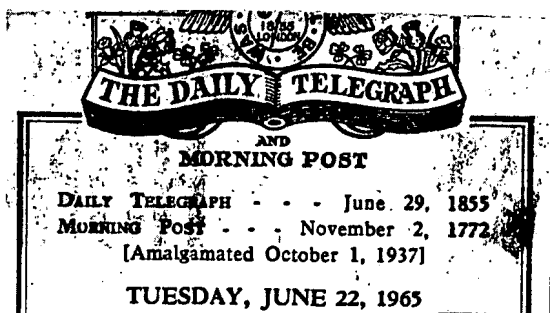


## Daily Telegraph Editorial: India's Atomic Dilemma Title 119

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Daily Telegraph Editorial 22 June 1965

Note: SHASTRI LAL BAHADUR was India's Prime Minister from 1964 to 1966. He succeeded Jawaharlal Nehru on his death and when Shastri died in 1966 he was followed by Indira Gandhi. Shastri was a professional politician and held a number of ministerial appointments after 1961.



### INDIA'S ATOMIC DILEMMA

MR. SHASTRI'S refusal to embark on a nuclear weapons policy, despite increased internal pressure since the explosion of the second Chinese bomb, is always qualified. He is explicit that no bomb will be made "for the present," but will not commit himself about the future. Last week in London, while saying it was much better to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons rather than make them, he recognised that unspecified "eventualities" might arise which would leave India no choice. One wonders how long this morally admirable example of abstinence can be maintained.

In this situation there is a special relevance in the reports of our Science Correspondent on the present capacity and the potential of the Indian atomic energy establishments, which he has been visiting. It appears that, genuinely, no decision has been taken to "make the bomb," nor is there anything that could fairly be called a "crash programme." Nevertheless there is steady expansion under an ambitious long-term plan to produce atomic energy that, although intended to be peaceful, could have military applications. There is no doubt about the quality and zeal of the scientists. Highly significant is the emphasis on achieving complete independence in raw materials, know-how and equipment. Already a bomb could be produced in 18 months. Rocket manufacture is to begin in 12 months.

The arguments against an Indian bomb are strong. The waste of money would be as distressing as the bad example of proliferation. But the probability is that the Indian Government will be driven by the Chinese threat alone, quite apart from the possibility of proliferation elsewhere, to take the awful step before long. The only alternative would be a completely reliable guarantee by the major atomic Powers—and the acceptance of this in place of an independent deterrent would postulate a rare degree of moral courage by the Indian people. Hitherto Mr. SHASTRI has canvassed the utopian idea of a guarantee by all nuclear Powers to all non-nuclear Powers. Getting down to specifics, is it conceivable that Russia would join with America, Britain and France in a credible guarantee to India against China? Otherwise, would non-aligned India accept a Western guarantee, excluding Russia? This is the crux.