

Disruptive Technologies and Instability in South Asia: A Myth or a Reality

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South Asia's peace and stability are largely decided by India-Pakistan relations. The possession of nuclear weapons by neighbouring states is a decisive factor in determining the nature of their relations. The relationship between the two nations has deteriorated due to the dispute over Kashmir. China, another nuclear power, bordering the same region, also has an influence on this strategic relationship. Many argue that the nuclear arms race, advancement of the civil nuclear industry and other scientific developments in the nuclear domain have contributed to the proliferation of weapons in the region. Due to all these reasons, analysts fear that South Asia is more likely to face nuclear dangers than other regions. This paper discusses whether disruptive technologies and the development of nuclear arsenal have escalated the arms race and raised the possibility of triggering a nuclear war in the region. It further discusses the technological implications on instability and balance of power within this context. The findings reveal that there is a trend in South Asia to increase the risk of conventional war as the number of nuclear weapons increase. It further leads to more danger since the nuclear states at conventional war are signalling their willingness to cross the nuclear threshold. On the other hand, the willingness shown by asymmetric actors to acquire disruptive technologies could also lead to a danger in South Asia. However, there is an opposing view that nuclearization of India and Pakistan is strengthening the stability of the region. For some scholars, it is very unlikely that a stable strategic nuclear balance would escalate a lower level conflict to a nuclear conflict. This paper grapples with both arguments in order to simulate further discussion.

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