



# IAS PARLIAMENT

*Information is Empowering*  
A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative

## Fear of a Nuclear Strike

### Why in news?

\n\n

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee of the US has held a formal hearing recently on the question of “authority to order the use of nuclear weapons”

\n\n

### What is the cause?

\n\n

- \n
- The intimate fear of a nuclear strike that stalked America during the Cold War has been revived again due to some recent developments.
- \n
- North Korea is increasingly advancing its nuclear capabilities despite drawing condemnation from the world countries.
- \n
- Apart from this, the US President's remarks that North Korea would be totally destroyed increases the fear of a possible nuclear confrontation.
- \n

\n\n

### What is the concern?

\n\n

- \n
- The U.S. is estimated to have 7,000 nuclear warheads and the President has the sole power to authorise their use.
- \n
- Once the President takes the decision, a nuclear warhead could be heading to its target in few minutes.
- \n
- Being in charge of the ‘nuclear button’ is considered to be the most

consequential of all presidential powers.

\n

- And whether Donald Trump could be trusted with that responsibility is being raised.

\n

- Notably, the concentration of the nuking power in the hands of the President was conceived to eliminate the possibility of a rogue General launching a weapon without authorisation.

\n

- Now, the question is that if the Generals had the power to stop a President gone rogue.

\n

\n\n

### **What do the regulations say?**

\n\n

\n

- The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review says the U.S. could consider the “use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances”.

\n

- This is essentially to defend its vital interests or that of its allies and partners.

\n

- Authorisation of war falls under congressional powers, but if an attack against America is “imminent”, the Commander-in-Chief has the powers to act.

\n

- But Generals can refuse to obey illegal orders.

\n

- However, it is uncertain if a General can question the legality of the presidential directive on a nuclear strike.

\n

- The question is also with distinguishing an imminent threat.

\n

- Some Democratic lawmakers are arguing for legislative restrictions on the power.

\n

- However, some have warned that such measures will undermine America’s nuclear deterrence capability.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n



**IAS PARLIAMENT**  
*Information is Empowering*  
A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative