

The Times of India July 22, 1997

Nuclear Policy

Sir,

This has reference to 'Drifting into Deterrence' by Mr Praful Bidwai (July 4). Even if one is to concede that the US sub-critical 'Rebound' test is not intended to enhance or improve upon the nuclear weapon capability of that country, and that providing a "symbolic sop to US weaponeers" is a small privilege of a nuclear power that the non-nuclear must not grudge, what explanation can Mr Bidwai offer for the huge stock-pile of nuclear weapons, enough to destroy the World not just once but many times over, the US is still in possession of, even as it is preaching nuclear disarmament to the semi-nuclear power in possession of a couple of crude nuclear devices? This alone should make the US intentions with regard to the CTBT, and other disarmament measures that it is trying to promote, suspect. Evidently the US is fully aware of the value of nuclear weapons not only as a deterrent for ensuring national security but also as source of political power.

The "permanence of nuclear weapons" is not just a matter of faith with the Indian bomb lobby as Mr Bidwai seems to think. It is a reality which is manifest in the attitude and conduct of the World's nuclear powers and which should be clear to every one except, perhaps, the idealist, who might try to wish it away. The absurdity lies not in our separating our "disarmament posture" and the "security posture" but in carrying out unilateral disarmament and then hoping for the best with regard to our security.

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