Global No First use policy

.Why in news?

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The strategy to reduce the usage of nuclear weapons has to shift from non-proliferation to no-first use policy in the 21st century.

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What is a No first use policy?

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- A No First Use pledge(NFU) or a policy refers to any authoritative statement by a nuclear weapon state to never be the first to use these weapons in a conflict.
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- It will be reserved strictly only to retaliate in the aftermath of a nuclear attack against its territory or military personnel.
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- These pledges are a component of a country's nuclear declaratory policies.
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- As such, there is no diplomatic arrangement to enforce a declaratory NFU pledge.
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- States with such pledges would be technically able to still use nuclear weapons first in a conflict.
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- China is the only nuclear weapon state to maintain an unconditional NFU pledge.
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- China declared its NFU policy in 1964, and has since maintained this policy.
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- India first adopted a "No first use" policy after its second nuclear tests, Pokhran-II, in 1998 and articulated the policy in 2003.
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What is the need for a GNFU policy?

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- The method of trying to prevent more countries from possessing a nuclear weapon has failed.
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- They first selectively proliferated nuclear weapons technology to their allies, while trying to keep it away from their adversaries.
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- Though they promised to disarm it later, they demanded the rest of the countries to not build their own arsenals in return.
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- They pulled out of this promise too later and decided that they'll keep their bombs in perpetuity, while insisting that the rest forever uphold their no-bomb commitments.
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- However, it became inevitable that the countries like India, Pakistan, North Korea etc., followed these developed nations in building their own nuclear arsenals.
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- So the only realistic idea for the 21st century is the prevention of first-use of nuclear weapons.
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- Global no-first use can co-exist with, even reinforce, the movement towards disarmament.
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- Thus, getting the world's powers to commit to no-first use, followed by reducing their nuclear arsenalbuild up are the initial steps.
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What is the role of India in this regard?

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- India recently announced that its Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear Submarine (SSBN), the INS Arihant, had completed its first deterrent patrol.
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- This moves the nation a step closer to actualising the nuclear 'triad' i.e is a three-pronged military force structure that consists of land-launched nuclear missiles, nuclear-missile-armed submarines and strategic aircraft with nuclear bombs and missiles.
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- However, the completion of the triad calls for a profound review of India's

policy on nuclear weapons.
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- India must shift focus from negotiating our way through international nuclear weapons control regimes, to shaping a world where these weapons of mass destructions are not used.
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- India must go from the defensive to the assertive strategy, wherein India must champion a global no-first use (GNFU) treaty.
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- The nuclear powers of the West, including Russia, are wedded to their longstanding doctrines and processes.
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- They pretend that non-proliferation works only by imposing sanctions on countries trying to make their own bombs, and they make deals with those who succeed in this endeavour.
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- This is because the nuclear powers are simultaneously improving their own arsenals.
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- This shows that the risks of an accidental nuclear war are mounting.
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- On the other hand, countries like China prefer GNFU and has had a no-first use doctrine for quite a while, and is likely to want to maintain that line.
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- Thus, there is scope here for India and China to collaborate at the level of international security.
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Source: Business standard

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