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China's Compulsions

Sir,

One cannot but subscribe to your views that the decision by India and China to hold a joint naval exercise and to exchange experts in the field of space science, are indications of a change in the Sino-Indian relations for the better (HT, Aug27). It may not, however, be quite correct to attribute the visible up-swing to the prolonged dialogue for improving mutual relations that has been going on between the two over the past couple of years. As a matter of fact most of the visits/meetings that have taken place prior to the recent Chinese initiative have yielded very little. Late Rajiv Gandhi himself is known to have been quite disappointed at the Chinese response during his Beijing visit in 1988. The present welcome change in the Chinese attitude seems to be coming about more as a matter of China's geopolitical compulsions consequent upon the changed World scenario.

There can be little doubt that after the collapse of the Soviet Union the World has had less to gain from the end of the cold war and more to lose from the unbridled power that the US has acquired as a consequence. There is, therefore, a requirement for a new power equation that might restore the World balance of power and ensure peace based on equality and justice. Apparently China, notwithstanding its official denials, is striving to take the place of the erstwhile Soviet Union in a bid to create the necessary dike against the growing US hegemony.

In its struggle against the US, China would certainly need allies and plenty of them too. Its patch up with South Korea has more to do with this compulsion than a sudden realisation of the virtues of good neighbourly relations. The changes that the Sino-Indian relations are witnessing are also a result of this Chinese compulsion. As a matter of fact due to geopolitical reasons China would need an alliance with India more than with any other. True India and China have serious disputes between them but these are not such as cannot be resolved.

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