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



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering