

The Times of India May 14(?), 1999

Friends & Foes

Mr M D Nalapat (“Curbing Another War” May 04) quotes from the Panchatantra that friendship is possible only among equals. Equality is, however, something that a country has to earn through a parity, or near parity, in military strength and not just demand from others as a matter of courtesy or favour.

Even at this advanced stage of civilization the law of the jungle- that might is right – is as relevant today as at any other time in the history of the World. The bane of all the governments before the BJP led coalition has been that they failed to grasp this basic truth. Mr Nalapat might have ‘secular’ compulsions for depriving the BJP of the credit for its bold new defence policy, aimed at the development of a deterrent system, by attributing the same to vigilant public opinion, but the fact remains that it is the BJP led coalition that is wholly and solely responsible for bringing about this positive change in our defence policy.

Undoubtedly there is a need for an Asian counter-weight for checking the hegemonistic tendencies of the US and its Allies. But for such a formation to take shape, China should take the initiative. India has to grow much more militarily to be able to form an equal and effective component of such an alliance. China has so far given no indication that it wishes India to be militarily strong. The dispute between India and China is not just related to border adjustments that could easily be sorted out across a conference table. The Chinese maps continue to show the whole of Arunachal, and large portions of Assam and Bengal as part of China.

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