

How have the nuclear doctrine of India and Pakistan evolved? What do their current doctrines imply for deterrence stability in South Asia.

## 1. Introduction:

The nuclear doctrine of India and Pakistan has evolved with regional dynamics. Both states developed nuclear weapons soon after their partition. In the last quarter of 20th century both crafted their doctrine which evolved from no-first use to minimum credible deterrence to full-spectrum deterrence. As a result of their nuclear doctrine South Asian region has been saved from any nuclear venture. Their doctrines imply for deterrence stability which is visible from minimum skirmishes across line of actual control between India and China. Moreover, limited armed activity in LOC is also due to minimum-credible-deterrence doctrine. Therefore, the nuclear doctrine of India and Pakistan serves as stabiliser in the region.

## 2. A Comprehensive Guide to India and Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine:

Nuclear doctrines of both: India and Pakistan shaped by regional and global security dynamics. Indian nuclear policy, for instance that of no first use serves as

stability force. It prevents China from taking any unilateral action in disputed areas across LAC. Similarly, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine aims to bar India from infiltrating in Pakistan or achieving India's goals of *Akhud-Bharat*. These nuclear doctrines can provide a framework for crisis stability by specifying how a state would respond to different type of threats on its border. Following paragraphs highlight evolutionary journey of India and Pakistan's nuclear doctrine:

### 3. Evolution of Indian Nuclear Doctrine:

India conducted its first nuclear test in 1994. For several years it maintained strategic ambiguity, however, its first nuclear policy came in 1999 in response to Pakistan's nuclear test.

### 4. No First Use Policy:

India's first draft of nuclear policy stated, "India would not be the first country to use nuclear weapons in a conflict". This clarified Indian intentions that nuclear weapons would only be used in

retaliation against any nuclear attack by any country. Therefore, the first step of evolutionary journey of India was no first use of nuclear weapons.

### 5. Minimum Credible Deterrence:

In January 2003, India formally adopted the concept of Minimum Credible Deterrence or MCD. It refers to the possession of a nuclear arsenal deemed sufficient to deter its enemy from initiating conflict. This policy not only deters potential threats from enemy but also sends soft or peace gesture.

### 6. Strategic Restraints:

Last but not the least, India has consistently expressed its commitment to 'strategic restraint'. It means India's responsible behaviour and a defensive posture in the context of nuclear weapon. Strategic restraint can be ascertained from Indian no first use policy and MCD. Hence, Indian leaders, over the years maintained it.

## 7. Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine:

Pakistan first initiated its nuclear program in response to India's nuclear program. It conducted its tests in 1998. Initially, it articulated Credible minimum Deterrence (CMD) aims to deter adversaries on its Eastern border while avoiding arms race.

## 8. First Use as Strategic Threat:

Although, Pakistan has not officially declared First-Use Policy, yet some of the statements by Chief Army Officer stated its interests of first use of nuclear weapons. This policy aims to bar India from any nuclear venture across India-Pakistan's border. Hence, unlike India, Pakistan is not committed to No-First-Use.

## 9. Minimum to Full-Spectrum Deterrence:

In 2013, Pakistan introduced the concept of Full-spectrum-Deterrence marked its shift from its initial doctrine of CMD. It means that Pakistan's response could be at various levels of aggression not solely focused on nuclear retaliation. For instance, Pakistan can deter through unconventional responses such as asymmetric warfare

etc. Hence, full-spectrum deterrence is Pakistan's nuclear doctrine.

## 10. Nuclear Weapons as a Counterforce Option:

Pakistan and India's nuclear weapons aim at ensuring stability in South Asian region. Both countries possess and develop nuclear arsenals in order to have a counterforce option in times of need. These weapons assure balance of power in the region. Therefore, nuclear arsenals are tools to maintain counterforce option.

## 11. Indian No First-Use Policy Deterrence in South Asia:

One of the indications of how nuclear doctrine of both countries imply for deterrence stability in the region is Indian doctrine of no-first-use of nuclear weapon. It is a significant policy that shows stability tool in South Asia.

### a. Minimum Skirmishes with China on LAC: Avoidance of Arm Race:

Indian nuclear doctrine has been playing crucial role in deterring China - another nuclear armed country - from initiating any conflict with India. The deterrence

policy keeps China at bay. As a result of it both countries are forced to avoid arms-race in the region.

## b. Limited Armed Activity on LOC due to MCD - Focus on Peace

It is due to the Indian doctrine of minimum credible deterrence that there is limited arms activity across line of actual control. Although, both India and Pakistan possess nuclear arms, yet not either of them have ever used it owing to their doctrine. Hence, their current doctrines imply stability.

## 12. Pakistani First-Use Policy Keep India at Bay:

Similarly, it is due to Pakistan's denial of commitment to no first use that India, despite powerful regional player is not acting unilaterally. Although, India and Pakistan have fought three wars over Kashmir, yet neither of them have used nuclear weapons. This shows that Pakistan's strategic ambiguity over first-use serves as catalyst for peace.

## a. Stability on Eastern Border

Since the inception of Pakistan

it has been an insecure country due to Afghanistan's resistance and denial of border recognition. But, Pakistan's nuclear weapons and its doctrine has been the reason for stability on western border of the country.

### b. Deter Taliban in Afghanistan on western border:

Deterrence policy of Pakistan avert Taliban in Afghanistan from infiltration and cause any higher-level unrest. Although, occasionally a few skirmishes occur across Ghazni border, yet not any full-fledge conflict ever has happened. The recent move by Pakistani government of deporting Afghan-refugee is not being resisted by Afghans due to Pakistan's power of possession nuclear weapon.

### c. Deter Great Powers to take any Unilateral Actions

Last but not the least, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine ensures stability in the region by preventing superpowers from any nuclear venture. This can be observed from US behaviour or its policies in Indo-Pacific region. This region has always been crucial part of US foreign policy during Obama and Trump period. to present days. One of the reason is nuclear doctrine of Pakistan which is full-spectrum-deterrence.

### 13. Current Doctrines Serve as Stabilizers in South Asia:

India and Pakistan's nuclear doctrines serve as stabilizers in South Asia. The reason is robust nuclear doctrine and clear stance on its usage. In geopolitics, maintenance of balance of power is necessary to survive in globalized world. In this context, South Asian region has always been envy of the world due to three countries with nuclear doctrine. As a result of their doctrine the region is saved from outside attacks or any nuclear threat which potentially could destroy the peace.

### 14. Conclusion:

To sum it all up, nuclear doctrine of India and Pakistan has evolved with the passage of time according to the changing regional dynamics. Both have maintained stern nuclear doctrine; while India maintains strategic constraints, Pakistan merged to keep strategic ambiguity. Moreover, full-spectrum deterrence in Pakistan's doctrine spurred stability in the region by deterring potential aggression from neighboring countries, especially India and Afghanistan.