

INDIA'S DOCTRINE OF NUCLEAR NO FIRST USE

Prelims: Governance- Policies

Mains: GS-III- Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.

- ▶ **Context:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted, after visiting the nuclear test site in Pokhran that "The future of India's 'No First Use' policy on nuclear weapons depends on the "circumstances",

What is No First Use doctrine, and how did it come into being?

- ▶ A commitment to not be the first to use a nuclear weapon in a conflict has long been India's stated policy.
- ▶ India declared a "no-first-use" policy under which it won't be the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict with its neighbors, but will retaliate should deterrence fail. Unlike Pakistan, India's other neighbor and rival China also has a declared no-first-use policy on nuclear weapons.
- ▶ **India's Nuclear Doctrine**
 - a) Building and maintaining a credible minimum deterrent.
 - b) Posture of 'No First Use', nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian Territory or on Indian forces anywhere.
 - c) Nuclear retaliation to a first strike will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage.
 - d) Non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.
 - e) In the event of a major attack against India, or Indian forces anywhere, by biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons.

Background

- ▶ On January 4, 2003, when Vajpayee was India's Prime Minister, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) met to review the progress in operationalizing the country's nuclear doctrine.
- ▶ An official release issued that day summarized the decisions that were being put in the public domain.

▶▶ Among the major points in the doctrine was “a posture of No First Use”, which was described as follows:

- ❖ “Nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere”.

Contents of Doctrine

- ▶▶ Nuclear retaliatory attacks can only be authorised **by the civilian political leadership through the Nuclear Command Authority**. The Nuclear Command Authority comprises a Political Council and an Executive Council. The Political Council is chaired by the Prime Minister.
- ▶▶ India would not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.
- ▶▶ India would continue to put strict controls on the export of nuclear and missile related materials and technologies, participate in the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty negotiations, and continue to observe the moratorium on nuclear tests.
- ▶▶ India remains committed to the goal of a nuclear weapons free world, through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.
- ▶▶ India’s doctrine does not mention any country, but it is no secret that the Indian nuclear arsenal is to counter threats from China and Pakistan.

Advantages of Doctrine:

- ▶▶ Since there is no first use alert requirement, the chances of reacting to a false alarm are nullified thus effectively quashing the chances of unnecessary chaos.
- ▶▶ A ‘no first use’ nuclear weapons policy suits India’s interest. Shifting to a first-use policy would mark a shift from deterrence towards nuclear war fighting
- ▶▶ These weapons are enormously destructive and should not be used. ◻ Since there is no first use alert requirement, the chances of reacting to a false alarm are nullified ◻ A first use would result in international dishonour and weigh heavily on a country with a first use posture.
- ▶▶ NFU doctrine is cheaper to implement; for India, which has many economic targets to achieve, this is a very important factor.
- ▶▶ NFU policy is just right for India as it ensures security for the nation and does not detract it from its march towards better prosperity for its people.
- ▶▶ India's NFU policy which has kept the nuclear arsenal in both India and Pakistan in a demated posture, which means that the nuclear warheads are not mated with the delivery systems.
- ▶▶ A NFU doctrine is cheaper to implement. For India, which has many economic targets to achieve, this is a very important factor.

China:

- ▶▶ China has maintained a 'no first use' policy since 1964 when it went nuclear, and the Chinese leadership has always considered nuclear weapons as political weapons.

Pakistan:

- ▶▶ Pakistan has adopted a first-use policy to ensure full-spectrum deterrence
- ▶▶ Pakistan knows that it cannot afford to use any nuclear weapons in a war, including its tactical nuclear weapons, as India would respond with massive nuclear retaliation as per its doctrine.

