

1. Trump's Claims and India's Objection**Background**

Recently, Donald Trump claimed he stopped India and Pakistan from fighting by using US trade talks as leverage. He said, "We can't trade with people who are shooting at each other and potentially using nuclear weapons."

India rejected this claim, saying the ceasefire (Operation Sindoor) came from bilateral talks with Pakistan, and not due to US pressure. India objects to:

- Being grouped or "hyphenated" with Pakistan, as if both are equal parties to a conflict
- Third-party interventions, which India has long opposed
- The US historically being more supportive of Pakistan in conflicts

**What Is 'Hyphenation'? Why Does India Oppose It?**

Hyphenation is what you do when you use a dash-like punctuation mark to join two words into one or separate the syllables of a word. India opposes being viewed as part of a "India-Pakistan" conflict package because:

- It reduces India's global identity to a regional dispute
- It places India and Pakistan on the same footing, even though India sees itself as a victim of aggression
- India prefers bilateral resolution of issues without foreign intervention
- India wants global recognition as an independent major power, not defined by its conflict with Pakistan

The UN and the Beginning of the Hyphenation

- In 1947, soon after independence, Pakistan-backed forces attacked Jammu and Kashmir
- India took the matter to the United Nations on Jan 1, 1948
- However, the UN renamed the issue from "Jammu and Kashmir" to the "India-Pakistan question," effectively equating both countries
- This felt like a symbolic defeat for India and created deep mistrust of third-party involvement
- Since then, Pakistan has sought internationalisation, while India insists on bilateral dialogue

Why the West Sided with Pakistan (Historically)

- During the Cold War, Pakistan was seen as a US ally against the USSR
- In contrast, India was non-aligned, making it less reliable in the eyes of the West
- US dependence on Pakistan during the Afghanistan war and war on terror further deepened the bias
- India, aiming to lead the Global South, prefers to manage its own conflicts

US Role in Four Key Wars Between India and Pakistan

1. 1947-48 War (First Kashmir War)

- US wanted a bilateral settlement, but was willing to back a UN-supervised Kashmir referendum if needed
- India expected UN support for its legitimate claim but felt betrayed when the issue was reframed as an India-Pakistan conflict

2. 1962 India-China War

- US supported India with military aid
- But it used the opportunity to pressure India to talk to Pakistan about Kashmir
- US President John F. Kennedy stopped Pakistan from opening a front during the war
- However, the pressure to compromise on Kashmir was seen as unfair to India

3. 1971 India-Pakistan War

- US strongly supported Pakistan because it had helped the US-China diplomatic breakthrough
- US warships moved toward the Bay of Bengal in a show of support
- Global backlash over Pakistan's crackdown in East Pakistan limited US support
- US lost credibility in both India and Pakistan for its handling of the crisis

4. 1999 Kargil War

- Marked a turning point in US policy
- US blamed Pakistan for violating the Line of Control
- President Bill Clinton pressured Pakistan to withdraw
- Clinton's extended visit to India (and brief stop in Pakistan) reflected a shift toward stronger US-India ties

US Mediation in Recent Incidents

- The US has helped defuse tensions, such as after:
 - The 2001 Parliament attack
 - The 2008 Mumbai attacks

But India continues to reject foreign mediation, especially in Kashmir. Trump's statements, even if well-meaning, go against India's principle of bilateralism and fuel concerns about unnecessary hyphenation.

Conclusion

India wants to be seen as a global power in its own right, not defined by its tensions with Pakistan. It prefers to handle conflicts bilaterally, without interference. The US role has shifted over time, from tilting toward Pakistan to building closer ties with India—but occasional statements like Trump's still complicate the narrative.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: Indian Express

2. Ukraine's Deepest Drone Strike on Russia Yet

What Happened?



On June 1, 2025, Ukraine launched its most far-reaching drone attack on Russia since the war began in 2022, destroying over 40 aircraft. The operation, called "Spider's Web," used 117 drones to strike targets over 4,000 km away. The attack happened just before peace talks were set to begin in Istanbul.

How the Attack Was Executed

- FPV (First-Person View) drones were reportedly smuggled into Russia
- They were hidden in "mobile wooden

houses"

- Roofs were remotely opened, allowing drones to launch from within Russian territory
- The attack targeted only military sites, according to President Zelenskyy

What Are FPV Drones?

- FPV = First-Person View
- Controlled by an operator using a live video feed from a camera on the drone
- Feed is viewed on goggles, smartphones, or other screens
- Also used for filming, sports, and hobby flying
- In combat, often paired with reconnaissance drones to scout targets

Combat Advantages of FPV Drones

- Cost-effective: One drone can cost as little as \$500 (₹42,000)
- Hard to detect: Small size and low radar visibility
- Deadly precision: Can hit specific targets accurately
- Reduces soldier risk: No need to send humans into danger zones
- Useful in high-defence zones: Where conventional air power is restricted due to anti-air systems

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Issues

Source: Indian Express

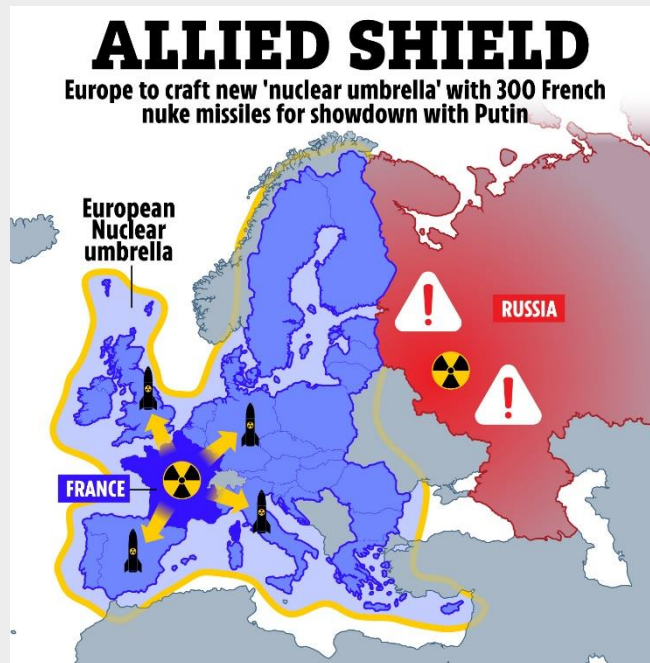
3. What would a French nuclear umbrella mean for Europe?

Introduction

On May 14, French President Emmanuel Macron stated that France is "open to dialogue" on potentially stationing its nuclear weapons in other European countries. This development occurred amid security concerns in Europe due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

What lies behind France's offer?

France's consideration of a broader European role for its nuclear deterrent aligns with its "European strategic autonomy" policy, which aims to enhance the EU's capacity to act independently in security and defence matters. President Macron's Sorbonne University speech emphasised Europe's need to bolster its defence capabilities, in order to be a more "sovereign Europe."



Moreover, U.S. President Donald Trump has questioned unconditional U.S. security guarantees to NATO allies, linking support to the 2% GDP defence spending target for security guarantees, prompting European nations to seek additional security assurances. Historically, France has fiercely guarded the independence of its nuclear deterrent, viewing it as a strictly national tool. This openness, thus, signifies an evolution in its strategic thinking.

What is the nuclear sharing model?

“Nuclear sharing” involves a nuclear-weapon state stationing nuclear weapons on allied non-nuclear-weapon states’

territory, with specific arrangements for potential use. Within NATO, the U.S. has maintained such arrangements for decades. Currently, U.S. B61 tactical nuclear gravity bombs are understood to be deployed in five NATO states: Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Türkiye.

Under these arrangements, the U.S. retains legal ownership and custody of the warheads. The U.S. President also retains the power to make the decision to use these weapons, following NATO consultation. This Cold War-era posture aims to demonstrate alliance solidarity, and share nuclear risks.

Does France have enough weapons?

France’s arsenal is around 290 nuclear warheads, deliverable by submarine-launched ballistic missiles and air-launched cruise missiles via Rafale jets. A 2023 Centre for Strategic and International Studies report analysed that extending France’s nuclear deterrent by basing warheads abroad would pose logistical and doctrinal challenges with its current arsenal size, suggesting that an increase in warheads might be needed for credible extended deterrence. Such deployments would require stationing French Air Force units, including Rafales and support infrastructure, abroad. Establishing secure command and control systems in a multinational setting would be complex.

Would it strengthen deterrence?

Deploying additional nuclear weapons in Europe has varied security implications. Proponents argue it could enhance deterrence against Russia by increasing NATO’s nuclear assets and demonstrating European resolve. Conversely, Russia would likely view such deployments as a significant escalation, potentially leading to “military-technical measures” in response. Russian officials have repeatedly warned against NATO’s eastward military expansion. Russia’s 2023 stationing of tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus is cited by some as a preceding escalatory step.

Is it legal under international law?

The 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the primary legal instrument for regulating nuclear weapons. Article I of the treaty prohibits nuclear-weapon states (like France) from transferring nuclear weapons or control over them. Existing NATO nuclear sharing is justified by participants as being NPT-compliant because no "transfer" of legal ownership or control occurs in peacetime; the U.S. maintains custody. Non-proliferation advocates and various research institutions have consistently challenged this legality.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Issues

Source: Indian Express

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