



Deterrence or danger?

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Deterrence or danger?-India does not gain anything by escalating the nuclear arms race in the region with INS Arihant

- The indigenous nuclear submarine, INS Arihant, is a great achievement for India.
- It has been universally recognised that the sole justification for having nuclear weapons is their deterrence value.
- The initiation of a nuclear attack would mean utter destruction, not just for the two parties involved but also for regions far beyond.
- If nuclear weapons fail to deter the outbreak of war involving use of such weapons, they have disastrously failed in their deterrence mission.

A nuclear triad

- The major nuclear weapon powers, principally the U.S., have developed the myth of a nuclear triad, that consists of land-based, air-based and sea-based nuclear delivery systems.
- The theory is that if country A initiates a nuclear attack on country B in a first strike, country B must be in a position, even after absorbing the nuclear strike, to retaliate with a massive nuclear attack on the enemy country.
- This is called second strike capability. In the event that an enemy initiates a nuclear strike, it will never be able to destroy all the land and air-based nuclear weapons of the target country.
- Again, the enemy might attack population centres and not nuclear weapon sites; in that case, all the nukes of the target country would be available for retaliation.
- In either case, the deterrence capability of the target country would remain intact. If the possession of the naval leg were to deter the enemy, ab initio, from initiating a nuclear launch, it would add to the deterrence value.
- Survivability by itself does not appear to make deterrence more credible.

The case of Pakistan

- Pakistan has rejected the no-first-use policy and has in fact said that it would not rule out using nukes if it felt compelled to do so in a war.
- It claims to have so-called tactical nuclear weapons which can presumably be used in a battle field.
- Pakistan, in other words, keeps the option of using nuclear weapons first as a deterrent against a conventional attack by India.
- We may not admit it, but we are engaged in a nuclear, and conventional, arms race, exactly the same way the superpowers were during the Cold War era.
- China is far ahead of India in many respects. It has more warheads and more nuclear-powered submarines.
- We have a territorial dispute with China, but both countries have acquired enough experience to manage and contain the conflict.
- It is reasonably safe to say that there will not be an all-out war involving the use of nuclear weapons between India and China.
- India has been in the forefront in campaign for nuclear disarmament. Let us not at least escalate a nuclear arms race in our region.

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