

ARE THERE LESSONS FOR INDIA AND PAKISTAN FROM THE ARGENTINE-BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR RIVALRY?

This paper aims to provide a discussion of in what ways there may be lessons from the successful end to the nuclear rivalry between Argentina and Brazil for that of India and Pakistan. It is of course understood at the outset that the two rivalries are greatly different, and that the strategic contexts and domestic circumstances of the latter two countries are immensely different from those of their South American contemporaries. However, there is enough which is similar in the two contexts for one to feel that the study of how the ending of the Argentina-Brazil rivalry took place does have some lessons to offer those interested in a similar end occurring in South Asia.

INTRODUCTION

Nuclear weapons are of course not an unalloyed ill in the modern world. Much scholarship has suggested a major role for them in providing the kind of mutual deterrence between East and West that may well have ended up assisting in the maintenance of world peace rather than disturbing it over many years of the cold war. Be that as it may, the destructiveness of such weapons and the dangers inherent in their testing and use, visible to all at the end of the Second World War but evolved into much greater ones since, have made most of the international community greatly interested in seeing them abolished or at least greatly reduced in numbers, size, testing, and number of countries holding them.

This international drive has seen regional as well as global efforts to limit their development, testing, deployment, stockage, and transit. The most significant of the latter has of course been the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, an ambitious project aiming at stopping the spread of such weapons to non-nuclear weapons states and limiting nuclear powers in terms of their arsenals of such weapons and their future status.

Despite major successes, the NPT has not of course been able to bring nuclear proliferation to a halt. A number of countries have become threshold states since 1968 and could cross that threshold to actual development and deployment of weapons in relatively short order. Others have unfortunately chosen to move forward with testing such weapons as part of nuclear programmes that included nuclear weapons as elements of national defence.

Some countries have, however, found it possible to pull back from the brink on the issue of nuclear weapons development. Despite the advantages those weapons could bring them in prestige, defence, deterrence, technological, and other senses, they have decided that the costs of such development were too high and the risks too great.

Two such states have been Argentina and Brazil, South American countries with a long history of rivalry and distrust. On the other hand, two countries which have not been able to reach such a happy state have been India and Pakistan, states with a shorter rivalry but one which has been