

# Maktab Competitive Exams Services

## Current Affairs Workshop for CSS 2025

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### Russia's Revised Nuclear Doctrine in 2024 and Global Security Implications

#### Definition of a Nuclear Doctrine

Nuclear doctrines are formal statements of policy that guide how a country views and uses its nuclear arsenal. They outline the conditions under which nuclear weapons may be used, either as a deterrent or in active defense.

Declaratory policy may not necessarily be the same as action policy—1982, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev Doctrine - **Soviet war plans in Europe**

#### Russia's Previous Nuclear Doctrines:

##### 2010 Nuclear Doctrine

The 2010 document reserved the right to employ nuclear arms in two circumstances:

- a) The utilization of nuclear or other types of weapons of mass destruction against [Russia] and (or) its allies”
- b) In the event of aggression against the Russian Federation involving the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is under threat.

This appeared benign. It was difficult to see circumstances in which the three Western nuclear-weapon states—the United States, the United Kingdom, and France—would launch a first strike on Russia with nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction. As for a conventional assault that might threaten Russia's existence, Napoleon and Hitler demonstrated the folly of that.

#### **Background and Rationale**

- a) Georgian Crisis 2008
- b) US Missile Defence Initiatives in Europe:
  - i. European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA 2009)
  - ii. Ground Based Midcourse Defence: focused on intercepting ICBMs in midcourse flight using ground-based interceptors (GBIs)
  - iii. X-Band Radar Deployment (AN/TPY-2) in Turkey in 2011 to track long range ballistic missiles
  - iv. Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) System deployed on ships and land-based sites in Europe

##### 2020 Nuclear Doctrine

In 2020, the Kremlin issued a document entitled “Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence.”

- a) The receipt of “reliable data on a launch of ballistic missiles attacking the territory of the Russian Federation and/or its allies. (A launch on warning Policy – Pre-emptive Strike)
- b) An attack (presumably with conventional weapons) against “critical Russian governmental or military sites of the Russian Federation, disruption of which would undermine nuclear force response actions. (Imitated Trump’s 2018 Nuclear Posture Review which stated that the United States might consider using nuclear weapons in response to a “significant non-nuclear strategic attack” against “U.S. or allied nuclear forces, their command and control, or warning and attack assessment capabilities.)

#### **Back Ground and Rationale:**

- a) US withdrawal from Arms Control Treaties (INF 2019, Open Skies Treaty 2020)
- b) Expansion of NATO after annexation of Crimea

#### **Features of Russia’s Revised Doctrine 2024**

- a) First, Moscow would consider “aggression against Russia by any non-nuclear state, but with the participation or support of a nuclear state” as a “joint attack” on Russia.
- b) Second, Russia would consider using nuclear arms on “receipt of reliable information about a massive launch of air and space attack weapons and their crossing of our state border,” to include an attack by “strategic and tactical aircraft, cruise missiles, drones, hypersonic and other aircraft.”
- c) Third, Russia would reserve “the right to use nuclear weapons in the event of aggression against Russia and Belarus as a member of the [Russia-Belarus] Union State,” including an attack in which the adversary “using conventional weapons, creates a critical threat to our sovereignty.”

#### **Background and Rationale?**

- a) Threat of Use of Western Weapons by Ukraine against Russia
- b) Significant losses to Ukraine war (*Sergey Karaganov* Proposal of Limited Nuclear Strikes against West to establish fear, Wagner Rebellion, Leopard II Tanks)
- c) Aftermath of Biden’s Nuclear Posture Review 2022 - The NPR supports the continued **modernization** of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, particularly its **nuclear triad** (land-based ICBMs, nuclear submarines, and strategic bombers – **B21 Raider Bombers, Columbia Class Submarines**).
- d) US adjustments to Nuclear Deterrence Strategy in 2024 (**Integrated deterrence**, which moves beyond traditional nuclear weapons to include a combination of nuclear, conventional, space, cyber, and informational capabilities against peer adversaries – China and Russia)
- e) Uncertainties about the Renewal of New START that is going to expire in 2026

## Real Threat or a Bluff?

- a) The Scope of nuclear weapons has always remained limited.
- b) Do not help in conventional wars – Vietnam War, Soviet Afghan War
- c) How will China and India respond to it? China is advocating for no first use policy
- d) It will weaken and Isolate Russia

## Global Security Implications:

- a) Conventional warfare and nuclear weapons will be seen as interchangeable options and Erosion of Nuclear Deterrence stability (Ukraine and Syria)
- b) Spark an arms race and it may weaken global efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation. (New START Treaty)
- c) Incentivize China, India, Pakistan and other powers to bolster their own nuclear capabilities, contributing to global instability
- d) Nuclear escalation in conflicts could bring renewed attention to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear warfare. International community could be forced to reexamine the ethical and legal frameworks governing the use of nuclear weapons
- e) The increased reliance on nuclear weapons in global geopolitics could create pressure on Countries in the Global South, many of which have taken non-aligned positions, to take side of nuclear armed powers like Russia and US

## Way Forward?

1. the U.S. and NATO should seek to engage Russia in direct **nuclear risk reduction dialogues**
2. Broader **multilateral dialogues** involving major nuclear powers (like **China, India, and Pakistan**) should be promoted. This could foster a shared commitment to global security, risk reduction, and stability in nuclear-armed regions.
3. The U.S. and NATO should engage with Russia in discussions about extending or even expanding the New START treaty, or initiating new arms control frameworks that address both strategic and tactical nuclear weapons.
4. Diplomacy should focus on reaffirming commitments made by **non-nuclear weapon states** under the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**.
5. Increased emphasis should be placed on the **humanitarian consequences** of nuclear warfare, which should drive global advocacy for reducing the role of nuclear weapons in military strategies. Organizations such as the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** can play a key role in raising awareness about the catastrophic impacts of nuclear conflict.
6. Engaging **civil society** and raising awareness about the risks of nuclear conflict can play a crucial role in influencing political will.