

# India's Nuclear Doctrine

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**Manpreet Sethi, Ph.D**

*Senior Fellow*

*Centre for Air Power Studies*

*NIAS-IPCS Workshop, Bengaluru*

# India's Nuclear Reality

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## Complex

- ❑ Two nuc powers with different doctrines and capabilities
- ❑ With both India has territ disputes and a history of wars

## Unique

- ❑ Both of which share a robust proliferation relationship
- ❑ Both of whom use proxies to complicate security

## Risk Prone

- ❑ Nuclear war as a result of accident, miscalculation or unauthorized use

# India Meets Challenge...

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- **Credible Nuclear Deterrence**
  - **Nuclear test necessary but not enough**
  - **Build up of capability**
    - **Warheads/delivery vectors**
  - **Display of resolve to use**
    - **Command and control**
    - **Survivability measures**
  - **Communication of both**
    - **Capability and resolve**



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# **INDIA'S NUCLEAR DOCTRINE**

## **Purpose & Process of Making**

# Definitional Clarity

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## □ Nuclear Doctrine

- Set of guiding principles, Philosophy/raison d'être of NWs
- Emerges from strategic culture of nation
- Relatively abiding & timeless

## □ Strategy

- Plan of action to achieve aim defined by doctrine
- Set of ideas to employ instruments of national power

## □ Posture

- Attitude/approach to capability build up & deployment
- Could be exaggerated or assumed to mislead
- Changes with cap and threat envt

# India's Nuclear Doctrine (IND)

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- **Draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine – 17 Aug'99**
  - Prepared by first NSAB
  - Chaired by K Subrahmanyam
  - Put out for public debate by then NSA
  - Criticised abroad (action); at home (content)
  - Never formalised
  
- **CCS note on operationalisation – 4 Jan'03**
  - Acceptance of basic attributes
  - Two differences



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# **INDIA'S NUCLEAR DOCTRINE**

## **Attributes and Appraisal**

# 1. Credible Minimum Deterrence

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- ❑ **Credible – believable to adversary**
  - ❑ **In capability**
    - ❑ **Nuclear warheads & attendant infrastructure**
    - ❑ **Delivery vectors of requisite range, accuracy & reliability**
  - ❑ **In resolve to use**
    - ❑ **Command & control structures**
    - ❑ **Communication channels & redundancies**
    - ❑ **Political will**



# 1. Credible Minimum Deterrence

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- ❑ **Minimum – sufficient in quantity**
  - ❑ **To inflict unacceptable damage**
  - ❑ **Determination of number**
    - ❑ **Calculation of adversary's unacceptability threshold**
      - **Historical experiences of a nation**
      - **Value at stake**
      - **State of economic development**
      - **Political system**
    - ❑ **Reliability of own arsenal**
    - ❑ **Survivability of own arsenal**

# Should Minimum Change?

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- In relation to increase in adversary arsenal?
  - **No** – nuclear parity/superiority immaterial
  - Only need enough to cause unacceptable damage – deterrence thru punishment
  
- In relation to adversary's move to BMD?
  - **Yes** - changes calculation of ability to cause unacceptable damage

## 2. NFU against NWS and Non Use against NNWS

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- **Rules out nuclear preemption**
  - **Not possible to defend nation by NW use**
- **Retaliation only policy**
- **Mere public posturing?**
  - **Evidence available in force structures, alert levels, etc.**

# Should NFU Change?

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- In relation to Pakistan lowering threshold with TNW?
  - **No** – part of policy of brinkmanship & projection of irrationality
  
- In relation to China's possible abandonment of NFU?
  - **No** – First use by India provides no protection

# Why NFU Should Not Change?

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- **Militaries prefer offence, but**
- **Nuclear FU not a good idea....**
  - **When adv has secure second strike capability**
  - **No possibility of ‘splendid first strike’**
  - **No guarantee against escalation**
  - **Calculations not ltd to damage caused by first strike, but damage suffered in response**
  - **Nuclear offence cannot assure victory, nor help escape damage to self**
- **Is FU Credible? Useful?**
  - ***McNamara admission***
  - ***“A Hell of an Alternative” President Kennedy***

# Why NFU Should Not Change?

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- **NFU more credible & liberating**
  - **No ‘weight’ of first use**
    - **When, how early or late, red lines etc**
  - **Onus of escalation on adversary**
    - **No strain on nuclear leash**
    - **No need to perfect logistics of first use**
    - **No psychological ‘burden’ of FU**
  - **Decision to retaliate far easier, legitimate, guilt free**

# Why NFU Should Not Change?

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- **Arsenal Requirements for Credible FU**
  - **Projection of war fighting to gain victory**
  - **Large numbers of first strike weapons**
  - **Nuclear superiority for counterforce**
  - **Elaborate and delegated C2**
  - **Nuclear forces on hair trigger readiness**
- **None conducive to strategic stability**
- **Raises existential risks**
- **NFU raises chance of no use of NW**

# 3. Civilian Control over NW

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- **Physical**
  - **DAE & DRDO**
  - **Only delivery systems with military**
- **Decision making**
  - **National Command Authority**
  - **Political Council to decide use**
  - **Executive Council for policy planning**

**Derived from Indian Political System**



# 4. Pursuit of Universal Nuclear Disarmament

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- **Aspiration for NWFW voiced in doctrine**
- **No dichotomy in twin-track approach**
  - **Short term compulsion Vs longer time security**
- **Search for multilaterally negotiated, universal, verifiable nuclear disarmament**

# Why India must pursue disarmament?

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## □ For National Security

### ■ Challenge of Nuclear Pakistan

- Pak sponsorship of terrorism driven by its NW

### ■ Challenge of Nuclear China

- Threat of nuclear blackmail/coercion

### ■ Challenge of Existential Risks

***Region Minus NW Enhances Security***

# Should Pursuit of UND be Abandoned?

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- **In relation to lack of international enthusiasm?**
  - **No** – In India's security interest
  - **“When a goal appears unattainable, don't adjust the goal, adjust the actions”...**

# Situating NW in India's Strategic Priorities

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- **Comprehensive National Development**
  - Economic, Social, Technological and Military
- **Peace and Stability at home & beyond**
- **Credible Deterrence – Conventional**
  - Prevent war
  - Fight & terminate war – early & favourably
- **Credible Deterrence – Nuclear**
  - Force high nuclear threshold of adversary
  - Leave no doubt on assured, punitive retaliation