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CHINESE MOTIVES

Sir, - Apropos Mr Dilip Mukerjee's article "Mixed Signals From China (September 25), the main thrust of China's new defence policy is against the growing US hegemony due to the unbridled power that it has acquired consequent after the end of the Cold War. The recent Chinese nuclear blast, coming as it does at a time when the US is engaged in arm-twisting over the issue of nuclear test ban, has to be seen as a challenge (even if symbolic) to the US supremacy in the field. Indeed the manner in which China is seeking equality with the US with regard not only to the test ban but also the NPT and the issue of missile technology transfers, is a clear enough indication that China is striving to take the place of the erstwhile Soviet Union in a bid to restore the balance of power and secure peace on the basis of equality and justice. This would explain why China must retain its nuclear option even while talking peace. For us and other "non-aligned" countries any move that attempts to check the US from donning the role of an international bully is to be welcomed no matter from what quarter it comes.

At the regional level, the death of the concept of international Communism has absolved China of its obligations towards fomenting World revolution through subversion and force, making it less expansionist and more accommodating towards its non-communist neighbours and consequently rendering most of its land forces superfluous. If any signal from china appears to be contradictory it is because China, like any other country, will not forego, what it considers to be, its genuine strategic interests. While there is no reason for us to feel unduly suspicious about Chinese motives, we cannot afford to be complacent either. It will need diplomacy of a very high order to deal with china even under the present favourable circumstances.

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