

# India's Doctrinal Modifications: Counterforce Temptations in South Asia

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## Abstract

This paper assists in understanding contesting technological capabilities and doctrinal modification between India and Pakistan that are drifting South Asia towards instability, leaving the nuclear deterrence in a dark abyss. Hawks on both sides of the nuclear armed rivals are unprecedentedly chanting threats of nuclear war. More bothersome is the indications of shifting the Indian policy of No First Use (NFU), calls for doctrinal modifications and counterforce temptations. An Indian quest for escalation dominance and Pakistani quest for stability against India is in fact a mutual struggle beyond 'minimum credible' to 'assured second strike' capabilities.

## Keywords

Counterforce, no-first-use, nuclear weapons, strategic stability, deterrence

## Introduction

The deterrence relationship between India and Pakistan was profusely visible when India launched a SPICE-2000 precision-guided munition at Balakot in Pakistan on February 26, 2019. India alleged that the targeted facility was a training camp of a terrorist organization, the Jaish-e-Muhammad, which claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on Indian military forces at Pulwama in Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir that killed 40 Indian military personnel (Slater, 2019). Pakistan responded in broad daylight with substantial escalation by downing one of India's MiG-21 Bison. The crisis further escalated following the capture of an Indian pilot, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, but his subsequent release at Wahga–Atari border as a peace gesture soon brought about de-escalation. The engagement between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Pakistan Air Force

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