

Essay on India's Nuclear Doctrine

The Nuclear Doctrine of India is based on the principle that India will only use a nuclear weapon in retaliation to a country's attempt of attacking India, its states or its army with a nuclear weapon. Nuclear Doctrine, in general, is how a country with a nuclear weapon uses the weapon in peace and at the time of war.

The Nuclear Doctrine of India is based on three main pillars. The three pillars of India's nuclear doctrine are as follows:

1. No first use
2. Credible minimum deterrent
3. Civilian control (NCA)

All other components of the doctrine such as survivability strategic trend, punitive retaliation in rapid response and shift from peacetime deployment to fully employable forces in the shortest possible time are all strict mathematical derivations of the above three basic principles.

Indian's nuclear doctrine is the most responsible doctrine which aims at providing the minimum credible deterrent. It is a consensus document and does not restrict the country from exercising its nuclear weapon options in any manner. It offers complete elasticity in deciding the number of nuclear weapons India should possess.

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There are various International groupings that are committed to exchange of information and technology related to nuclear weapons, dual-use technology, biological weapons and chemical weapons.

Pillars of Nuclear Doctrine of India

India became a nuclear power country without signing the [Non-Proliferation Treaty](#) which makes it the first country to have accomplished something like this. The pillars of India's Doctrine Treaty are as mentioned below:

1. No-first-use

As per the nuclear doctrine, India conforms to a no-first-use policy when it comes to nuclear weapons. The theories of no-first-use and deterrence go hand in hand. Any first aggressive usage of nuclear weaponry will be an indication and an admittance that deterrence has not been successful and that the use of such weapons was the only option left for the country.

It is universally acknowledged that a nuclear war between two nuclear powers would only lead to disastrous losses for both sides and would not amount to any meaningful military decision. In such circumstances, the no-first-use policy would be deemed as the most appropriate.

2. Credible minimum deterrent

The concept of minimum nuclear deterrent includes sufficient survivable and operationally prepared nuclear forces, a vigorous command and control system, effectual intelligence and early warning capabilities, and all-encompassing planning and operational training in tune with the strategy and the inclination to employ nuclear weapons and forces. The nuclear doctrine expects a deterrent that has the capability of administering destruction and punishment to the aggressor.

The principles of credibility, effectiveness and survivability will be central to India's nuclear deterrent.

The nuclear doctrine does not quantify the minimum deterrent. It demands a highly effective military capability. The doctrine emphasises on an effective and enduring diverse force that are based on a nuclear tread of aircraft, sea-based assets and mobile land-based missiles.

3. Nuclear command authority (NCA)

On 4th January 2003, India unveiled a 3-tier Nuclear Command Authority (NCA) to manage its nuclear weapons. This board framework was approved on the nuclear doctrine prepared by the National Security Board.

The NCA comprises of the following:

- (a) political council
- (b) executive council and
- (c) strategic forces command

The political council is headed by the Prime Minister. It is the body which authorizes the use of nuclear weapons.

The executive council is headed by the National Security Adviser to the prime minister. Its function is to offer inputs for decision-making by the NCA and to implement the directives it gets from the political council. The executive council may include the chiefs of defence services, the convener of the NSAB, the IIC chairman, the cabinet secretary, intelligence agencies heads and secretaries of ministers represented in the cabinet committee on security (CCS).

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The strategic forces command (SFC) would be responsible for the administration of the nuclear forces and will be actually tasked with the firing of nuclear weapons. SFC is the second tri-service command in India. The first one was set up in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the year 2001. Establishment of the NCA will add credibility to the nuclear position of India. The NCA stands out in its firm commitment to deterrent stability through civilian control over nuclear weapons.

The most important aspect of India's nuclear doctrine is that it is majorly linked to a continued commitment to total nuclear disarmament. The 5 major nuclear nations are antipathic to relinquishing their monopoly over the production and deployment of nuclear weapons while denying a similar privilege to other countries.