

SIPRI Report 2025

Posted at: 18/06/2025

SIPRI Report 2025: India's Growing Nuclear Capabilities Amid Global Arms Race

Context

The **SIPRI Yearbook 2025** (by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) has revealed that **India now possesses more nuclear warheads than Pakistan**, though it still lags significantly behind **China**. The report underscores the danger of a **renewed global nuclear arms race**, amid the **erosion of arms control agreements**.

About SIPRI Yearbook 2025

The SIPRI Yearbook is a globally respected annual publication that tracks **armaments, disarmament, and international security trends**. The 2025 edition highlights an increase in nuclear arsenal modernization, regional instability, and the **rising risk of nuclear conflict**.

India's Status in SIPRI Yearbook 2025

- **Total Warheads:** India possesses **180 stored nuclear warheads** as of **January 2025**.
 - **Modernization:** India is developing **canisterised missiles** with **multiple warhead capability**.
 - **Nuclear Triad:** India now maintains a **mature nuclear triad**—land-based missiles, air-delivered weapons, and **nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs)**.
 - **Strategic Shift:** There's a possible shift towards **mating warheads with launchers even during peacetime**, moving away from the earlier **de-alerted posture**.
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Pakistan's Nuclear Capability

- **Total Warheads:** Estimated at **170 nuclear warheads** (as of January 2025).
 - **Growth Trends:** Increasing **fissile material production** and new delivery systems suggest arsenal expansion in this decade.
 - **Strategic Focus:** Pakistan's nuclear posture is primarily aimed at **deterring India**, with a focus on **short-range tactical nuclear weapons**.
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China's Expanding Nuclear Arsenal

- **Total Warheads:** Estimated at **600 nuclear warheads**, with an annual growth of **~100 warheads since 2023**.
 - **ICBM Silos:** Development of **around 350 new ICBM silos** in remote desert and mountain bases.
 - **Posture Shift:** Indications suggest China may now keep **warheads mounted on missiles during peacetime**, a significant departure from earlier practices.
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Global Nuclear Force Trends

- **Total Warheads Worldwide:** **12,241 nuclear warheads**, of which **~9,614** are in military stockpiles.
 - **Top Nuclear Powers:** **Russia (5,459)** and **USA (5,177)** together hold **over 90%** of global nuclear weapons.
 - **Operational Alert:** Around **2,100 warheads** are maintained in a **high-alert operational state**.
 - **Global Modernization:** All **9 nuclear-armed states**, including the **UK, France, Israel, and North Korea**, are **modernizing or expanding** their arsenals.
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Crisis in Arms Control

- **New START Treaty:** The **last major arms control treaty** is set to **expire in 2026**, with **no successor agreement** currently in place.
 - **Unregulated Growth:** Absence of global frameworks risks **unchecked nuclear expansion** and escalation.
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Rising Risks of Nuclear Conflict

- **Regional Flashpoints:** Tensions in **early 2025**—particularly during **India-Pakistan standoff over Operation Sindoor**—raised alarms, especially with **strikes on nuclear-linked sites**.
 - **Technology Multipliers:** Integration of **AI, cyberwarfare, quantum systems, and space assets** is making deterrence **more fragile and less predictable**.
 - **Escalation Risk:** Compressed **decision-making timelines** and **disinformation** increase chances of **miscalculation or accidental launch**.
 - **Misinformation Warfare:** Use of propaganda and fake narratives during conflict distorts **threat perception** and can hasten escalation.
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Policy Implications for India

- **Balanced Posture:** India must pursue **modernization** without sacrificing **strategic restraint**.
 - **Dialogue Revival:** There is an urgent need to **revive arms control talks** and promote **regional nuclear risk-reduction measures**.
 - **Strategic Autonomy:** Enhancing **indigenous technological capabilities** is essential to maintain a **credible minimum deterrence**.
 - **Global Leadership:** As a responsible nuclear power, India should actively **engage in disarmament and non-proliferation platforms** to shape global norms.
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Conclusion

The **SIPRI Yearbook 2025** highlights a concerning return to **global nuclear build-up** amidst weakening governance mechanisms. For India, a path of **measured modernization** must be coupled with **active global advocacy** for arms control and multilateral dialogue.

In today's nuclear landscape, **security is no longer defined by quantity alone**, but by the interplay of **speed, misinformation, and disruptive technologies**—making **strategic prudence and diplomatic engagement** more vital than ever.



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