

dian military readiness can ensure that India can take a first strike from Pakistan, its neighbor to the west, and retaliate massively. India can never realistically sign the nonproliferation treaty until it first has a bilateral treaty with China to cap that country's nuclear weapons production and perhaps dismantle existing warheads.

For nonproliferation, the world badly needs a better framework than the NPT, which has been dying a steady and slow death thanks to Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea. Nonproliferation, as it has been enforced, has not worked, and it is time to think of new approaches. Rogue states such as Iran and North Korea should not be allowed to enrich uranium and plutonium. They should be given nuclear fuel for supervised use in civilian reactors under the strict supervision of the IAEA, with all spent fuel taken back promptly by the suppliers so that it cannot be enriched for weapons production. The appropriate response for bad behavior is not knee-jerk economic sanctions that hurt only the general populace and not the governments, but the freezing of all assets held by those countries in foreign banks. Without foreign exchange, nefarious proliferation activities become much more difficult.

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Mad scientist as cartoon villain

I am moved to comment on Dave Pieri's review (PHYSICS TODAY, November 2006, page 60) of the book *Mad, Bad and Dangerous?: The Scientist and the Cinema* by Christopher Frayling (Reaktion Books, 2005).

Pieri calls attention to and reinforces Frayling's concern that movie portrayals of scientists often paint a very disturbing picture that may adversely affect public opinion about the value of science and scientists. I am at a disadvantage because I have not yet read the book, but all the movies cited in the review would have been viewed primarily by adults of mature intelligence well able to evaluate critically the relevance of the portrayals.

For a truly horrifying experience, I suggest spending a Saturday morning watching the animated cartoons presented on many TV channels for the amusement and edification of children from about 3 to 10 years of age. The plots are typically struggles between good and evil, with good always win-

ning out. All too frequently the villains are "mad scientists" bent on misusing their knowledge to conquer and rule the world. The heroes are children or teens, to whom the target audience can strongly relate. Subordinate characters frequently include fuddy-duddy incompetent "crackpot inventors" whose Rube Goldberg contraptions are as likely to hinder as to help the heroes or villains, depending on which side the crackpot inventor takes. These portrayals leave on impressionable young minds an indelible image that may persist throughout a lifetime as distrust of science, technology, and their practi-

tioners, and an avoidance of those fields as career choices.

If any formally recognized minorities were so insulted, their antidefamation societies would long ago have sounded the tocsins and mounted the barricades to demand political and legal action against the purveyors of this slanderous trash.

Incidentally, as one who spent his working career on the interface between science and technology, I can claim to have been vilified as both mad scientist and crackpot inventor.

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