoyed at the Chinese developments but will become relaxed when, in another year or so, it seems that other countries are not following the example of China. The nuclear powers probably will eventually deal with China in an appropriate disarmament forum. But in a few years there will be another crop of

nuclear powers appearing, and then perhaps the original members of the club will get down to the business of disarmament. Till then it looks as if, the Chinese explosion notwithstanding, we are in for a period of flirting with ideas on the periphery of disarmament—and hoping for the best. In short, I do not see the Chinese bomb having any great effect on the handling of the question of disarmament.

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I have implied in the above remarks that India, Japan, Sweden, and other countries are not going to denounce the partial test ban on the plea that the Chinese explosion has materially changed the circumstances of their security. This, I believe, will be the case unless the Chinese, carried away by their new achievement, do something spectacular, such as another attack on India, or explosion of such a comprehensive series of tests that it is clear that they mean to develop a first-class nuclear arsenal. Since the Chinese have already once attacked India they might do so again, though I would tend to believe that their new bomb is not by itself going to be the cause of such an attack. If an attack comes, it will be the result of the touchiness of two “great” and sensitive countries again building up to a border situation which becomes so precarious that it only resettles after a few local conflicts. Unfortunately, both sides are still capable of contributing to such steps, though India is more cautious today than she was in 1960–62. To conclude this particular point, I would judge that if the Chinese were to launch another armed attack against India, internal developments in India would result almost certainly in a new group coming into power, which would probably go ahead with the development of nuclear weapons.

The present government of India will almost certainly not develop nuclear weapons, even though the interesting person who is now prime minister has said that he is not as innocent as he looks. Indeed, on November 24, 1964, after having given the impression that India would definitely keep to the road of strictly peaceful development of the atom, Shastri told the Indian Parliament that all the implications of the manufacture of the bomb must be carefully weighed. He added that it is necessary that the country know the technique of the manufacture of the bomb. Two days later the executive committee of the Congress Parliamentary Party endorsed these views. There the matter is likely to rest unless some startling international development of direct concern to India occurs. These remarks must not be taken to mean that there is not a considerable body of

opinion in India which is strongly in favor of going ahead with the manufacture of the bomb. Of course there is. Indeed, there are those who feel very sore that India did not get the jump on China, and who are convinced that India could by now have had a nice little cluster of bombs. But these people as yet are not in control of the situation.

So far as Japan is concerned, I think there is little doubt that in various ways the country must be making sure, here and now, that it is in a position to manufacture nuclear weapons with all speed. For Japan the decisive factor will probably be the rate at which China develops her own arsenal. The faster and the more comprehensive China's development, the surer it is that Japan will find a way around her present interdiction and plunge into the nuclear bomb business. So far as Sweden and Switzerland are concerned, their future course will be more affected by European developments than those in Sinkiang. I would say that the Chinese bomb is not relevant to them. But it is difficult to imagine the Australian government not taking stock of its capacities in the nuclear field with a view to manufacture if the situation becomes increasingly menacing. In the Middle East the Chinese bomb will have some effect—if only that it will give certain countries another excuse to accelerate their plans and redouble their efforts. But, for various reasons, these developments will remain highly secret—so much so that we will not know when at least two countries in that area actually have started building up their nuclear arsenals. Perhaps they already have; after all, test explosions are not absolutely necessary any longer.

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In conclusion, as a result of the bomb it is going to be much more difficult to keep China out of the United Nations. But the way things are going, a vote in the General Assembly in favor of the Peking government will be a Pyrrhic victory. The Peking government is not going to come to New York, it seems, unless the Taiwanese can be extracted from the Security Council. This is going to be more difficult to achieve. Similarly, though there might be a vote in favor of China being brought into the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Conference, she will not participate until the Taiwanese quit the Security Council. Finally, the Chinese bomb will increase pressures for negotiations on the issues in Southeast Asia which plague the world. If we do get such negotiations, rather than an intensification of the military conflict, this could be the most constructive effect of the Chinese bomb.

Arthur S. Lall