



IPCS

INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

Innovative Research | Independent Analysis | Informed Opinion

IPCS Debate

July 2013

INDIA, PAKISTAN AND THE NUCLEAR RACE

Edited by
Ruhee Neog



India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: The Strategic Entanglement

PR Chari



India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: The Elephant and the Dilemma of Nuclear Force Planning

Vice Adm (Retd) Vijay Shankar



India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: No Clear Winners

D Suba Chandran



India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: The Two Pots Down the Nuclear Stream

Rabia Akhtar



India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: Strengthening the Risk Reduction Measures

Salma Malik



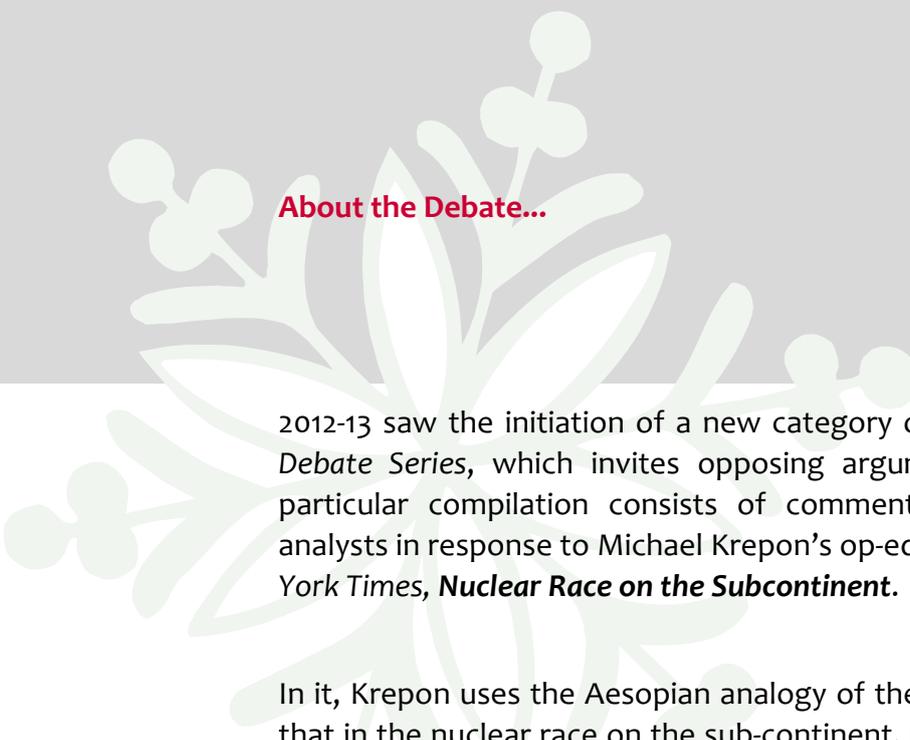
India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: Evaluating the Response

Michael Krepon



IPCS

INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES



About the Debate...

2012-13 saw the initiation of a new category of publications entitled the *IPCS Debate Series*, which invites opposing arguments on issues of note. This particular compilation consists of commentaries by Indian and Pakistani analysts in response to Michael Krepon's op-ed piece of 4 April 2013 in *The New York Times*, ***Nuclear Race on the Subcontinent***.

In it, Krepon uses the Aesopian analogy of the hare and the tortoise to argue that in the nuclear race on the sub-continent, Pakistan, the hare, will compete with dogged determination but India, the tortoise, will ultimately win. He suggests investments in cross-border trade as the safest way to undertake a reorientation of strategic calculations that equate security with an increased nuclear arsenal, and to subsequently improve bilateral relations. It is this primary characterisation and proposition that Prof PR Chari (India), Vice Adm (Retd) Vijay Shankar (India), Dr D Suba Chandran (India), Rabia Akhtar (Pakistan) and Salma Malik (Pakistan) make assessments of in their individual commentaries. The sixth and final commentary in this compilation is a rejoinder by Michael Krepon, in which he addresses the responses to his original NYT op-ed.

Ruhee Neog

Senior Research Officer, IPCS



India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: The Strategic Entanglement

PR Chari

Visiting Professor, IPCS

E-mail: prchari@gmail.com

Comparing countries to animals is an absorbing pastime for foreign policy analysts to discover their essential character. It is, therefore, no accident that the US has chosen the eagle to be its national symbol to emphasise its aggressive, risk-taking nature. The erstwhile Soviet Union, now Russia, identified itself with the bear, which hugs what it seizes securely to itself. During the heyday of the Empire, the British lion - king of the forest - symbolised its power, which is intriguing since that feline is not indigenous to the British Isles. Nearer home, animal allegories have sought to capture the basic character of China and India. China conjures up conflicting images of a cuddly panda and fire-breathing dragon, while India has been compared to the prickly porcupine or self-preening peacock or lumbering elephant.

In this milieu, Michael Krepon's characterisation of the India-Pakistan nuclear imbroglio in terms of the Aesopian hare-tortoise fable greatly overstates the case. Krepon argues that "India's nuclear weapons program is moving steadily forward without great exertion. The tortoise will win this race, and could quicken its pace. But the hare continues to run fast, because nuclear weapons are a sign of strength amidst growing domestic weaknesses and because it can't keep up with the growth of India's conventional military programs." This is not quite accurate, since it must also be appreciated that the strategic direction of India's military nuclear programme has uncompromisingly been directed against China and, incidentally, against Pakistan. In other words, nuclear weapons are primarily required by India to establish strategic parity with China, and secondarily, to deter Pakistan's intransigence. Pakistan's nuclear programme, however, is essentially intended to counter its conventional forces inferiority vis-à-vis India.

Currently, both countries hold around 80-100 nuclear weapons in their stockpiles. Despite routine pledges to maintain a minimal deterrent, the size of these stockpiles has doubled over the last decade. Both countries also possess cruise missiles, and are seeking nuclear-armed submarines to ensure the survivability of their deterrent, provide second strike capability, and strengthen their deterrent postures. Pakistan, in fact, has imbued nuclear weapons with magical properties; they can deter India, and provide a sense of equality with its seven-times-larger neighbour that is fast becoming the third largest economic power in the world. Nuclear weapons also provide it with strategic reassurance, however illusory, in dealing with the US. Nothing, therefore, infuriates Pakistanis more than suggestions that the US should gain control over or 'takes out' Pakistan's nuclear arsenal in defined circumstances.

Krepon also draws attention to the fact that Pakistan's nuclear policy, and, for that matter its defence, as well as its Kashmir and India policy are strictly controlled by the Pakistan Army, with civilians playing a peripheral role in the decision-making apparatus. He then draws attention to the quantitative and qualitative nuclear arms race proceeding

In this milieu, Michael Krepon's characterisation of the India-Pakistan nuclear imbroglio in terms of the Aesopian hare-tortoise fable greatly overstates the case... .. This is not quite accurate, since it must also be appreciated that the strategic direction of India's military nuclear program has uncompromisingly been directed against China and,

in South Asia, with obvious dangers for its strategic stability. Unfortunately, he has no plausible solutions to proffer about how India should configure the size and structure of its nuclear arsenal to meet the threat from China without inviting a reaction from Pakistan. In other words, how could arms race stability be sought in a triangular nuclear scenario, which is unique in the international security system, and has no guiding precedent? Unstated here is his belief that India faces no nuclear danger from China; hence, it is excessive for India to conjure up a non-existent nuclear threat from China to justify its enlarging the range of its delivery capabilities, and making other attempts to sophisticate its nuclear arsenal.

Regrettably, these eminently sensible suggestions have wrecked on the rocks of official obduracy and obstruction. Why? In truth, the political leadership and, in the background, the military and intelligence services in India and Pakistan have no interest in permitting such confidence-building measures to flourish and erode their institutionalised negativism.

He then suggests that: “The safest route to reduce nuclear dangers on the subcontinent is through concerted, top-down efforts to improve relations between Pakistan and India. The surest way to do so is by greatly increasing cross-border trade. Leaders in both countries have endorsed this course of action, but underlings are moving slowly in the run-up to national elections.” He might have added the need to liberalise the visa regime, and promoting reciprocal visits of special interest groups like students, media persons, legislators, professional groups and so on to create constituencies in both countries that would develop a mutual interest in friendly bilateral relations. These are tired old beliefs, and have often been made before. Regrettably, these eminently sensible suggestions have been wrecked on the rocks of official obduracy and obstruction. Why? In truth, the political leadership and, in the background, the military and intelligence services in India and Pakistan have no interest in permitting such confidence-building measures to flourish and erode their institutionalised negativism.

Unless Krepon can find a better solution to these problems, his well-meaning ideas to insulate the nuclear entanglement between India and Pakistan from disaster are not going to succeed. Of course, the disaster is of primary consequence for the two South Asian adversaries, who need to be aware of and address the dangers to their own survival.

India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: The Elephant and the Dilemma of Nuclear Force Planning

Vice Admiral (Retd) Vijay Shankar

Former Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Forces Command of India

One of the open secrets of the Indian security establishment is the evolution of its nuclear weapons capability. The process did not follow any established norms that guide the discernment of theory into a security strategy or the rendition of technology into a nuclear stockpile. Rather, its development was driven by a single-point politico-scientific coterie stirred by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) combine. The leadership neither saw strategic significance in a more eclectic approach nor clarity that a theory did not endanger political ideology or scientific savvy, but was an instrument to fertilise both.

From Indian folklore, a story is told of six blind men and an elephant. The allegory underscores the limits of individual perceptions when left in stove pipes without an integrating hypothesis. Viewed in perspective of the enormous destructive power of the nuclear weapon, now in the hands of the new 'destroyer of worlds', it presented a terrifying and unspeakable nature of the truth, much as the elephant to the blind. To marry political issues and technological capabilities with military operational practices was the unheeded scream of the previous quarter of a century.

It was only after Pokhran II in 1998 and the Kargil episode that the real nature of nuclear weapons was emphasised and the imperative of military involvement dawned on the establishment. This realisation took the form of a declared nuclear doctrine with a classified section that drew a roadmap for enabling and operationalising a 'No First Use' doctrine. Born of the desire not to repeat the Cold War experience, and a belief in Brodie's maxim that nuclear weapons had changed the nature of warfare; nuclear war avoidance became primary to the political objective. While this critical discernment was slow in the offing and the product of a tangled approach, there can be no denying its rational strength and its progression.

A deterrent relationship is a balance founded on rationality. On the part of the 'deterree', there is rationality in the conviction of disproportionate risks of hostile action; and on the part of the 'deterrer', there is rationality of purpose and transparency in confirming the reality of the risks involved in a manner that

It was only after Pokhran II in 1998 and the Kargil episode that the real nature of nuclear weapons was emphasized and the imperative of military involvement dawned on the establishment. This realisation took the form of a declared nuclear doctrine with a classified section that drew a roadmap for enabling and operationalizing a 'No First Use' doctrine.

strategic miscalculations are avoided. The exceptional feature of this transaction is that the roles are reversible, provided it is in the common interest to maintain stability, and this is where the sub-continental rub lies when the search for equilibrium is one-sided.

Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons is visceral in urge, India-specific in intent and 'at-any-cost' in motivation. It serves to explicate (and vindicate) the bizarre extent of the AQ Khan network's exertions, and its clandestine nuclear links with China and North Korea. Therefore, unique and intriguing to the nuclear cauldron is the tri-polar nature of the playing field, with China and Pakistan in a collusive arrangement. Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme was conceived, designed, and tested by Beijing from the mid-1970s onwards. In conjunction with all this is the rapid pace at which the Khushab reactors (II and III in particular) have come on-line and weapons-grade plutonium is being extracted with active and persistent Chinese aid. Collaboration, technological updates, the breakneck build-up of fissile material and production and extraction facilities may even suggest a doctrinal co-relation, which any deterrent relationship overlooks at the peril of its constancy.

Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons is visceral in urge, India-specific in intent and 'at-any-cost' in motivation. It serves to explicate (and vindicate) the bizarre extent of the AQ Khan network's exertions, and its clandestine nuclear links with China and North Korea.

No meaningful scrutiny of the sub-continental nuclear situation can avoid looking at the internal workings of Pakistan. What has caused this situation is the fixation with achieving military parity with India, and the precarious cocktail that the establishment has brewed in nurturing fundamentalist and terrorist organisations as instruments of their policies in Afghanistan and Kashmir. This policy has blown back to the extent that it is more than plausible that elements of the nuclear arsenal could well fall into extremist hands, aided by sympathetic rogue elements in the military. The recent happenings at Abbottabad, the plutonium rush, the assault on PNS Mehran, the conventionalising of the Hatf-9 missile, the descent to tactical nuclear weapons, and the continued opacity of strategic underpinnings of their nuclear programme defies rationality and does not in any way engender confidence in the prospects for stability. Added to all this is US Secretary of State Kerry's recent insinuation in Beijing of Pakistan's nuclear links with North Korea (while oddly down playing China's role) that attached nuclear perfidy to an already vexed situation. Such 'hare'-like nimbleness in nuclear matters, as Michael Krepon has termed it, could also suggest an incredulous belief on the part of Pakistani leadership in being able to control the escalatory nuclear ladder. This they must know is a fallacy, given the yawning power asymmetry that exists.

We stand today on the cusp of a 'Strangelovesque' situation caused in part by the reluctance to control the manner in which technology and political events are driving the direction in which arsenals are headed, and in part due to lack of transparency. This is the predicament that is faced by nuclear force planners. There does not appear to be any other answer than to readjust nuclear postures, turn back the clock on tactical nuclear weapons, and re-tune doctrines with the aim of bringing about balance in posture. Policy must accommodate the reality of the tri-polar situation and the need for 'convincing reassurances' on the matter of rogue players.

India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: No Clear Winners

D Suba Chandran

Director, IPCS

E-mail: subachandran@ipcs.org

The IPCS debate by PR Chari and Vice Adm Vijay Shankar, in response to Michael Krepon's commentary, analyses the various facets of the nuclear race in South Asia. Krepon's primary focus revolves around two issues: highlighting the nuclear race between India and Pakistan, and how to reduce nuclear dangers.

Three questions need to be raised: first, is the nuclear race involving India and Pakistan only about the competition and strategic equation between these two countries alone? Second, what is the nature of this race? Is there a finish line, or is it an open-ended race? Third, if it is indeed an open-ended race, can there be a real winner, irrespective of who is leading the race?

While Krepon makes the argument of nuclear race in the subcontinent as essentially between India and Pakistan, both PR Chari and Adm Vijay Shankar refer to China as well.

True, India may be the tortoise as Krepon argues, but is it racing, how ever slow the pace, against the Pakistani hare or the Chinese panda? For an Indian analyst, whom the strategic community of the rest of the world ignores or does not understand (perhaps intentionally), the race is not with Pakistan. Rather, it is with China—perhaps there is a strong belief within India that if the primary objective of its nuclear trajectory is driven by China, it need not worry about the Pakaistan's nuclear trajectory. But this is where India is making a cardinal mistake, which is explained subsequently.

What is absent in Krepon's original argument is the role being played by the panda to upset the race, or perhaps 'fix' it between the tortoise and the hare by siding with the latter.

China's clandestine involvement plays an important role in boosting Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme and its missile system. In turn, this has its own implications for India's strategic calculations. Any advice or expectation from the West will remain ineffective, as Krepon himself suggests towards the end of his argument, unless India will "take dramatic steps to improve relations" with Pakistan. However, irrespective of improving relations with Pakistan - dramatically or otherwise—India will continue to pursue a nuclear trajectory that will unfortunately pull Pakistan into the race.

Three questions need to be raised: first, is the nuclear race involving India and Pakistan only about the competition and strategic equation between these two countries alone? Second, what is the nature of this race? Is there a finish line, or is it an open-ended race? Third, if it is indeed an open-ended race, can there be a real winner, irrespective of who is leading the race?

Where Krepon errs substantially in his argument is his belief that “The tortoise will win this race, and could quicken its pace.” As if there is a finish line which is well-defined and relatively better documented, towards which the hare and tortoise are running.

While the tortoise is running to catch the panda, the hare is aiming to outdo the tortoise. Unfortunately for the tortoise and the hare, the panda is attempting to catch up with the American eagle! Despite the growth in hard and soft powers, neither is the cuddly Panda likely to catch up with the high flying eagle nor is the slow moving tortoise likely to catch up with the mighty Panda. Unfortunately, the hare is more likely to run all over the place; at times with a ‘booster’ from the panda, and at times escaping (perhaps intentionally) the eagle’s eye. In short, this is a nuclear jungle, and will remain so.

What is even more important in this race and the ‘finish line’ is what Adm Vijay Shankar has argued in terms of the pressure from the scientific bureaucracy in India’s nuclear build-up. As he rightly identifies in his argument, the nuclear trajectory of India is “driven by a single-point politico-scientific coterie stirred by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) combine.”

What is even more important in this race is what Adm Vijay Shankar has argued in terms of the pressure from the scientific bureaucracy in India’s nuclear build-up. As he rightly identifies in his argument, the nuclear trajectory of India is “driven by a single-point politico-scientific coterie stirred by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) combine.” This argument underlines an important factor in defining India’s objectives in the nuclear race in South Asia involving Pakistan and China. If this is the case, does a faster or slower hare really matter?

While China may want to reduce the nuclear distance between itself and the US, India may want to emulate this vis-à-vis China, and Pakistan may want to reach parity vis-à-vis India. Even if India is able to take the lead in the future, in its own elephantine and tortoise-like style, will it help win the race?

Defining what it means to ‘win’ a nuclear race will answer the above question. Does winning mean taking a lead in the race? Or, does it mean creating nuclear stability in the region? This will remain India’s greatest conundrum - even if it takes the lead in terms of numbers, superiority will never create an environment of nuclear stability vis-à-vis Pakistan.

As India increases the distance between itself and Pakistan in the long-run (which will happen inevitably), the latter will engage in dangerous strategic calculations with its limited numbers to upset the Indian lead. In that case, India may lead the race, but never be able to win it.

While Krepon primarily focuses on the tortoise and hare, PR Chari and Adm Vijay Shankar bring in the panda. This commentary introduces the eagle as well.

But are there only five animals in this race? What about the Iranian cat and the Saudi Arabian horse? As Iran develops its nuclear programme, will Pakistan’s arsenal remain focused only on India, as Adm Vijay Shankar argues? Or, will it include Iran, with an umbrella over Saudi Arabia as well?

India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: The Two Pots Down the Nuclear Stream

Rabia Akhtar

Fulbright Scholar & PhD Candidate, Kansas State University

E-mail: rabia@ksu.edu

Aesopian fables and their moral parallels in our everyday life are amusing. But anyone who believes that the slow and steady wins the race, has probably never really won a race at all. Perhaps India and Pakistan, as the tortoise and the hare respectively, are not trying to 'win' the 'nuclear race' as alluded to by Michael Krepon, but remain 'The Two Pots' that Aesop talks about. The earthenware pot tries its best to keep a safe distance from the brass pot despite reassurances given by the latter of good intentions, and as they float down the stream, the earthenware pot says to the brass pot, "But I may come in contact with you, if I come too close; and whether I hit you, or you hit me, I shall suffer for it."

But anyone who believes that the slow and steady wins the race, has probably never really won a race at all. Perhaps India and Pakistan, as the tortoise and the hare respectively, are not trying to 'win' the 'nuclear race' as alluded to by Michael Krepon, but remain 'The Two Pots' that Aesop talks about.

Pakistan is clearly the earthenware pot and must prepare for any eventuality, since it is forced to keep company with the strong brass pot - India - by default, as they travel down the nuclear stream. The brass pot continues to modernise its nuclear arsenal by acquiring submarine launched ballistic missiles for credible second-strike capability, introducing ballistic missile defence in the region, and continuing production of weapons-grade fissile materials at a 'steady pace', all the while proclaiming that its deterrence is not directed towards Pakistan. Unfortunately while all these strategic developments taking place in the region, coupled with the massive reorganisation of the Indian military through the Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan 2012-2027 (LTIPP), do make us appreciate that the Indian military is preparing to fight two-front wars, it leaves absolutely no room for comfort for the Pakistan as they remain India's most troubled front. This modernisation is bound to push the earthenware pot to find means to secure its own deterrence capabilities and seek alliances, formal or informal, against any intended or unintended damage by the brass pot. Indeed, as Dr Chandran observes in his article, there is a bigger bronze pot - China - in the nuclear stream as well and I believe that it might gain influence and become popular in the neighbourhood amongst smaller and weaker pots as a result of the brass pot's increasingly offensive capabilities.

The dilemma then for the two pots is to continue down the nuclear stream without coming into contact with one another, all the while maintaining a safe distance. The earthenware pot, aware of the dangers of coming into contact with the brass pot, proposed confidence and security-building measures long before overt nuclearisation, many of which were rejected out rightly by India. Pakistan

has also been extraordinarily transparent about the measures it has taken to secure its nuclear weapons against internal and external destabilization unlike India, but instead of being appreciated by the 'pot' community, it has been ridiculed with ifs and buts about its 'competency' to manage a highly stable nuclear command and control system.

Do these two pots have control over their destiny? India is seven times larger than Pakistan and was the one who introduced nuclear weapons in the region with its nuclear test in 1974. India should therefore take the lead and actually exhibit 'Gandhian restraint' in proposing measures to reduce nuclear dangers in South Asia, and undoubtedly, Pakistan will follow suit.

The earthenware pot understands and acknowledges that the asymmetry with the brass pot is beyond yawning; therefore, there is no attempt at trying to achieve 'parity'. All it wants is 'equilibrium' at all costs so that it can stay buoyant. Why is it so difficult to understand and accept that Pakistan does not have any ambitions to flaunt its nuclear prowess in or beyond the region? Its deterrence posture remains 'minimum' yet credible, where minimum numbers of nuclear weapons are required to effectively counter the threat. It is unfortunate that ambiguity enshrined in the Indian NFU (read massive retaliation) proclamation makes it difficult for Pakistan to finalise how many nuclear weapons justify the 'minimum' requirement for credible, stable deterrence.

Do these two pots have control over their destiny? India is seven times larger than Pakistan and was the one to introduce nuclear weapons in the region with its nuclear test in 1974. India should therefore take the lead and actually exhibit 'Gandhian restraint' in proposing measures to reduce nuclear dangers in South Asia, and undoubtedly, Pakistan will follow suit. India can take the lead by capping its fissile material production; declaring its fissile material stockpiles; volunteering to sign the FMCT unilaterally if it truly wants to champion the cause of disarmament; and by encouraging Pakistan's entry into the NSG as a measure to keep a check on Pakistan's export control regime, to name a few. But, if India is indeed the tortoise that Krepon believes it is, then true progress will only be made when it will stick its neck out. If it fails to take the lead and create an environment where Pakistan is compelled to follow, then it must know that the rules of the game have changed. The hare knows that if it takes the straight path, it will win. The hare knows it cannot afford to take a nap or be distracted.

India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: Strengthening Risk Reduction Measures

Salma Malik

Assistant Professor, Dept of Defence & Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad

E-mail: salmamalik@gmail.com

It is inherent in the nature of India and Pakistan for all problems and issues to become intertwined, and the simplest can affect the most complicated and vice versa. The latest, and now widely trending, issue in this spat is the death at the hands of fellow (Pakistani) inmates of Sarabjit Singh, whose confession about masterminding bomb blasts in Pakistan puts him in the league of Ajmal Kasab. Interestingly, not only was he accorded a hero's funeral back home, but was immediately avenged through a replica attack on a Pakistani incarcerated for years in a Jammu prison because of illegal border crossing.

The moral of this fable, Aesopian or not, is never to lose an opportunity to avenge and always pay the adversary in the same coin. Pakistan, which has more often been labeled the brash, immature state—slipping into the hands of Taliban, upping the nuclear ante through its tactical nuclear weapons and perceived aggressive posture, and terrorising India through its mad cap ideas - has actually shown more restraint and commitment to the continuity of the bilateral peace process. However, the process remains a dialogue opportunity at best, rather than seen as moving towards any meaningful conclusions.

With substantial domestic problems, and engagement for the first time on the western front, any active confrontation with India is the last desirable option for Islamabad. But this does not at any point imply that in case of an unfortunate development, such as the initiation of the much talked about Cold Start doctrine or akin, Pakistan would shy away from refocusing its attention to the eastern front. Despite a semblance of peace, skirmishes across the LoC and the resulting political and media frenzy are an indication of the extremely taut and fragile relations between the two.

So, if Krepon provocatively aims to race the South Asian hare and tortoise, would it imply that both neighbours have the same goal posts, and wish to race for a singular gain? Pakistan is not on an ego trip by trying to merely win the nuclear race, nor does it seek to take advantage of India's proverbial catnap. Pakistan's nuclear programme and preparedness has and remains purely driven by its genuine security needs. With no viable bilateral mechanism or external

The moral of this fable, Aesopian or not, is never to let lose an opportunity to avenge and always pay the adversary in the same coin. Pakistan, which has more often been labeled the brash, immature state, slipping in the hands of Taliban, upping the nuclear ante through its tactical nuclear weapons and perceived aggressive posture, and terrorising India through its mad cap ideas, has actually shown more restraint and commitment to the continuity of the bilateral peace process.

support in resolving long-standing disputes and conflicts, ranging from Sir Creek and water sharing to Kashmir, a growing conventional (weapons) asymmetry and deliberate apathy towards concerns voiced by Pakistan—whether with regard to an Indo-US strategic partnership, a de-hyphenation of India and Pakistan’s nuclear status, or turning a blind eye to Pakistan’s energy needs - compel the country to adopt indigenous measures for protecting and safeguarding its interests, like any other country would do in similar circumstances.

With regard to India, the US conveniently keeps its eyes wide shut and feels fatigued each time Pakistan brings up these genuine concerns. For the US, India is all about containing the next containment adversary - China! After all, the clash of civilisations theory has now more or less run its course, and there is always a need for a new flavour of the month as well as better allies. Little do they realise that not only will Beijing never behave like the USSR, it will also not be in the interest of any of the countries in this equation who are vying for each others’ jugular to draw first blood, as economic interdependence and geostrategic realities wisely suggest otherwise.

With regard to India, the US conveniently keeps its eyes wide shut and feels fatigued each time Pakistan brings up these genuine concerns. For the US, India is all about containing the next containment adversary - China! After all, the clash of civilisations theory has now more or less run its course, and there is always a need for a new flavour of the month as well as better allies.

Secondly, India will never be the amiable ally that Pakistan desires. Although China, by its very nature, is not easily provoked, Krepon’s marathon should have Beijing as a very important player in this game, as China’s nuclear testing and the brief border skirmish compelled today’s tortoise to behave as the hare of yesteryear’s and expedited its quest for nuclear muscle at any cost. If we take overt nuclearisation as an indicator of reaching the first goal post, then Pakistan was twenty four years late in responding to the smiling Buddha. India’s China factor gels perfectly with US assessments, however the policy pundits sitting in DC must not overlook the fact that the bulk of India’s strategic arsenal, its force posturing, military doctrines, and procurement trends are primarily Pakistan-centric. With Afghanistan as a new proxy turf, the situation could become grimmer in the coming years. Equating India’s weapons development and acquisition as a Gandhian notion is totally

absurd. Even the tiniest of upsets in this precariously balanced nuclear equation, which by no means amounts to a race, would add to Pakistan’s concerns and compel Islamabad to re-adjust the threshold of its credible minimum deterrence.

Both Pakistan and India are well aware of the costs of an inadvertent nuclear strike. Pakistan has virtually survived on grass to seek this security guarantee, and no amount of solicitation can convince either of the neighbours to review their policy options (although the bulk of this friendly advice has been Pakistan-centric). What is required, and can be facilitated by friends such as the US, primarily, is helping India and Pakistan strengthen their nuclear risk reduction and restraint regime, as well as address the concerns that are at the root of the entire problem.

India, Pakistan and the Nuclear Race: Evaluating the Response

Michael Krepon

Co-founder, The Stimson Center

E-mail: mkrepon@stimson.org

Metaphors and analogies are useful literary devices to prompt reaction and discussion. My weak attempt to borrow Aesop's fable about the tortoise and the hare, and to apply it to the nuclear competition on the subcontinent, seems to have had its intended effect. Had Aesop written a fable about the dragon and the elephant, I would have borrowed this device, as well.

The weaknesses of my analogy have been readily identified - most tellingly the triangular, action-reaction character of this competition. As hard and fast as the US-Soviet nuclear competition was, in some respects it was easier to defuse than the China-India-Pakistan competition. There was a rough symmetry of top-line force levels, a hard-earned acceptance of transparency and intrusive monitoring, an acknowledgement after the Berlin and Cuban missile crises not to play with fire in each other's backyards, and a readiness to try to structure the competition through formalised agreements. Even so, Washington and Moscow did not break the back of their nuclear competition until risk-taking leaders assumed power in both countries, and until the Soviet Union's economy and political coherence began to crater.

Beijing, New Delhi and Islamabad/Rawalpindi share some of the same difficulties in stabilising their nuclear competition with Washington and Moscow. There is a familiar pattern of a lack of enthusiasm by diplomats to tackle nuclear risk reduction, scepticism by national security establishments, and distracted political leaders. In addition, there is the novel problem of stabilising a triangular competition without structural content, as formal agreements are unlikely. Geometrically speaking, a triangular hierarchy is harder to stabilise than one between two superpowers. 'Our' spoilers worked an insider game, operating within the bureaucracy and on Capitol Hill. Your spoilers attack government buildings and five-star hotels.

So, yes, quite obviously, the analogy of a two-party competition, a winner and a loser, and a finish line are not analytically sound for South Asia. Still, these answers seem too pat, too simple, and too well rehearsed. The difficulties go deeper, making stabilisation measures even more difficult. To be sure, China

Beijing, New Delhi and Islamabad/Rawalpindi share some of the same difficulties in stabilising their nuclear competition with Washington and Moscow. There is a familiar pattern of a lack of enthusiasm by diplomats to tackle nuclear risk reduction, scepticism by national security establishments, and distracted political leaders.

factors significantly in Indian military requirements. What's missing in most Indian strategic assessments, until recently, is that Pakistan refuses to accept the status of India's lesser-included case. India's strategic community has difficulty accepting this circumstance, preferring to believe Pakistan can only complete this successfully with Chinese help. This was abundantly true during the early phases of Rawalpindi's quest for a nuclear deterrent. Clinging to this assumption now, when available evidence suggests otherwise, underestimates the Pakistani military establishment's willingness to pay for, and the Pakistani defence production establishment's ability to deliver, a widely diversified and growing set of nuclear capabilities. Pakistan is the hare because it works harder to compete than India, and because it has fewer political impediments to do so.

Nuclear competitions do not have winners, whether they are two-party or three-party affairs. Winners have strong and growing economies. Winners have domestic cohesion. Nor do nuclear arms competitions have finish lines. One new requirement simply leads to the next.

Nuclear competitions do not have winners, whether they are two-party or three-party affairs. Winners have strong and growing economies. Winners have domestic cohesion. Nor do nuclear arms competitions have finish lines. One new requirement simply leads to the next. It takes great political and diplomatic exertions to put in place nuclear risk-reduction measures. So far, leaders in China, India, and Pakistan have not been up to this task.