

# India's Nuclear Doctrine: A Case of Strategic Dissonance or Deliberate Ambiguity

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## **Abstract**

India's ongoing nuclear modernisation does not seem compatible with its declared nuclear doctrine of 2003. Several influential voices from within the country have argued for the need to review its nuclear posture. As a consequence, and to restore the credibility of its deterrence posture, some former senior Indian decision-makers have hinted that the country may have already moved from its traditional posture of No First Use (NFU) and could possibly contemplate a comprehensive first-strike against Pakistan. This potential shift in India's nuclear posture, along with operationalisation of second-strike capability, suggest that India may have drifted away from its stated policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence (CMD). It is not yet clear whether this shift is real, intended to maintain deliberate ambiguity, or else a result of prevailing dissonance within India's strategic elite. The resultant discord between its declaratory position and its ongoing developments may force Pakistan to take remedial measures that could lead to action-reaction syndrome, thus, causing instability in South Asia.

**Keywords:** India, Credible Minimum Deterrence, Nuclear Modernisation, Strategic Stability, Arms Race.

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