Indian Nuclear Doctrine & Pakistan's Nuke

What is the nuclear doctrine of India?

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- India’s nuclear strategy builds on the principle of limitation, despite being a non-signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
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- Its policies have been greatly consistent with the key provisions of NPT that apply to nuclear-weapon states.
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- India has declared nuclear doctrine of 2003, which stands by principles such as credible minimum deterrence, No-First-Use (NFU), non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states, remains a fundamental document till date.
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- The Indian government has not shown any indication that it is attempting to deviate from these declared norms.
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- India’s record when it comes to observable and measurable benchmarks of responsible nuclear behaviour is a largely positive one.
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What is the status of Pakistan nuclear weapon?

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- Pakistan continues to expand the size of its nuclear arsenal, including with the Nasr platform.
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- This expansion will take place notwithstanding India’s policy or posture.
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- Pakistan’s aggressive military strategy combined with an expanding nuclear weapons arsenal should be a matter of deep concern for the whole world, not

merely for India.
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- Pakistan has refused to adopt the NFU policy, and takes undue advantage of its nuclear shield to support and sponsor terrorist attacks in India without any fear of retaliation.
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- There is a deep-rooted Sino-Pak nuclear axis in building nuclear delivery capabilities, often violating the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).
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- Pakistan’s medium range ballistic missiles Shaheen I and II also closely correspond to China’s ‘M’ series of ballistic missiles.
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Is there any shift in India’s doctrine?

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- There are series of debate in Western circles about India’s growing favouritism for an offensive nuclear posture.
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- This supposed shift in India’s position is often interpreted as a response to Pakistan’s acquisition of tactical nuclear weapons or even to India’s inability to deter Pakistan from employing cross-border terrorism.
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- The proactive approach of India makes a strong case for continuing the minimum deterrence posture.
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- As of now there is no official indication that India intends to keep its nuclear forces at a ‘higher readiness level’.
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What are the issues with India’s nuclear doctrine?

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- Analysts claiming such a shift in India’s nuclear posture warn about the consequent heightening of nuclear risks.
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- Researches feel that more holistic view of the concept of minimum

deterrence is required that categorically specifies India’s approach.
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- India’s commitment to the principles of restraint and responsibility in its defence practices remains inadequate.
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- India’s shift towards a proactive and offensive nuclear posture on rather obscure premises and mistaken assumptions.
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- Development of offensive conventional concepts for India’s conventional preparedness, is rather inappropriate and misleading.
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Why India cannot be soft cornered?

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- Each country has the right to retaliate when a war is waged against it, including a proxy war.
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- If India takes an indulgent stand, it may fail to send the fitting signal to Pakistani aggressive posturing and terror acts.
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- It can undermine the logic of credible minimum deterrence.
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- India can take initiatives ‘unilaterally’ to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons, like it did by signing the Hague Code of Conduct, may be inconceivable.
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- India-Pakistan agreement for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons could be a non-starter considering Pakistan’s policies of first use.
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Way forward

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- The significance of India’s doctrine is as similar as the US posture, which indicates that the sole purpose of American nuclear weapons is merely to deter, not to initiate, a nuclear war.
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- India’s security needs differ in a great deal from Pakistan’s, as India has to deal with a greater security challenge from China.

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- Pakistan has a reactionary history of nuclear and missile development and it continues to challenge India’s security through proxy wars and state-sponsored terrorism.
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- The nuclear escalation risk cannot be contained by the revision of India’s minimum deterrence policy, but with a change in Pakistan’s behaviour.
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- Regional stability is possible only if Pakistan starts to practice restraint, act responsibly, and include the principle of NFU in its nuclear doctrine.
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Source: IDSA

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