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# Trends. Pakistan evens the score: Do we need an overtime?

Editor

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As IBPP goes to press, the Associated Press (AP) has reported that the Pakistani government has engaged in five nuclear detonations and--in the words of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif--settled the score with India. In addition, the AP reported that Pakistan was placing nuclear warheads on its Ghauri missile.

There are two political psychological issues that need immediate explication. First, the psychology of games. Games, the competition intrinsic to many games, and comparative frequency accounts of salient actions between and among competitors are cognitive constructs contributing to impelling nuclear weapons-related action. Diplomatic and intelligence assets applied to understanding and modulating the consequences of the India-Pakistan game(s) should be concerned with delineating the nature and rules of the game(s) each government believes itself and its adversary to be playing.

Second, the reinforcement, omission training, and punishment strategies that various world powers have instituted and been threatening to institute in an effort to prevent nuclear testing and nuclear weaponization of heretofore nonnuclear powers need to be reassessed. For example, the rigid embracing of cognitive consistency--being compelled to follow through with threatened action (punishment) because future threats will be less credible and have even less deterrent value--is not an appropriate response. Credibility in foreign policy is more likely to be strengthened if a political entity changes as necessary to new facts. Otherwise that entity is always a prisoner of its sunk costs.

Now that there are two new publicly-declared nuclear powers, following through with threatened punishments will more likely be politically destabilizing for them and for those entities that can be affected by them. Instead, both powers--new members of the nuclear club--should be treated according to club rules. Perhaps, in this way, they will both come to believe that it is in their interests to play the same game, with the same rules, and accept the same predictable set of behaviors. (See Anderson, C.A., & Morrow, M. (1995). Competitive aggression without interaction: Effects of competitive versus cooperative instructions on aggressive behavior in video games. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21, 1020-1030; Colman, A.M., & Wilson, J.C. (1997). Antisocial personality disorder: An evolutionary game theory analysis. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 2, 23-34; Hausken, K. (1997). Game-theoretic and behavioral negotiation theory. *Group Decision and Negotiation*, 6, 511-528; Mori, K. (1996). Effects of trust and communication on cooperative choice in a two-person prisoner's dilemma game. *Japanese Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 35, 324-336; Pakistan explodes nuclear devices. (May 28, 1998). Associated Press.) (Keywords: Arms Race, Deterrence, Game Theory, India, Nuclear Weapons, Pakistan, Political Psychology, Security.)