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Letters to the Editor

Defence preparedness

Sir. — The U.S. administration has sanctioned Rs. 1,200 crores worth of modern weapons and surveillance systems to our unfriendly neighbour. This warrants full-preparedness on our part — our Army, Navy and Air Force and their intelligence wings, and of course our political leaders.

We will have to tie up all the loose ends in our defence systems, stock essential spares and very quickly add modern weapons, to counter the threats posed by the new arsenals of Pakistan. The Government should create a National Defence Fund for which 100 per cent tax exemption should be given. Enormous amount of unaccounted money and wealth can be tapped for this fund.

It is time to go nuclear and take up indigenous defence production in a big way — the public and private sector giants should be encouraged to play their role in strengthening and meeting the defence needs of the country.

N. Harihara Subramaniam, Madras

NAM and new equations

Sir. — The conclusion of the 11th non-aligned summit in Colombia threw up many issues. Pakistan is wont to launch hostile propaganda against India at every forum and the NAM summit was no exception.

India occupies the pride of place among the hundred-odd non-aligned member nations for its signal contribution in developing and sustaining the non-aligned movement over the last 34 years.

The Nehruvian non-aligned policy was aimed at securing the national interest in a bipolar world which was confronted by the two giants — the U.S. and the USSR. India's interest lay in the middle path of steering clear of the power blocs. Several decolonised countries joined the non-aligned group, instead of opting for a bipolar world.

However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the bipolarity was dissolved. A polycentric world with new players and power equations soon emerged. The hangover of the cold war may continue with foggy screens and hazy perceptions for some time to come, but that is inevitable.

Our country is at the crossroads today. Aspiring for a seat in the Security Council is different from playing a rightful role in the changed international scene. India cannot afford to ignore the partisan attitude of the U.S. in arming Pakistan. The time is opportune for us to take up the mantle role as one of the balances of power. Our leadership will have to assess the possibilities and finetune the next move, consistent with the national aspirations.

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