3/00/2018

Response to Research Proposal from Political Scientist Perspective

**Tensions with Neighbors**

As you briefly allude to, India’s nuclear program is justified by tensions with Pakistan and China. Given their hostile relationship, nuclear parity with Pakistan is an absolute minimum acceptable to Indian policy makers. Furthermore, nuclear weapons give India more leverage with China than conventional force, where China has a decisive edge. Given that you seem to be suggesting that India should engage in disarmament these security concerns may present a significant obstacle. Any disarmament process would have to involve China and Pakistan, thus greatly complicating affairs. However, it also means that even partial disarmament would have a significant effect on multiple nuclear arsenals.

**Reference and Content Expansion**

Even if you are writing a technical paper it should be informed by knowledge of the strategic mindset of Indian decision makers. Otherwise, you run the risk of making technically valid suggestions that are nonetheless dead on arrival. Thus, I have identified a few sources that provide a general overview of the Indian nuclear strategic mindset and listed them below. These documents should help inform your understanding of Indian objectives, fears and capabilities.

Basrur, Rajesh M. "Nuclear weapons and Indian strategic culture." Journal of Peace Research 38, no. 2 (2001): 181-198.

Ganguly, Sumit. "Behind India's Bomb: The Politics and Strategy of Nuclear Deterrence." Foreign Affairs 80, no. 5 (2001): 136-42. doi:10.2307/20050256.

Giles, Gregory F., and James E. Doyle. "Indian and Pakistani views on nuclear deterrence." Comparative Strategy 15, no. 2 (1996): 135-159.

**The Civilian Supremacy Issue**

Contrary to the default western assumption it is not clear that Indian civilian leadership is truly in charge of the Indian nuclear program. Instead it appears that military elements may be independently deciding nuclear policy. In particular the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) have engaged in IBCM and nuclear weapon research without any civilian mandate. This means that any technical proposals for disarmament of arsenal modification must be satisfactory to not only the civilian leadership, but also the military. In fact, I can foresee very few cases in which the military bureaucracy would welcome a reduction in its authority and capabilities. It is worth considering that any perceived excesses in the Indian nuclear arsenal are the product of this military supremacy. The civilian leaders are unable to impose restraint so military actors seeking to increase their own prestige and importance constantly push for expanded arsenals.