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## DISSOCIATION OF SENSIBILITY

IN HIS ESSAY OF 1921 ON "The Metaphysical Poets", T. S. Eliot argued that the poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had suffered from a "dissociation of sensibility" which made their feeling more crude, and their thinking reflective or ruminative. "Tennyson and Browning", Eliot wrote, "are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience: it modified his sensibility." The phrase *dissociation of sensibility* rapidly achieved great popularity; it provided a formula for expressing the revolt of the contemporary mind against the poetry of the neo-classical period and of the Romantics, and it also reflected, vaguely, the pessimism and disillusionment with regard to modern man that characterized the post-war period. In the course of time, however, Eliot's phrase came in for a good deal of criticism,<sup>1</sup> and in 1947 Eliot himself in his address on Milton before the British Academy withdrew his earlier assertion that it was Milton and Dryden, as the most influential poets of the seventeenth century, who were to a considerable extent responsible for the dissociation of sensibility. He suggested that the phenomenon was not a purely literary matter, but that it had profound historical causes. It is dissociation of sensibility in this broader sense with which we shall be concerned.

A convenient starting-point is provided by Eliot's distinction between the thinking of Tennyson and Browning and that of Donne, between "ruminative thinking" on the one hand, and the kind of thinking that modifies the sensibility on the other. One way of formulating the distinction is to say that Tennyson and Browning are engaged in abstract thinking, the thinking of the mind alone, while Donne practises concrete thinking, the thinking of the body. "He who sings a lasting song, /Thinks in a marrow-bone," as Yeats says. The difference between the two kinds of thinking can be illustrated by means of an analogy from the field of psychoanalysis. The psychoanalyst recognizes two stages in the growth of his patient's understanding. First, the patient acknowledges that the interpretation of his symptoms offered by the analyst constitutes a hypothesis theoretically adequate to the facts. Then, in the second stage,

which may occur some time later, the patient suddenly experiences a violent storm of emotion, and the unavowed feelings that are buried within him flood into consciousness along the channels provided by the analyst's theoretical formulations. It is this achievement of insight, when the patient knows the truth with intuitive certainty, with his whole body, that corresponds to concrete thinking. What was before merely known verbally, abstractly, he now experiences as concrete knowledge that modifies his sensibility.

From what has just been said it will be clear that thinking of the body cannot really be communicated; all that can be done is to set up the conditions most favourable for allowing another person to experience the thought that the thinker has experienced. Here one might draw an analogy with poetry, for the words on the printed page are designed to make it possible for the experience that is the poem to be re-created in the mind of the reader; no one supposes that by merely memorizing a poem one possesses it. Abstract knowledge, on the other hand, can be readily communicated: a boy of twelve can acquire a knowledge of the scientific discoveries made by Newton, though he cannot possess himself of the wisdom of Plato. (Unfortunately, he can be made to *seem* to comprehend Plato; T. S. Eliot observes in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* that it is easy to substitute a "sham acquisition of taste" for the genuine development of it, and what he says of literature in general can obviously be applied to wisdom literature.<sup>2</sup>) Because abstract thinking can be communicated (and concrete thinking can be "abstracted" and then communicated), a man is able to accumulate abstract knowledge with great rapidity. His rapid progress in acquiring abstract knowledge is of course only possible because he travels light, leaving his body behind him; the train moves off at tremendous speed because the carriages remain behind in the railway station. My argument is that this is precisely the situation of modern man: the desire for quick and easy gains has led him to cultivate abstract thinking at the price of a loss of contact between head and heart, and body and spirit, or, more precisely, at the price of dissociation of the senses, dissociation of the feelings, and dissociation of the identity.

The nature of dissociation of the senses can best be illustrated by a kind of parable. A shepherd who has a dozen sheep knows each of them by name, by a hundred details of its appearance, almost by its smell. If one sheep dies, the shepherd experiences the death of that sheep in its concrete, sensuous reality. When the flock becomes larger, it is more difficult for him to preserve his personal relationship with all his sheep. Then, we may suppose, someone teaches him a little elementary arithmetic, and the problem of keeping a grasp

on what is going on is simplified. Now he will say, not "Fitch is lost," but "I have only got in forty-nine sheep; one of them must be lost." Armed with this knowledge, he will perhaps see his affairs prosper, until the time comes when he has a huge flock, but hardly knows what a sheep looks like, because he spends all his time in an office working out complicated calculations concerning costs, production, profits, and the like. Finally, of course, such a high level of abstraction is reached that his work can be performed more satisfactorily by a machine than by the man.

This, in simplified form, is the story of modern industry. Our shepherd turned accountant deals with ciphers, abstractions, symbols, signs or words, rather than with things, and this is precisely the situation of the modern businessman. The worker in the factory, though not so completely cut off from the senses as the executive, is also alienated from the products of his work. It is important also to note that the scientist, who is responsible for the technical progress on which modern industry is based, uses an approach which in certain respects resembles that of our shepherd. The shepherd turned accountant gained an ability to organize complex material, but at the price of a loss of direct sensory contact with the object. He withdrew himself as a person out of the experience, for any man—or machine—could reach the same results from the same figures. The scientist, too, carries out an experiment with the idea of excluding his own individual tastes, opinions, and so on, so that the results he obtains will have universal application, and can be tested and verified by other scientists—or machines—in other parts of the world. Like the shepherd, again, the scientist ignores the concrete, sensuous reality of the object, for the sake of understanding and mastering it. In order for Newton to relate the falling of the apple to the movement of the planet, it was necessary for him to ignore something of the unique, concrete particularity of that individual apple.

It may seem at first sight strange to offer the scientist as an example of the man who is dissociated from the senses, for it is usually assumed that the scientist owes his allegiance to the senses, to what is demonstrable, tangible, and measurable. There is a basis of truth behind this assumption, of course, but the important point is that the scientist only considers the particular, as it were grudgingly, for the sake of abstracting from it a generalization that should ideally be capable of expression in mathematical terms, that is, with the maximum degree of abstraction.<sup>3</sup> The scientist, in fact, like the mediaeval schoolman, turns away from the senses to a more unified satisfactory and tractable world governed by universal laws. This truth, which philosophers of

science have been stressing recently was noted by Gerard Manley Hopkins eighty years ago. In a letter of 1886, he writes:

The study of physical science has, unless corrected in some way, an effect the very opposite of what one might suppose. One would think it might materialise people (no doubt it does make them or, rather I shd. say, they become materialists; but that is not the same thing: they do not believe in Matter more but in God less); but in fact they seem to end in conceiving only of a world of formulas, with its being properly speaking in thought, towards which the outer world acts as a sort of feeder, supplying examples for literary purposes.<sup>4</sup>

And, as Whitehead point out in *Science and the Modern World*, the "formulas" with which the scientist works, for example, the idea of a straight line without breadth or thickness, are highly abstract, and in fact unreal, though of course extremely useful. But then the abstractions of the shepherd who builds up a big business are likewise extremely useful.

It is essential to note that a heavy price has to be paid for the gains achieved by the process of abstraction. Our conquest of nature encourages us to seek solutions to our problems outside ourselves, and we fail to realize that the growth of our wealth or our power cannot keep pace with the growth of our desires when they are dissociated from the senses. In his book *The Image*, an excellent study of the phenomenon of dissociation in the twentieth-century American, Daniel Boorstin observes: "Never have people been more masters of their environment. Yet never has a people felt more deceived and disappointed. For never has a people expected so much more than the world could offer."<sup>5</sup> This criticism has, indeed, been a commonplace of Romantic thought for a hundred and fifty years. As Shelley writes in his *Defence of Poetry* (1821): "The cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world; and man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave."<sup>6</sup>

Second, even our ability to cope with life at the physical level is threatened by the success of abstract thinking in subjugating the natural world. The intractability of things-in-themselves constitutes a challenge (in Toynbee's sense) that calls forth man's energy and courage. Too complete a mastery over the external world creates a cosy, air-conditioned nightmare in which the powers of sensation atrophy, and man finds himself in the situation prophetically foreshadowed in H. G. Wells's story, *The Time Machine*, where the Eloi,

those "graceful children of the upperworld," cling together pathetically in a vain effort to escape the consequences of their dependence on the horrible, subterranean, cannibalistic Morlocks, who alone are tough enough to encounter brute reality. *The Time Machine* can be read as a parable of the class-struggle precisely because it is the middle classes who have been most successful in overcoming the difficulties of life, and thus in cutting themselves off from reality. Dissociation of the senses has hitherto manifested itself principally among people in the middle classes: it is only when the shepherd is converted into an accountant that he forgets what sheep look like! Now, however, the machine has begun to take over the duties of a working-class, so that most men are exposed to what Professor Boorstin in the opening paragraph of his book, describes as "the thicket of unreality which stands between us and the facts of life."

Third, once we have lost contact with reality, we are forced to rely on other people to tell us what the object (e. g. the sheep) is really like. We come to resemble blind men (except that we do not develop our other senses) in that we do not look at the world, but depend on others to describe it for us; thus we find ourselves at the mercy of *other people*, and above all, of course, at the mercy of the symbol-manipulators. (In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Orwell showed how easily the Ministry of Truth could manipulate public attitudes in Oceania, making the people transfer their alliance from Eastasia to Eurasia with incredible rapidity.) The man who is rooted in the senses has some chance of resisting the infection of public opinion, because, like the children in the tale, he simply *sees* that the emperor has no clothes on; but where there is dissociation, where the organism is receiving no direct information about the nature of things, it is obliged to accept on trust whatever information it gets at second-hand from other people. Dissociation of the senses, then, like all the forms of dissociation, increases our dependence on other people, and the "other-directed man" (described by Riesman in *The Lonely Crowd*) who does not attend to things-in-themselves, or even to things in relation to himself, but instead has his antennae delicately adjusted to other people, is essentially a product of an age of dissociation.

It will be evident from what has been said so far that dissociation of the senses inevitably leads to dissociation of the feelings. Remoteness from the object destroys the bond of love that naturally links a man with the things he touches. Our shepherd can love his sheep, but he cannot love his money (except in a slightly insane and dissociated fashion). Once the loving-bond with the created world is broken, the attitude towards things changes to one

of fear. The feelings we have about something (such as a sheep, a person, or an institution) are in the natural course of things rooted in our physical relationship with that thing, and acquire substance and reality from a multitude of contacts with it in the course of the rough-and-tumble of everyday living. But when we have no physical relationship with the object—whether it be the goods we sell or the enemy we hate—then our feelings, liberated from the restrictions that reality normally imposes, are free to run riot in fantasy, swelling to monstrous proportions, or oscillating from one extreme to another. In the passage from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* referred to a moment ago, Orwell stresses the point that the feelings of the people of Oceania could be manipulated so easily because they existed in a vacuum:

If he [the average citizen of Oceania] were allowed contact with foreigners he would discover that they are creatures similar to himself and that most of what he has been told about them is lies. The sealed world in which he lives would be broken, and the fear, hatred, and self-righteousness on which his morale depends might evaporate.<sup>7</sup>

It is arguable that Orwell is here uncharacteristically optimistic, for the evidence seems to suggest that stereotypes about foreigners are not much modified by experience of them; in certain areas almost all men are dissociated from the senses so effectively that they become permanently trapped in a sealed world into which no direct information can penetrate. In any case, because of the effect of modern communications, we are all today in a situation where our feelings are to a considerable extent concerned with objects—like T. V. stars or astronauts or national political figures—that we never see or touch. And even in the case of those objects that we do touch and see—for example, our wives, our neighbours, and our colleagues—we can avoid the labor of adjusting our feelings to their complex reality, because the mobility of modern society makes it easy to switch to another wife, another neighbourhood, or another job. Thus the conditions of modern life, which are the fruits of technological progress due to abstract thinking, create first dissociation of the senses, and thence dissociation of the feelings.

We must next consider the way in which abstract thinking has led directly to dissociation of the feelings. We can begin by glancing at a speech in *Hamlet* in which Claudius, echoing the arguments previously used by Gertrude, urges Hamlet to cease mourning for his father:

But, you must know, your father lost a father;  
 That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound  
 In filial obligation for some term  
 To do obsequious sorrow; but to persevere  
 In obstinate condolment is a course  
 Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:

. . . . .

Fie! 'tis a fault to Heaven,  
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
 To reason most absurd, whose common theme  
 Is death of fathers.

This speech offers the interesting spectacle of one man telling another that he "ought" not to have the feelings that he in fact does have. In this situation one man will ignore the advice that is offered to him (as Hamlet in fact does); another will perhaps find that the offered advice strikes a chord in his mind, awakening in him an authentic desire to master his grief; and a third man will be persuaded to "accept" the advice at a verbal level, altering his behaviour or his ideas accordingly, although no genuine change has taken place in his feelings. Clearly, the difference between the second man and the third man corresponds to the difference between unified sensibility and dissociated sensibility, or between genuine development of taste and the sham acquisition of it. And just as the man whose taste is an artificial acquisition does not know what he *really* feels about a work of art, so the man who disguises or suppresses his real feelings loses contact with himself, and becomes dissociated from his feelings.

Abstract thinking encourages the kind of response seen in the third man because it fosters the tendency to stand apart from oneself and look at a situation from a detached point of view. Consider, for example, the famous passage of *Political Justice* in which Godwin argues that if a man were able to save one of two people from a fire, in circumstances where the other would have to be left to perish, he ought to elect to save Fenelon rather than his own valet, or even his own father or mother. Godwin formulates as follows the moral that his anecdote is meant to illustrate:

. . . the soundest criterion of virtue is, to put ourselves in the place of an impartial spectator, of an angelic nature, suppose, beholding us from an elevated station, and uninfluenced by our prejudices, conceiving what would be his esti-

mate of the intrinsic circumstances of our neighbour, and acting accordingly.\*

What magic is there in the pronoun 'my' to overturn the decisions of everlasting truth? My wife or my mother may be a fool, or a prostitute, malicious, lying or deceitful. If they be, of what consequence is it that they are mine? (Book II, Chapter 2)

*Political Justice* exercises a powerful attraction, as Wordsworth admitted even after repudiating Godwinism,<sup>8</sup> because it combines the authority and prestige of science and Holy Scripture with the meretricious appeal of abstract thinking. (Note that Godwin conveys the impression that virtue can be achieved easily and rapidly.) It is, of course, true that the scientist adopts towards physical problems an attitude of angelic disinterestedness, putting himself "in the place of an impartial spectator" when he carries out an experiment. The religious man, too, in imitation of Christ, seeks to free himself from the bonds of merely personal feeling and natural affection.<sup>9</sup> But, we must note, the scientist, quite apart from any selfless enthusiasm for his subject that he may feel, knows that only scientific impartiality produces results, so that he has good and sufficient *selfish* reasons for desiring to be impartial. As for the religious man, after long exercise in spiritual endeavour and self-discipline, he experiences more joy in the love of God and in the love of truth than in the love of father and mother, so that he too has a kind of selfish reason (or, at any rate, a valid inner motivation) for practising holy dispassion. It is clear, then, that the scientist and the saint are special cases that offer little guidance for ordinary mortals.

Faced with Godwin's suggestion that he ought to prefer Fenelon to his father, the ordinary man, it would seem, can react in any one of the three ways I discussed a moment ago. He can reject Godwin's advice, saying, in effect: "But this particular person happens to be *my* father, and, from my own limited, subjective point of view, I place a higher value upon him than upon any other man in the world, Fenelon included." Or, he can make a deliberate effort of will to train himself in obedience to Godwin's rule, perhaps seeking to cultivate the Stoic virtue of *apatheia* that we find, for example, in Swift's Houyhnhnms, who feel no grief on the death of a parent or friend. Or, finally, he may conduct himself in outward conformity to Godwin's recommendations, without being authentically inspired by the Godwinian ideal. In this

\* Cf. John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism*: "As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator."



last category, we may for our present purposes distinguish three sub-divisions: first, the conscious hypocrite who pretends to have motives that will meet with the approval of others; next, the man who is self-deceived, who flatters his vanity by pretending to himself and to others that he is better than he really is, and, as Hazlitt says in his essay on Godwin in *The Spirit of the Age*, mistakes a "heartless indifference for a superiority to more natural and generous feelings"; third, the man who is self-ignorant, who does not know what he feels, and meekly allows other people to tell him what he must feel and what he must do. Both the man who is self-deceived and the man who is self-ignorant are alienated from their own feelings. Abstract thinking, then, invites a man to adopt a universal point of view, to look down on himself with angelic impartiality from an "elevated station," with the result that, like the shepherd who forgot what sheep look like, he loses contact with himself and forgets what he really feels; in other words, he becomes dissociated from his feelings.

All the forms of dissociation are mutually related, and it can be said that dissociation of the identity is both a result and a cause of the other forms of dissociation. Our identities are to a considerable extent shaped by objects in the world, by the feelings that we have about these objects, and by the sentiments and aspirations that we form in relation to them; inevitably, then, lack of sensation and spurious feeling tend to produce a spurious identity. On the other hand, one of the main reasons why we falsify feelings is to tailor them to fit the false identity that we have chosen. Thus, if we identify ourselves with holy or saintly men, we dissociate ourselves from the unregenerate feelings of anger, hatred, and so on, that arise in our breasts; if we model ourselves upon the Napoleonic or Nietzschean *Obermann*, then we disown our feelings of compassion or weakness; and if we follow the path of conformity, then, like Riesman's other-directed man, we keep our antennae delicately attuned to other people, taking care to re-broadcast the same tune that they are playing, and fleeing from the feelings that would brand us as outsiders. Clearly, whether we copy Christ or Napoleon or the Joneses next door, whether we aspire to be a lotus flower or a violet in the middle of a bunch of violets, we are perverting ourselves and blighting our true flowering if we imitate the outward forms of an excellence (or a mediocrity) prescribed for us by other people. And it cannot be too often repeated that this is really the heart of the matter: the essence of dissociation of the identity, as of all the forms of dissociation is that we do not obey the inner law of our own natures, but rather the voice of other people.

"At a certain point in his evolution," D. H. Lawrence says, "man be-

came cognitively conscious: he bit the apple: he began to know." And he adds, "But the moment man became aware of himself he made a picture of himself, and began to live from the picture: that is, from without inwards."<sup>10</sup> With the Fall of Man, the unique, interior self-knowledge that is the mark of the concrete thinking of the body is replaced by the exterior abstract knowledge that is common to all men. By dint of adopting the outlook of an impartial spectator, we learn to see ourselves as others see us, so that in the end we cease to know who we are or where we really stand. The mild form of dissociation of sensibility that Eliot discerns in Tennyson and Browning leads ultimately to that crisis of self-identity which threatens modern man.

## FOOTNOTES

1. See, for example, F. W. Bateson, "Contributions to a Dictionary of Critical Terms: II, *Dissociation of Sensibility*," *Essays in Criticism*, I (July, 1951), 302-312.
2. For a critical discussion of Eliot's dictum, see F. W. Bateson, "The Teaching of Literature: A Reply to Mr. Eliot," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, XXV (1955-1956), 38-46.
3. "Thus the scientist knows how to interest himself strictly in universals; he admits no individuals to his attention, except as the initiation of new studies or the verification of old ones." John Crowe Ransom, *The World's Body* (New York, 1938), p. 206.
4. *The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon*, ed. Claude Collier Abbott (London, 1935), p. 139.
5. Daniel Boorstin, *The Image* (Penguin, 1963), p. 16.
6. Similarly, in *The New Republic* (1877), W. H. Mallock has Mr. Herbert (who represents Ruskin) say: "Your mind, my good sir, that you boast of, is so occupied in subduing matter, that it is entirely forgetful of subduing itself—a matter, trust me, that is far more important."
7. George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Toronto, 1949), p. 197.
8. For Wordsworth's attitude to Godwin, see Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth-Century Background*, Chapter 11.
9. "Consequently the love of father, mother, and friends does not influence him unduly, for the sword of spiritual love severs all earthly love from his heart, so that he feels no deeper affection towards his father, mother and friends than towards other people unless he sees greater virtue or grace in them than in others," Walter Hilton, *The Ladder of Perfection*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (Penguin, 1957), pp. 219-220.
10. The sentences occur in Lawrence's "Review of *the Social Basis of Consciousness* by Trigant Burrow", collected in *Phoenix*, ed. E. D. McDonald (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1961), pp. 377-382.

Leo Y. Liu

## A NUCLEAR CHINA AND WORLD ORDER

DURING THE 1960's China emerged as another nuclear power in the world. Since 1964, China has conducted ten nuclear tests. They ranged from the first enriched-uranium bomb in 1964 to a nuclear warhead carried by a guided missile in 1966, a multi-megaton H-bomb in late 1968, and an underground test in late 1969. In addition, in 1970 and 1971, China successfully launched two space satellites. Thus China has conducted a very impressive variety of tests and at the same time demonstrated rapid progress in nuclear weapons development. It is therefore imperative to examine the effects of these Chinese nuclear weapons achievements on world order, especially on her neighboring countries in Southeast Asia.

One of the most outstanding characteristics of the present world order is that both superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, appear to be relatively "conservative" in the sense that neither of them seeks drastic change in the distribution of power in the world. Consequently, no more countries are to face a serious problem in the maintenance of their nationhood. The Soviet intervention in Hungary and her "invasion" of Czechoslovakia and the U. S. intervention in the Dominican Republic and her "invasion" of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs were basically defensive actions, carried out for the purpose of restoring the *status quo* in those areas.

The second characteristic of the present world order is that the military, economic, and political capabilities of the two superpowers are greater than that of any other country in the world. Only they possess the overwhelming military and economic resources necessary to qualify them as "superpowers." Only they have greater power to coerce and reward other countries. Consequently, they have been able to restrain other countries from taking large-scale military activity or military ventures in the world, especially in Asia. Thus in the Taiwan Strait crisis, the United States forced the Nationalist Chinese government to promise that they would not use military force to

attack Mainland China; in 1958, the Soviet Union refused to support Chinese bombardment of the Taiwanese offshore islands and in subsequent years refused to build up a nuclear force for China; in 1962, both superpowers pressed their respective factions in Laos to reach a settlement. Through their efforts, the superpowers have also brought peace to the 1965 Indian-Pakistan war and brought into existence the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. Their present restraints on those involved in the Indo-Chinese war and in the Middle East War could be regarded as other cases in point.

The third characteristic of the present world order is that continuous technological advancement has tremendously increased the destructive capability of nuclear weaponry. Because of the increasing costs of the use of nuclear weapons, both superpowers are cautious in their relations with other countries and with each other. Both of them appear to realize that their nuclear weapons must remain unused, the alternative being mutual suicide. Consequently, neither superpower would maneuver the other into an extreme situation out of the fear that her adversary might become sufficiently desperate to use her nuclear weapons.

It is true that in the past few years, the superpowers have experienced many crises in such areas as Quemoy, Suez, and Cuba, wherein they have made threats of nuclear war. These threats, however, were made in a rather cautious manner and none of them was made for aggressive or offensive purposes. For example, the Soviet threat in the 1957-8 Quemoy crisis was not made until the crisis was virtually over and there was apparently no longer any danger of a nuclear war. The threat made by the United States during the 1962-3 Cuban crisis was intended to force the Soviet Union to remove her missiles, which appeared to threaten American security, from Cuba. It seems that both superpowers have exerted themselves in order to avoid an all-out war. As *Ciro Elliott Zoppo* points out:

While threats of nuclear war have been made by both Soviet and American leaders in crises or local-conflict situations, the avoidance of all-out nuclear war seems to have become an established "rule" of the international system.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, *Hans J. Morgenthau* correctly observes that "atomic power, monolithically controlled by the United States and the Soviet Union and keeping each other's destructive capability in check, is a force for peace, however precarious."<sup>2</sup>

In view of these characteristics, it appears that although the present world order is far from ideal, it does provide some kind of relative stability and a sense of moderation in the world, and hence in Asia.

Then, how does China's emergence as a nuclear power affect these characteristics and consequently those countries in Asia?

Critics of China express the opinion that China is an irresponsible and dangerous nuclear power because of her alleged claim that a third world war is inevitable and that it would not matter much if even half of the world population were to die in this war. For example, the Soviet Union claimed that

to prevent a new world war is a real and quite feasible task. . . .

And what is the position of the CPC [i.e. Chinese Communist Party] leadership? What do the theses that they propagates mean: an end cannot be put to wars so long as imperialism exists; . . .

These theses mean that the Chinese comrades are acting contrary to the general course of the world communist movement in questions of war and peace. They do not believe in the possibility of preventing a new world war. . . .<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet Union further claimed, "every communist Leninist will feel disgust at an attitude to thermonuclear war such as this: 'Never mind if a half of mankind perishes, if 300 million Chinese die'."<sup>4</sup> What is more, the Soviet Union pointed out that the Chinese Communist statement "was no chance remark but considered conception."<sup>5</sup>

However, it is very doubtful that China has actually made these claims. In fact, over the past years, China has reiterated that "1. China wants peace, and not war; 2. It is the imperialists, and not we, who want to fight; 3. A world war can be prevented."<sup>6</sup> It appears that China has not claimed that a world war is inevitable. Nor has she sought such a war. Instead, her statements show more apprehension than aggressiveness. "It is they and not we who want to fight; . . ." China's other apparently bellicose statements are of the same nature:

Should the U.S. imperialists invade China's mainland, we will take all necessary measures to defeat them. . . . With the defeat of U. S. imperialism, the time will come when imperialism and colonialism will be really liquidated throughout the world.<sup>7</sup>

Another charge against China is that she "obviously underestimate[s] the whole danger of thermonuclear war" because she has contended that "the atomic bomb is a paper tiger" and is not terrible at all.

Through the years, China has indeed advocated the "paper tiger" assumption. In 1960, for instance, China maintained that

The atomic bomb is a paper tiger. This famous statement by Chairman Mao Tse-tung is known to all. This was our view in the past and this is still our view at present.<sup>8</sup>

However, the "paper tiger" argument does not necessarily mean that China has failed to understand the implications of nuclear weapons. In fact, in 1961, Marshal Yeh Chien-ying advised his troops to learn how to preserve their lives in a nuclear attack.<sup>9</sup> In February, 1964, Chou En-lai pointed out "the imperialists and certain other persons unscrupulously have distorted China's position and made widespread propaganda about it." He indicated that in a nuclear war China would lose more people than would other countries.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, there is little reason to maintain that China does not understand the implications of nuclear weapons. She fully realizes that the "paper tiger" is quite capable of becoming a "living tiger."

However, it is one thing to say that China does not want a world nuclear war, does not belittle the lives of human beings, and does not underestimate the mass destruction caused by nuclear weapons, and it is quite another to say that she will not pursue her major foreign policy objectives such as the establishment of her hegemony in at least Southeast Asia. So far, China appears to be quite cautious in pursuing her objectives, but this is probably due to her fear that any reckless moves might provoke the United States or provide her with an excuse to launch an attack on China or the Chinese nuclear facilities. Evidence indicates that this fear dates from approximately 1954. For example, in that year, Marshal Yeh Chien-ying warned his people to prepare against a sudden attack by the "imperialists", and admitted that in a nuclear war China's army would be in a comparatively backward position.<sup>11</sup> In 1964, after her first nuclear test, China openly admitted that American nuclear forces in Asia were a threat to China and believed that the United States might be tempted to launch a sudden nuclear attack on China:

The perfidious imperialists are accustomed to launch sudden attacks in starting an aggressive war, and new techniques create more favourable conditions for carrying out sudden military attacks.<sup>12</sup>

However, the effectiveness of this U.S. nuclear deterrence imposed on China is bound to decrease as China emerges to be a major nuclear power. In 1964, immediately after China conducted her first nuclear test, U.S. President Johnson assured American allies in Asia that the American commitments there would be honored, and announced at the same time that "nations that do not seek nuclear weapons can be sure that if they need United States support against the threat of nuclear blackmail, they will have it."<sup>13</sup> Nor does the Soviet Union give China any encouragement and security guarantee.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, as China's nuclear weapons capability increases, the United States appears to become less willing to honor her military and even political commitments in Asia. For example, Johnson's guarantee was not mentioned after 1964. In fact, on July 19, 1967, one month after the sixth Chinese test was conducted, American Secretary of State Dean Rusk announced that the guarantees mentioned by Johnson in 1964 would only be discussed again in Geneva, where the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty would be negotiated, or in the Security Council of the United Nations. On April 26, 1968, Arthur J. Goldberg, U.S. ambassador to the General Assembly, made similar statements.<sup>15</sup>

This U.N.-guarantee, if possible and effective, is of course desirable. Unfortunately, however, it does not seem to be very likely. Because of the impotence of the United Nations' own collective security system, the ineffectiveness of the Security Council caused by the use of veto power, and the other organizational weakness and political problems in the United Nations, an effective U.N. guarantee is beyond present attainment. The United Nations has yet to make any visible progress in this direction.

However, a U.S.-Soviet joint guarantee for the security of Asian countries has been proposed. The alleged significance of this "joint guarantee" is that it would not juxtapose the great powers. This joint guarantee seems feasible to Raymond Aron because he believes that "the big powers will act jointly to restrain potential trouble-makers, even those armed with nuclear weapons."<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, to realize such a joint guarantee, the superpowers do not need over-all cooperation. However, such optimism seems unwarranted. True, in recent years, there has been some limited co-operation between the superpowers, e.g., their joint efforts in the neutralization of Laos, in the mediation of the Indian-Pakistan war of 1965 and the later Tashkent agreement, their meetings in Glassboro and Camp David, and their common effort in the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Nevertheless, the scope of their co-operation is still limited. Basic conflicts of interest between the superpowers are still quite real. It is therefore extremely

unlikely that the Soviet Union would agree to a joint guarantee of the security of South Vietnam; nor is it likely that the United States would agree to a guarantee with the Russians of the security of North Vietnam. In this regard, Stanley Hoffman seems correct when he points out:

As long as the bipolar contest persists, one may doubt the willingness of each super power to give an assurance to non-nuclear allies or clients of the other, against a former or dissident ally, and thus to consecrate formally the fiasco of the original alliance, and perhaps even to consolidate the rival's hold on an area.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, it is very doubtful that a "joint guarantee" would be a feasible solution to the problem of security in Asia.

Even if such a guarantee for security were offered by the superpowers, it would still be questionable that it would be effective in deterring a possible Chinese nuclear threat.

The credibility of such a guarantee, if it were at all possible, would still present a serious problem. The Asian countries might doubt that the United States or the Soviet Union could stop or deter a Chinese nuclear attack in time to save their countries from destruction. It would certainly be useless to rescue a ruined land.

In addition, the United States will be in an uncomfortable position when China has an operational nuclear force and is in a position to attack many of the American bases in Asia. If China were to attack a country whose security was guaranteed by the United States, the Americans would have to take into consideration the possibility that retaliation on their part might provoke a Chinese nuclear attack on U.S. bases in Asia, and hence ignite a Sino-American nuclear war or possibly a world nuclear war. The United States would certainly not be willing to accept the consequences of such a war.

Furthermore, if the future Chinese nuclear weapons can definitely imperil the homelands of the superpowers and cause irreparable damage to them, Asian and other countries probably would not believe the commitments and guarantees offered by either superpower, doubting that the superpowers would risk their own cities and population to come to their rescue. As one renowned Indian political scientist pointed out, "if the Chinese even succeed in building up a strategic balance with the U.S., . . . it is very questionable if [the United States] would sacrifice Boston for Bombay or Detroit for Delhi."<sup>18</sup>

Even before China has become a major nuclear power, her nuclear weapons development so far has already caused fear among many Asian coun-



tries. For example, P. K. Banerjee, Minister of the Indian Embassy in Washington, said that China's nuclear test had brought a "sense of insecurity and offensive threat, not only to India but to many neighboring countries."<sup>19</sup> The Indian Prime Minister, Shastri, pointed out that it was necessary for the superpowers to maintain the security of India.<sup>20</sup> Japanese Prime Minister Sato said that the Chinese nuclear tests endangered the security of other Asian countries. "China with a nuclear capability is, as far as Japan is concerned, a threat."<sup>21</sup> Cambodia expressed her fear in her recurrent statements reminding China that she "has solemnly declared that she will never be the first to use these weapons of mass destruction."<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, employing indirect methods, China could convince or force Asian countries to remove the influence of the superpowers from their territories. The removal of U.S. bases from Asia has been one of China's basic objectives since 1949. On November 24, 1964, for instance, after Japanese Prime Minister Sato decided to permit U.S. nuclear submarines in Japanese ports, China warned:

The closer the Japan-U.S. collaboration, the less guaranteed is Japan's security. Today U. S. imperialism is brandishing its nuclear weapons in Asia, making active preparations for a nuclear war. If it eventually starts such a war, Japan, as a U.S. nuclear base, is bound to bear the brunt and will inevitably be pushed into the abyss of nuclear calamity. The Japanese Government willingly acts as an accomplice in U.S. imperialism's nuclear war preparations—this is an extremely dangerous road by which the Japanese nation is led to a bottomless nuclear chasm. Precisely because of this, the Japanese people have unfolded a vigorous mass struggle opposing entry of U.S. nuclear submarines and opposing turning Japan into a U.S. nuclear war base by the U.S.-Japanese reactionaries.<sup>23</sup>

China might also use potential threats to prevent Asian countries from becoming allies of either superpower. At present, although China has only a token nuclear capability, she has already tended to use this strategy towards Japan:

Placing itself [i.e., Japan] under the wing of U.S. imperialism, working hand in glove with Soviet revisionism . . . and acting as the vanguard in opposing China, the reactionary Sato government will . . . end shamelessly in being buried together with U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism.<sup>24</sup>

If the superpowers were actually forced to remove their bases and forces from Asia, China's huge ground force would become a very effective

instrument in the pursuit of her foreign policy objectives, through tactics such as revolutionary wars. At present, China has an army of 2,250,000 men in 115 divisions. She also has four armoured divisions and one or two airborne divisions. In addition, there is evidence that China is prepared to equip her ground troops with tactical nuclear weapons.<sup>25</sup>

It may be suggested that the Asian countries could still unite in order to halt any possible future Chinese military ventures or Chinese-sponsored revolutionary wars in Asia.<sup>26</sup> The possibility of this "collective defence", however, unfortunately appears to be rather small. In the first place, there are various conflicts and tensions among countries in Asia, e.g., between Pakistan and India, among Indonesia-Malaysia-the Philippines, between Malaysia and Singapore, and among Cambodia-Thailand-Vietnam. In the second place, the foreign policies of these countries are entirely different, ranging from completely anti-Communist Chinese (e.g. South Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan) to pro-Communist Chinese (e.g. Burma, Pakistan, Nepal.) In the third place, most Asian countries are incapable of defending themselves without outside assistance. The combination of weaknesses among these countries does not necessarily mean strength. Only India, Indonesia, and Japan are strong in relation to China. But both India and Indonesia have been plagued by many domestic and foreign problems and have been weakened in recent years. As far as Japan is concerned, most Asian countries probably still remember vividly the Japanese invasion and aggression in Asia during the Second World War. Their fear of a strong Japan might therefore rule out the possibility of supporting Japan as their leader in Asia against China.

In view of China's emerging nuclear weapons capability, many Asian countries probably would be forced to develop their own nuclear weapons. At present, at least two countries in Asia could employ this alternative: India and Japan. A report in January 1970 says that there are persistent demands from within India's ruling Congress Party for an Indian nuclear weapon program and the Indian government is now studying the cost of building such a system.<sup>27</sup> In 1970, Japanese premier Eisaku Sato claimed that Japan must take greater responsibility for her defence.<sup>28</sup> A reliable report predicts that "Japan will embark on an independent course and soon thereafter take the necessary steps to become a nuclear power."<sup>29</sup> When both India and Japan become nuclear powers, there will be even less chances of stability and security in the world. In the first place, if China, India, and Japan become nuclear powers, there would be a rapid nuclear proliferation in Asia or even in the world. At present in Asia many countries which are very sensitive to the

Chinese, Indian, or Japanese nuclear weapons developments, such as Pakistan, Indonesia, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, South Vietnam, New Zealand, Taiwan, and Australia all possess power reactors and have started advanced nuclear research.<sup>30</sup> Either out of fear or pride, or both, they could well decide to develop their own nuclear weapons if China, Japan and India should all become nuclear powers. Nuclear proliferation would then become inevitable. In the second place, as several Asian countries become nuclear powers, the probability of pre-emptive or anonymous nuclear attacks among them also increases. So far, there has been no threat of anonymous nuclear attack between the superpowers. An anonymous nuclear attack is one from unknown source or from a source difficult to identify in a very short time. At present, a nuclear attack on the United States would inevitably be attributed to the Soviet Union and *vice versa*. It is unlikely that France and Britain would launch such an attack. Since the attacker could be identified quickly and easily, an immediate retaliatory attack could be launched by the victim. Therefore, neither superpower could expect to attack her adversary and remain undetected and unscathed. However, as many Asian countries become nuclear powers, the source would become very difficult to identify.<sup>31</sup> Some nuclear countries might therefore be tempted to launch a nuclear attack on their enemies, hoping to escape detection. At the same time, since none of them could expect to have invulnerability or near invulnerability like the superpowers have, one country might be tempted to launch a pre-emptive nuclear attack on her enemies in order to eliminate them once and for all or to destroy their nuclear facilities before they could become too powerful to deal with. For example, if a very hostile India or Thailand were becoming a nuclear power, China might be tempted to launch a nuclear attack on the country before she could become a serious nuclear threat to China. Furthermore, as mentioned above, there are many tense local conflicts in Asia, e.g., between Pakistan and India, between North Vietnam and South Vietnam, between Cambodia and North and South Vietnams, etc. There are also potential dangers and conflicts there, e.g., among Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia, etc. Therefore, the temptation for them to launch pre-emptive or anonymous attacks on their adversaries would be quite great.

For these reasons, even a limited nuclear proliferation in Asia, in response to China's nuclear weapons development, must be regarded as undesirable.

Furthermore, when China becomes a major nuclear power the superpowers' power to restrain other countries from engaging in serious military

conflicts would also be reduced. For example, the restraints the superpowers successfully imposed on Pakistan and India during their 1965 war might have been a failure had China been a major nuclear power at that time. Discrediting U.S. deterrence and containment, China might have decided to offer substantial military aid to Pakistan along with a guarantee of her security, and thus seriously complicate the situation and make settlement impossible. Also, if there is still any hope of reaching an agreement in the present Paris talks which have been accepted by South Vietnam and North Vietnam under the influence of the superpowers, such a hope would diminish if China after becoming a major nuclear power felt more confident and therefore decided to supply the North Vietnamese and Vietcong with substantial military aid<sup>32</sup> or offer them guarantees of security. The Chinese attacks on the Paris peace talks and their advocacy of revolutionary wars indicate that the Chinese might indeed take this course of action. China's recent support of ousted Cambodia head Sihanouk while both superpowers tend to restrain themselves and their "allies" in Indochina from taking advantages of the situation, further indicates that the situation would become more complicated when China becomes a major nuclear power.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, in view of China's severe attacks on the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and her refusals to have anything to do with them, it is very doubtful whether many countries would still honor these treaties once China becomes a major nuclear power.

At the same time, the Asian countries' fear of a nuclear China could lead them to take one or more of the following courses of action: First, these countries might become reluctant to resist Chinese sponsored revolutionary wars in their countries. Secondly, they might consider it expedient to join in the Chinese hegemony and follow the Chinese line of policy. Thirdly, they might accede to Chinese demands without resistance in events such as border disputes.

#### NOTES

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3. *Pravda*, July 14, *Soviet News*, No. 4872 (July 17, 1963), 29-43.
4. "Soviet Government Statement, August 21, 1963", *Soviet News*, No. 4885 (August 21, 1963), 103-109.

5. See Raymond L. Garthoff, "A Soviet Critique of China's Total Strategy" *The Reporter*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 10 (May 19, 1966), 49.
6. See *Peking Review*, No. 44 (November 1, 1963), 19-20.
7. *Peking Review*, No. 41 (October 8, 1965), 14.
8. *People's Daily*, December 31, 1964.
9. *Bulletin of Activities* (A secret Chinese document), reprinted in *The Politics of the Chinese Red Army*. ed. J. Chester Cheng, (Stanford, California: The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University, 1966), 249-255.
10. "Chou En-lai, Interview with Agence France Press, February 3, 1964" *Peking Review*, No. 7 (February 14), 16.
11. See *New China News Agency (NCNA)*, July 27, 1955, *Current Background*. No. 347 (August 23, 1955), 29-31.
12. *Peking Review*, No. 6 (February 5, 1965), 19.
13. For text of Johnson's statement, see *New York Times*, October 17, 1964.
14. See *New York Times*, May 15, 1965, and July 4, 1967.
15. See for example, Arthur J. Goldberg, "U.S. Calls for Prompt Endorsement by the General Assembly of the Draft Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons," *The Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, Department of State Publication 8385 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Off., 1968), 8.
16. Raymond Aron, *The Great Debate* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1965), 62.
17. Stanley Hoffmann, "Nuclear Proliferation and World Politics," *A World of Nuclear Powers?* ed. Alastair Buchan (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 113.
18. See Sisir Gupta, "The Indian Dilemma," *A World of Nuclear Powers?* 61.
19. This statement was made in 1966. It was quoted by W. L. Ryan and S. Summerlin in their *China Cloud: America's Tragedy and China's Rise to Nuclear Power* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), 190.
20. See M. R. Masani, "The Challenge of the Chinese Bomb" *India Quarterly*, Vol. XXI, No. 1 (January-March 1965), 23. See also *The Times* (London), December 5, 1964.
21. See *New York Times*, October 17, 1964, October 18, 1964, December 5, 1964, May 15, 1965, and November 4, 1966.
22. See for example reprints in *Peking Review*, No. 22 (May 27, 1966), 38; No. 45 (November 4, 1966), 27.

23. *Peking Review* (November 27, 1964), 6-8. See also *Ibid.* (December 18, 1964), 6-8.
24. *Peking Review*, No. 38 (September 19, 1969), 27.
25. See *China Quarterly*, No. 18 (April-June, 1964), 87. See also *Bulletin of Activities*, No. 27 (July 25, 1961) and No. 29 (August 1, 1961), reprinted in *The Politics of The Chinese Red Army*. ed. J. Chester Cheng, 647-689, 729-735.
26. For further discussion of such an Asian collective system, see for example, Arthur S. Lall, "The Political Effects of the Chinese Bomb," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, (February, 1967), 22. Donald Edward Kennedy, *The Security of Southern Asia* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 234. Werner Levi, "The Future of Southeast Asia," *Asian Survey* Vol. X, No. 4 (April, 1970), 348-357.
27. "News Digest: India Studying N-Weapons," News dispatch from New Delhi, *Edmonton Journal*, January 26, 1970.
28. "Japan's Defence Budget up Sharply," news dispatch from Tokyo, *Edmonton Journal*, January 26, 1970.
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30. See U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, *Foreign Atomic List* (April 1, 1967).
31. Many writers, including Hans J. Morgenthau and Leonard Beaton, also recognized this danger. See Hans J. Morgenthau, "Has Atomic War Really Become Impossible?" 7-9; Leonard Beaton *Must the Bomb Spread?* (New York: Penguin, 1966) 32ff.
32. China has been giving aid and support to the North Vietnamese and Vietcong over the past years. For details, see for example, "Foreign Affairs: China's Motionless Army" *New York Times*, May 6, 1966; Article by Philip Franklin of *Los Angeles Times Service*, from Saigon, reprinted in *Edmonton Journal*, March 24, 1969; *New York Times*, January 17, 1965; *Edmonton Journal* (news dispatch from Hong Kong), April 13, 1970; *Edmonton Journal* (New York Times Service), September 3, 1969.
33. For China's position and attitude, see Mao Tse-tung's article in *Peking Review*, special issue, (May 23, 1970). For further discussion on the subject, see *Peking Review*, No. 24 (June 12, 1970), 12ff.