

Indian Express June 29,1991

Art of saying nothing

Sir:

Air Commodore Jasjit Singh's article "Managing the nuclear challenge" is somewhat disappointing. The author remains noncommittal and for the most part the language use is akin to that used by politician when he wishes to say nothing. What Commodore Jasjit Singh's assessment of the Pakistani proposal boils down to is that if the proposal addresses our legitimate security interests and concerns then we should proceed further in the matter; but if it does not, then it deserves to be rejected. Now who, if not the Director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, is to tell us whether the Pakistani proposal interferes with our security or not?

One also wonders why Commodore Jasjit Singh has not taken into account the nuclear threat from China. Is it because he feels that such a threat does not exist or because the threat is so awesome and the effort required to meet it so colossal that an ostrich-like posture is more convenient?

Non-Proliferation is indeed a hoax being played by the nuclear powers on the non-nuclear countries. The concept is based on injustice and is, therefore, untenable. What moral justification can there be for maintaining the nuclear weapons monopoly of a chosen few? The hope of a "credible, equitable, and feasible non-proliferation regime" with "sensitivity to the legitimate security concerns of states", which seems to have tilted the authors opinion in favour of the Pakistani proposal (notwithstanding his vigorous arguments against it in the beginning of his article) is, in fact wishful thinking. A country that has a serious dispute with a nuclear power, which is apparently incapable of being resolved through peaceful means, (other than abject surrender), may justifiably deem itself to be suffering from a nuclear threat and nuclear weapon capability may be considered as its legitimate concern. A nuclear weapon capability, even if it is a second strike capability, will not only act as a deterrent against the use of such weapons but also provide the necessary backing to diplomacy while that is being employed as a means for settling the dispute. Such a situation exists in our relations with China, which we may ignore only at our peril.

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