

India's Nuclear Doctrine: Notes for UPSC

India has possesses Nuclear Weapons. The first nuclear test was carried out in 1974, under the operation named "Smiling Buddha". Once again India tested Nuclear weapons in the year 1998, under the name "Operation Shakti". It would not be right to call India a Nuclear superpower as 90% of the worlds' nuclear weapons are in the possession of Russia and USA.

Aspirants would find this topic very helpful in the IAS Exam.

What type of Nuclear bomb does India have?

India has neutron, fission and thermonuclear weapons which yields up to 200 Kilotons. Pokhran-II had 5 detonations, one was a fusion bomb and the remaining 4 were fission bombs. The bombs can be launched via land,air and sea, thus making India to be one of the few nations of the world who are nuclear triads.

How many land-based Nuclear Missiles does India have?

The estimated 68 nuclear warheads of land-based nuclear weapons of India are under the control of and deployed by the Strategic Forces Command, using a variety of both vehicles and launching silos.

The names, type and range of these missiles are given in the table below:

How will the air-based missiles be launched?

In addition to their ground-attack role, it is believed that the Dassault Mirage 2000s and SEPECAT Jaguars are able to provide a secondary nuclear-strike role. The SEPECAT Jaguar was designed to be able to carry and deploy nuclear weapons.

Land Based Ballistic Missiles of India			
Name	Type	Range (KM)	Status
Prithvi-I	Short-range ballistic missile	150	Deployed
Prithvi-II	Short-range ballistic missile	250-350	

Prithvi-III	Short-range ballistic missile	350-600	
Agni- I	Medium-range ballistic missile	700	
Agni-II	Medium-range ballistic missile	2000-3000	
Agni-III	Intermediate-range ballistic missile	3500-5000	
Agni-IV	Intermediate-range ballistic missile	4000	
Agni-V	Intermediate / Intercontinental ballistic missile	5000-8000	
Agni-VII	Intermediate / Intercontinental ballistic missile	8000-12000	Under development
Surya	Intercontinental ballistic missile & MIRV	12000-16000	Unconfirmed

How will the sea-based missiles be launched?

The Indian Navy has developed two sea-based delivery systems for nuclear weapons. The first is a submarine-launched system consisting of at least four 6,000 tonne (nuclear-powered) ballistic missile submarines of the Arihant class. The second is a ship-launched system based around the short range ship-launched Dhanush ballistic missile (a variant of the Prithvi missile).

The names, type and range of these missiles are given in the table below:

Sea-Based Ballistic Missiles of India			
Name	Type	Range (KM)	Status
Dhanush	Short-range ballistic missile	350	Operational

Sagaria (K-15)	Submarine-launched ballistic missile	700	Operational
K-4	Submarine-launched ballistic missile	3500	Tested
K-5	Submarine-launched ballistic missile	5000	Under Development [[]
K-6	Submarine-launched ballistic missile	6000	Under Development [[]

Why did India decide to go Nuclear?

India lost the 1962 war with China. 2 years later, in 1964, China successfully tested Nuclear weapons. In addition the Sino-Pakistan alliance was also a factor. As such, the Government of India decided that only a very powerful deterrent could keep their aggressors at bay. Thus this was the reason for India deciding to develop nuclear weapons.

What are some of the main features of India's Nuclear Doctrine?

Some of the main features of India's nuclear doctrine are given below.

1. "No First Use" policy - India will use nuclear weapons only in the event of a nuclear attack on India.
2. It asserts that nuclear weapons are solely for deterrence and that India will pursue a policy of "retaliation only"
3. Only Civilian political leadership has the power to authorize nuclear retaliation.
4. The Government of India will not respond with a punitive retaliation should deterrence fail
5. Nuclear weapons will never be used against non-nuclear weapon states.

The above details would help candidates prepare for UPSC 2020.