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Dealing with China

Sir,

The proposed visit of Mr. Vajpayee to China has evoked much controversy. Public debate on issues of national importance is indeed a healthy sign. Unfortunately, however, there is a trend in the present debate that cannot be termed as healthy. That is when the issue is viewed by some in their pro Russia or pro China stance.

There are the pro-China elements that would have the destiny of the country linked with that of China and who have, therefore, wholeheartedly welcomed the Janata Government's move to normalise relations with China. On the other hand, there are the pro-Russia elements who feel that by moving closer to China, India would automatically move away from the Soviet Union. They are naturally not happy over the Government's effort to improve relations with China.

While we may not term these elements as anti-national, their views and arguments, biased as they are, divest the debate of its objectivity and are, therefore, of little value. Normalisation of relations with China is definitely in our national interest but we must ensure that normalisation does not amount to surrender. For this a deeper analysis of the Sino-Indian relations is required.

Technically speaking, the policy objectives in international relations which every country aims at in pursuance of its national interests may be categorised under either "containment" or "dominance". Containment implies status quo in international relations. The aim of this policy is peace because it would create a situation in which all nations submit to the present state of affairs and make no effort which is directed towards change (the cause of all wars).

The policy of dominance, on the other hand, implies change in World order, either for reasons of greed for what rightfully belongs to others (mostly territory) or for genuinely undoing the wrongs of history. The policies of containment and dominance, therefore, always remain in constant conflict with each other.

India's policy has always been that of containment just wanting to hold what she inherited at the time of Independence. On the other hand, China's declared policy, with the aim of regaining "lost territories" and fomenting World revolution through subversion and armed intervention in the "revolutionary struggles" of other countries, is a policy of dominance directed towards a change in World order.

China's military and political interests in the strategic areas of Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh and the eastern states of Nagaland and Mizoram spring directly from her policy of dominance and pose the most serious threat to the security of our country. This is the crux of the problem. The border dispute, which is being continuously harped upon, is in fact only the effect and not the cause of the Sino-Indian conflict.

In the forthcoming talks, therefore, India must insist on the Chinese renouncing their present policy of dominance, at least in as much as it concerns us, openly and in clear terms. This assurance must, come from both the Chinese Government as well as the party, to prevent the Government from continuing its present policy under the garb of party activities (as they are wont to do).

It is no doubt going to be a difficult task for Mr. Vajpayee but there could not have been a more opportune moment for him to try. Threatened by Russia that she feels, China today needs

India's goodwill more than India needs China's. We can, therefore, speak today from a position of strength; a position we have always been denied due to our lack of military strength.

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