India's Nuclear Deployment Policy Shift

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Why in News?

Recently, SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) Report 2026 stated that India has deployed 12 nuclear warheads, for the 1st time.

- **Stockpile –** Estimated at 190 warheads (Jan 2026), up from 180 in 2025.
- **Policy Shift –** India earlier kept warheads and launchers separate in peacetime, now by deploying them on an SSBN – Deterrence patrol, it signals higher readiness.

  Deterrence Patrol – An SSBN sails secretly with nuclear weapons onboard, ensuring second strike capability so India can retaliate from sea even if attacked.

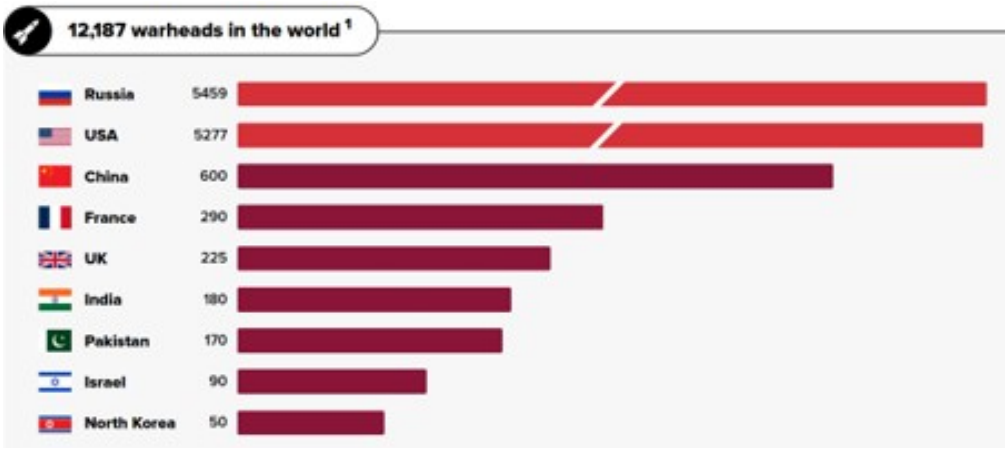
- **Recessed Deterrent Policy –** (De-mated Posture) – Nuclear warheads and delivery systems kept separate in peacetime to prevent accidental use.
- **India's Nuclear Policy –** It is guided by the 2003 doctrine, based on *No First Use (NFU) and Credible Minimum Deterrence.*

  Credible Minimum Deterrence – A nuclear doctrine where a nation keeps a (limited but survivable arsenal) of nuclear weapons.

- In case of a nuclear strike on India, the doctrine mandates a massive retaliatory response to inflict unacceptable damage on the adversary.
- **Nuclear Triad –** 5 are officially recognized as possessing a nuclear triad: the United States, Russia, China, India, and Pakistan.

  Triad – Military capability to deliver atomic weapons via 3 distinct methods Aircraft, land-based missiles, and SSBNs (sea-based

deterrence).



References

1. Indian express | Nuclear Deployment
2. NDTV | Nuclear Deployment

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