

**DOCUMENT**

**Indian Nuclear Doctrine**

The following is the text of the Indian Nuclear Doctrine prepared by the Nuclear Doctrine Group of the National Security Advisory Board and adopted by the entire NSAB after a thorough discussion.

**1. Preamble**

- 1.1 The use of nuclear weapons in particular as well as other weapons of mass destruction constitutes the gravest threat to humanity and to peace and stability in the international system. Unlike the other two categories of weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical weapons which have been outlawed by international treaties, nuclear weapons remain instruments for national and collective security, the possession of which on a selective basis has been sought to be legitimised through permanent extension of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) in May 1995. Nuclear weapons states have asserted that they will continue to rely on nuclear weapons with some of them adopting policies to use them even in a non-nuclear context. These developments amount to virtual abandonment of nuclear disarmament. This is a serious setback to the struggle of the international community to abolish weapons of mass destruction.
- 1.2 India's primary objective is to achieve economic, political, social, scientific and technological development within a peaceful and democratic framework. This requires an environment of durable peace and insurance against potential risks to peace and stability. It will be India's endeavour to proceed towards this overall objective in cooperation with the global democratic trends and to play a constructive role in advancing the international system toward just, peaceful and equitable order.
- 1.3 Autonomy of decision-making in the developmental process and in strategic matters is an inalienable democratic right of the Indian people. India will strenuously guard this right in a world where nuclear weapons for a select few are sought to be legitimised for an indefinite future, and where there is growing complexity and frequency in the use of force for political purposes.
- 1.4 India's security is an integral component of its development process. India continuously aims at promoting an ever-expanding area of peace and stability around it so that developmental priorities can be pursued without disruption.
- 1.5 However, the very existence of offensive doctrines pertaining to the first use of nuclear weapons and the insistence of some nuclear weapons states on the legitimacy of their use even against non-nuclear weapon countries constitute a threat to peace, stability and sovereignty of states.
- 1.6 This document outlines the broad principles for the development, deployment and employment of India's nuclear forces. Details of policy and strategy concerning force structures, deployment and employment of nuclear forces will flow from this framework and will be laid down separately and kept under constant review.

## **2. Objectives**

2.1 In the absence of global nuclear disarmament India's strategic interests require effective, credible nuclear deterrence and adequate retaliatory capability should deterrence fail. This is consistent with the UN Charter, which sanctions the right of self-defence.

2.2 The requirements of deterrence should be carefully weighted in the design of Indian nuclear forces and in the strategy to provide for a level of capability consistent with maximum credibility, survivability, effectiveness, safety and security.

2.3 India shall pursue a doctrine of credible minimum nuclear deterrence. In this policy of "retaliation only", the survivability of our arsenal is critical. This is a dynamic concept related to the strategic environment, technological imperatives and the needs of national security. The actual size, components, deployment and employment of nuclear forces will be decided in the light of these factors. India's peacetime posture aims at convincing any potential aggressor that:

Any threat of use of nuclear weapons against India shall invoke measures to counter that threat; and

Any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the aggressor.

2.4 The fundamental purpose of Indian nuclear weapons is to deter the use and threat of use nuclear weapons by any State or entity against India and its forces. India will not be the first to initiate a nuclear strike, but will respond with punitive retaliation should deterrence fail.

2.5 India will not resort to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against States, which do not possess nuclear weapons, or are not aligned with nuclear weapon powers.

2.6 Deterrence requires that India maintain:

Sufficient, survivable and operationally prepared nuclear forces,  
A robust command and control system,  
Effective intelligence and early warning capabilities, and  
Comprehensive planning and training for operations in line with the strategy, and  
The will to employ nuclear forces and weapons.

2.7 Highly effective conventional military capabilities shall be maintained to raise the threshold of outbreak both of conventional military conflict as well as that of threat or use of nuclear weapons.

## **3. Nuclear Forces**

3.1 India's nuclear forces will be effective, enduring, diverse, flexible, and responsive to the requirements in accordance with the concept of credible minimum deterrence. These forces will be based on a triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missiles and sea-based assets in keeping with the objectives outlined above. Survivability of the forces will be enhanced by a combination of multiple redundant systems, mobility, dispersion and deception.

3.2 The doctrine envisages assured capability to shift from peacetime deployment to fully employable forces in the shortest possible time, and the ability to retaliate effectively even in a case of significant degradation by hostile strikes.

#### **4. Credibility and Survivability**

The following principles are central to India's nuclear deterrent:

4.1 *Credibility*: Any adversary must know that India can and will retaliate with sufficient nuclear weapons to inflict destruction and punishment that the aggressor will find unacceptable if nuclear weapons are used against India and its forces.

4.2 *Effectiveness*: The efficacy of India's nuclear deterrent be maximised through synergy among all elements involving reliability, timelines, accuracy and weight of the attack.

4.3 *Survivability*:

India's nuclear forces and their command and control shall be organised for very high survivability against surprise attacks and for rapid punitive response. They shall be designed and deployed to ensure survival against a first strike and to endure repetitive attrition attempts with adequate retaliatory capabilities for a punishing strike, which would be unacceptable to the aggressor.

Procedures for the continuity of nuclear command and control shall ensure a continuing capability to effectively employ nuclear weapons.

#### **5. Command and Control**

5.1 Nuclear weapons shall be tightly controlled and released for use at the highest political level. The authority to release nuclear weapons for use resides in the person of the Prime Minister of India, or the designated successor(s).

5.2 An effective and survivable command and control system with requisite flexibility and responsiveness shall be in place. An integrated operational plan, or a series of sequential plans, predicated on strategic objectives and a targetting policy shall form part of the system.

5.3 For effective employment, the unity of command and control of nuclear forces including dual capable delivery systems shall be ensured.

5.4 The survivability of the nuclear arsenal and effective command, control, communications, computing, intelligence and information (C412) systems shall be assured.

5.5 The Indian defence forces shall be in a position to execute operations in an NBC environment with minimal degradation.

5.6 Space based and other assets shall be created to provide early warning, communications, damage/detonation assessment.

## **6. Security and Safety**

6.1 *Security*: Extraordinary precautions shall be taken to ensure that nuclear weapons, their manufacture, transportation and storage are fully guarded against possible theft, loss, sabotage, damage or unauthorised access or use.

6.2 *Safety* is an absolute requirement and tamper proof procedure and systems shall be instituted to ensure that unauthorised or inadvertent activation/use of nuclear weapons does not take place and risks of accident are avoided.

6.3 *Disaster control*: India shall develop an appropriate disaster control system capable of handling the unique requirements of potential incidents involving nuclear weapons and materials.

## **7. Research and Development**

7.1 India should step up efforts in research and development to keep up with technological advances in this field.

7.2 While India is committed to maintain the development of a deterrent, which is both minimum and credible, it will not accept any restraints on building its R&D capability/

## **8. Disarmament and Arms Control**

8.1 Global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament is a national security objective. India shall continue its efforts to achieve the goal of nuclear weapon-free world at an early date.

8.2 Since no-first use of nuclear weapons is India's basic commitment, every effort shall be made to persuade other States possessing nuclear weapons to join an international treaty banning first use.

8.3 Having provided unqualified negative security assurances, India shall work for internationally binding unconditional negative security assurances by nuclear weapon states to non-nuclear weapon states.

8.4 Nuclear arms control measures shall be sought as part of national security policy to reduce potential threat and to protect our own capability and its effectiveness

8.5 In view of the very high destructive potential of nuclear weapons, appropriate nuclear risk reduction and confidence building measures shall be sought, negotiated and instituted.