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Europe and Nuclearisation in South Asia

Jacques Fontanel & Jean-François Guilhaudis

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Summary : New Delhi is still opposed to a NWFZ and recommend a general and complete global disarmament. Pakistan rejected India's offer of a nuclear no-first-use agreement, but it proposed not to deploy nuclear if India reciprocates. France and UK was not clearly in favour of sanctions against India and Pakistan for their nuclear tests, but the majority of the European countries condemned the nuclear program of India. However, France favours the NWFZ (South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone) and express interest in peaceful nuclear collaboration with India.

New Delhi est toujours opposé à une zone exempte d'armes nucléaires et recommande un désarmement général et complet à l'échelle mondiale. Le Pakistan a rejeté l'offre de l'Inde d'un accord de non-usage en premier de l'arme nucléaire, mais il a proposé de ne pas déployer le nucléaire si l'Inde lui rendait la pareille. La France et le Royaume-Uni n'étaient pas clairement en faveur de sanctions contre l'Inde et le Pakistan pour leurs essais nucléaires, mais la majorité des pays européens a condamné le programme nucléaire de l'Inde, mais aussi les réponses apportées par le Pakistan. Cependant, la France est favorable à la NWFZ (South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone) et exprime son intérêt pour une collaboration nucléaire pacifique avec l'Inde.

Keynotes : nuclear weapons, India , Pakistan, Europe
Armes nucléaires, Pakistan, Inde, Europe

South Asia covers Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and the two always-opposed nuclear powers India and Pakistan. We will mainly focus on these two countries.

After India had tested a nuclear device in 1974, Pakistan proposed a South Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) at the United National General Assembly. There exist several resolutions of the General Assembly in favour of the creation of such a zone. But India did not agree with this initiative and argued that nuclear disarmament was more a global concern than a regional one. This country has then voted against annual UNGA resolutions calling for a NWFZ in South Asia.

On 31 December 1988, India and Pakistan signed an agreement by which they committed themselves not to attacking each other's nuclear facilities, which entered into force on 27 January 1991. On April 1991, they decided the mutual notification of military exercises and the prevention of airspace violations by military aircrafts. In 1997, they decided to establish direct communications between their army headquarters, and this was revived in 2000.

In 1998, India and Pakistan conducted tests of nuclear weapons. India conducted three underground tests on 11 May 1998 and two more tests in 13 may, a fusion device with a yield of 43 kilotons and fission devices with yields of 12, 0,2, 9,2 and 0,6 kilotons. Indian claimed to be able to build neutron bombs. On 28 may 1998, Pakistan announced five nuclear tests, one of 35 kilotons, the others for small tactical weapons. On 30 may, one more test was done of a 14-kiloton device.

Most countries have condemned the tests. United States, Japan and several other countries have imposed sanctions on both countries. For instance, Japan has suspended economic assistance to both India and Pakistan. However these measures, progressively reduced yet, were stopped in 2001, as a contribution of both countries to the war on terrorism. International attention is now focused on the aim of persuading both countries to adhere to NPT and to join the Conference on Disarmament negotiation on a treaty to ban production of fissile materials.

The conflict between Pakistan and India seems to be one of the main problems for European Union members.

I. A summary of the analysis of facts from European observers

It is interesting to analyse the recent events on nuclear purpose between India and Pakistan and to explain the European view about the nuclear defence systems of both countries.

1.1. The recent events on nuclear purposes

Some bilateral talks were held in 1998. The Lahore MOU established measures to control the use of nuclear weapons in the region. In 1999, India and Pakistan decided to increase cooperation and regional security. However, with the Kargill crisis, the coup in Pakistan and terrorism in Cashmere did not create the proper climate for the dialogue.

The Kargill war (1999) has been the heaviest fighting between Pakistan and India since 1971, when they fought a full-scale war. 1000 Kashmiri Mujahideen militants based in Pakistan crossed the Line of Control, the "de facto" boundary between the two countries. Pakistani soldiers crossed into India to support them, although Pakistan denied it, at least at the beginning. There were the use of artillery and helicopters, with some heavy units, but mainly a massive air strike by India. There was a large probability for a wider war. On the basis of official's testimony, Pakistan had prepared to launch a nuclear strike on India during the 1999 Kargill war. Under US pressure, Pakistan has agreed to pull out the intruders and it announced to maintain a minimum nuclear deterrent. Pakistan has now some problem with nuclear weapons and the influence of terrorist groups.

On June 1999, the Group of Eight called for an immediate cease-fire and for the restoration of LOC. The answer of Pakistan was that it had no control over the militants. For the European Union, the well-organized and supplied offensive was supposed executed with Pakistan's support. China called for a dialogue and then Pakistan agreed with the restoration of the Line of Control. Two weeks later most of the forces were disengaged. With the coup of October by Pervez Musharraf, a real cease-fire was obtained.

Following a terrorist attack against India's Parliament on 13 December 2001, India massed its forces along its border with Pakistan, which also mobilized, with its nuclear missiles. India even considers that terrorism in Kashmir is entirely imported and exported by Pakistan. The nuclear weapons doctrine of Pakistan is in favour of "first-use" but this country has promised not to use this "inconceivable" solution; India has however retorted that India would destroy Pakistan if the doctrine was used. Later, the Indian and Pakistan governments have nevertheless announced the de-escalation and demobilization of over half a million troops that had been amassed at the border with Pakistan ten months ago. This situation was a dangerous potential for the outbreak of a nuclear conflict.

1.2. The Indian and Pakistan's nuclear policies in November 2002

India is still opposed to a NWFZ and it recommends general and complete global disarmament. It has proposed a conference on the abolition of all nuclear weapons in 1998, a nuclear no-first use agreement with Pakistan and a Sin-Indian de-targeting agreement. This country follows the strategy of the " minimum deterrence ", which is similar to France. It has expressed its willingness to join the fissile material treaty negotiation. On 17 August 1999, there was a proposal for a national Indian nuclear doctrine by a non-official National Security Advisory Board. India would pursue a policy of " credible minimum nuclear deterrence ", in which the " fundamental purpose of Indian nuclear weapons is to deter the use and threat to use of nuclear weapons by any State or entity against India and its forces. India would not use nuclear weapons for a first attack, but it would respond to any nuclear attack with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the aggressor ". This was announcing a new open nuclear weapon program. But the Indian government has never been completely involved in this proposal, which it did not approve.

Pakistan has rejected India's offer of a nuclear no-first-use agreement, but it has proposed not to deploy nuclear weapons if India reciprocates. It hopes this threat will prevent war, as it fears being overwhelmed by India's conventional military superiority in case of a conflict. After 1998, Pakistan has expressed its willingness to join missile material treaty talks and to sign the CTBT and a moratorium on further tests. With the recent events of international terrorism, the safety of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal has become a major concern.

Both India and Pakistan have declared themselves to be nuclear weapon states. They were not parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). They also had rejected the call by the 2000 NPT Review Conference for their accession to the NPT as non-nuclear states. India and Pakistan are not member of the Zangger Committee (1974), which is an informal arrangement. While the NPT did not explicitly control nuclear technology, the Zangger Committee agreed a Trigger list that participation states implement through national export control systems. Lately, India and Pakistan do not belong to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (1978), which has developed guidelines for nuclear transfers and for nuclear related dual use equipment, material and technology. They are not either members of the Missile Technology Control Regime, a voluntary association of countries that shares the objectives of non-proliferation of system for weapons of mass destruction.

In October 2002, the representative of Pakistan proposed to the Fifty-seventh General Assembly of UNO a " strategic restraint regime in South Asia ", for the formalization of the India and Pakistan unilateral nuclear test moratoriums, not operationally weaponize nuclear-capable missile systems or deploy anti-ballistic missile systems, for open discussions on nuclear security doctrines, with a view to forestalling an " all out " nuclear arms race.

II. European Union and the nuclear issues in the India-Pakistan relations

It is important to define the type of relations between South Asia and Europe, to try to understand the nuclear game between EU, USA, UNO and India-Pakistan and to establish the specific relations between European Union and its members.

II.1. *The type of relations*

South Asia is often compared to Western Europe in size, because of their diversity of languages, regions, nationalities and cultural heterogeneity. However, there is hardly anything in common between South Asia and European historical experiences in the past three centuries. The influence of United States and a feeling of a common security threat had facilitated European economic and military integration. It is not the case for South Asia, where business interests are not interested to become a driving force for fostering regional integration. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), born in 1985, has made significant progress for the promotion of the fight against terrorism or drugs, but the antagonism between India and Pakistan has inhibited more substantive progress in regional economic cooperation. Contacts between European Union and SAARC were initiated in 1992, but India, a member state of SAARC, preferred to maintain bilateral agreements with members of European Union. In July 1996, the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between SAARC and European Commission, due to internal SAARC problems, has been no effective implementation. There are no meaningful EU-SAARC projects. There is no suitable common dialogue. The European Commission feels that SAARC internal divisions have prevented much effective cooperation. However, though the EU is not a model for South Asia, its vast experience with regard to economic integration and trade liberalization should be useful for South Asia.

For Europe, SAARC is an organization with strong ambitions, but with restricted powers, because of the rule of unanimity, the exclusion of a multilateral approach in favour of a bilateral solution of problems, and the absence from the beginning of a free trade policy or a preferential agreement. The weight of India is very important (76% of the population and 77 % of the regional GDP) and the tensions between India and Pakistan complicate regional cooperation. EU has consistently affirmed an interest in strengthening links with SAARC, but there are a lot of political difficulties. There are six objectives in the strategy of alliance:

- Contribute to peace and security,
- Strengthen mutual trade and investment flows,
- Promote the development of the less prosperous countries of the region,
- Contribute to the protection of Human rights, democracy and rule of law,
- Build a global partnerships and alliances with Asian countries,
- Strengthen the awareness of Europe in Asia.

India thinks that West is too soft on Pakistan, mainly on the question of terrorist attack on the Parliament and the recent upsurge in violence during elections in the Muslim majority state of Kashmir. On November 2002, the relations between Pakistan and India remain tense despite troops' withdrawal. India will try to block any attempt to lift sanctions against Pakistan, imposed after the military coup. It accuses Pakistan of sabotaging economic cooperation in South Asia; India has refused to participate in the summit of regional leaders scheduled for January in Islamabad.

European Union is a powerful actor in the global system today. After a bipolar system dominated by United States and Soviet Union, the global system has experienced a spectrum of unipolar system dominated by the United States. This hegemonic situation is contested. The five effective power centres (USA, EU, Russia, India and China) are constantly interacting, in order to maintain equilibrium in world politics, economy and security. Two EU members are nuclear weapon states. European Union has acquired a new personality: with the Maastricht Treaty, it has launched the Common Foreign and Security Policy, in relation with NATO. EU is now a military power, with the establishment of an autonomous European army of 60.000 men, with 15 squadron air force, 15 warships, 200 transport planes and so on. There is no idea of a clear break with USA. There still remains a technological gap between USA and EU, though if EU tries to reduce it. However, EU is also reorganizing herself in all sectors, without appearing confrontationalist. However, the US expectation of the EU to continue playing a subordinate role to US strategies does not seem realistic. EU has to established close relationship with China, Russia and India.

II.2. The nuclear game between EU, USA, UNO and India-Pakistan

India and Pakistan are mainly preoccupied with improving relations with the USA. They are obsessed with their mutual relations and their relations with USA are absolutely central. European Union plays a minor role, even if United Kingdom keeps some influence.

The future of the CTBT has been complicated in October 1999 when the US Senate voted to reject the Treaty's ratification. The vote set back international efforts to bring the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty) into force since the USA is one of the members of the CD (Conference on Disarmament) with nuclear power or research reactors on their territories. It is a break in the trend of approval of the objectives and means of the treaty. At this time, in India, the government reversed its strident opposition to CTBT but the US Senate vote complicated the domestic debate. The Prime Minister Vajpayee promised to refrain further testing and wanted to obtain a consensus on the ratification of CTBT. India continues to observe its voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing, which was a de facto acceptance of the CTBT.

In Pakistan, Prime Minister Nowaz Sharif had linked its country's signature to a reduction of economic and trade sanctions imposed by the USA in 1998. It wants to be free of coercion, even after the coup. But in case India conducts a test before signing CTBT, then Pakistan would not sign it.

The CD (Conference on Disarmament) evoked the ban of the production of missile material for military purpose. But negotiations have been blocked by a procedural problem.

The five nuclear weapon states (NWS) recognized under the NPT have entered into Voluntary Offer Agreements with the AIEA, which allows the Agency to apply selective safeguards on all or on certain facilities within their territory. They agree to pay some controls and give some information during the inspection and verification processes. For European Union, members' states are also involved in the safeguards of Euratom (European Atomic Energy Community). There is a need to strengthen safeguards, with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The main problem is the proliferation (nuclear, missiles, chemical and bacteriologic weapons), with the danger of the North Korean ballistic missile program, for instance. For Europe Union, France and United Kingdom are engaged in the issues related to the non-compliance of North Korea with its IAEA safeguards agreement as UN Security Council Permanent members. Pakistan might pay for North Korean missile technology by providing nuclear technology to a "rogue" state, North Korea. Europe Union is very concerned by this issue and it reacts negatively against the evolution of the nuclear program of Pakistan.

II.3. Official positions

When the nuclear tests have been decided by India and Pakistan, EU has just decided a common position for the preparation of the Conference on NPT. Until then, EU had tried to convince both countries to be part of the Treaty. After the 1998 nuclear tests, the European Union's reaction (and notably that of France) has been more moderate than USA and Japan's ones. USA immediately spoke of international sanctions, which was not the solution proposed by European Union. European Union condemned the nuclear tests, as representing a deep threat for peace and international security and non-proliferation. It asked India to be a member of NPT and to stop new tests. It insisted to sign and ratifies the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty), to contribute actively to the Conference of Disarmament, to strictly control its exports of nuclear materials and to stop the deployment of missiles equipped by nuclear vectors.

If EU is clearly not in favour of the nuclear tests, with the idea of the refusal of the "fait accompli", EU indicated that it wanted to verify the evolution of the situation and to take the useful appropriate measures. There was the idea of the international sanctions. EU has threatened India to stop the advantages of the Generalized Preference System and to lag the financial loans from World Bank. At the beginning, India was threatened by a political will of a tightening of its links with Pakistan. The economic sanctions have been applied against India.

After Pakistan nuclear tests, the European Union was disappointed and dismayed. It one more condemned nuclear tests and expressed the view that these events are clearly not a solution for peace. It has insisted on the necessity of a nuclear disarmament and of the respect of NPT. It then asked the two countries to stop new nuclear tests and to do not deploy ballistic missiles. If in this second declaration, EU threatens Pakistan economic sanctions, but without concrete effects.

EU has then asked the two countries to develop a dialogue for a better stability in South Asia. It has proposed (General Affairs Council of 26 October) to restore confidence between India and Pakistan, with a technical assistance and the control of military exportations. In this case, the " fait accompli " was almost agreed, but EU tried to reduce the importance of the nuclear tests, by the cooperation. Though India and Pakistan did not follow EU demands, the sanctions have not been strengthened.

The likelihood of a nuclear conflict is higher in South Asia than anywhere else in the world. Nuclear weapons are most likely to be used in wartime or near-wartime conditions. For Europe Union, India and Pakistan are going through a particularly ugly phase in their rivalry. There are three main dangers :

- Miscalculation or misperception can be the cause of a nuclear war. During the Cold war, there were more than 50,000 false alarms and 1,000 were very serious. Rumours of imminent use and panic behaviour in crowded urban centres must be dangerous.

- The unauthorized use must be also a danger, with the possibility for fundamentalists to penetrate the armed forces.

- Accidents, fires or explosion of nuclear weapons are a potential danger.

War between the two countries is inappropriate and a wrong means to resolve the issue of cross border terrorism. Militarily, it is a bad and a high-risk option, which can provoke a nuclear catastrophe.

11.4. National official positions

There was no common attitude between the members of EU. Such as G8 and the Security Council of the United Nations Organization, France and United Kingdom were not clearly in favour of sanctions against India and Pakistan for their nuclear tests. However, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands decided some sanctions. If the majority of the EU member has condemned the nuclear program of India, France has been more moderate, due to its own nuclear strategy. However, France favours the NWFZ and expressed interest in peaceful nuclear collaboration with India.

For the First Committee of the General Assembly of UN a new agenda towards a nuclear weapon-free world was useful. A lot of members of EU have abstained in the vote (such as Germany), some have agreed with it (Sweden and Austria), but France, India, Israel, Monaco, United Kingdom, United States and Pakistan and India have voted against. China has voted for the new agenda and there has been an abstention from Russia. India was against the draft resolution on the risk of Middle East Nuclear Proliferation, Pakistan and USA have abstained and EU was in favour. After a modification, the countries were in favour. For the draft resolution on the promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, United Kingdom and USA voted against, EU was for the abstention and India and Pakistan voted in favour.

CONCLUSION

The conflict between Pakistan and India represents a problem for European Union. Pakistan is an Islamic country, where democracy is not really established, which was a refuge for terrorism. India is clearly more popular in Europe. However, Europe does not want to play a part in the conflict between India and Pakistan.

Annex 1.

In 2002, the nuclear forces of the two countries were as follow :

India			
Type designation	Range (km)	Payload (kg)	Status
MiG-27 Flogger/Bahadur	800	3000	
Jaguar	1600	4775	
IS/IB/Shamsher Missiles Prithvi	150	1000	Deployed, may have a nuclear role Tested but status unclear First flight test 1999. Deployment expected soon.
Missiles Agni I	1500	1000	
Missiles Agni II	2000	1000	
Pakistan			
Type/Designation	Range (km.)	Payload (kg)	Comment
F-16A/B	1600	5450	
Shasheen I (Haft-4)	700	1000	Test fired 15 April.1999. Possible nuclear role
Missiles Ghauri I	1300-1500	500-750	North Korean Nodong missiles
Missiles Ghauri II	2000-2300	750-1000	Test fired on 1999

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