

# Conference proceedings

## **Strategic stability and nuclear doctrines in Southern Asia**

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## INTRODUCTION by Jean de Ponton d'Amécourt

South Asia remains subject to strong regional tensions: the recent crises between India and Pakistan have raised fears of a nuclear escalation in the world. Since the 1998 nuclear tests, the two rivals have de facto become nuclear powers. Although a precarious balance has been established for some years, various conflicts have eroded this period, particularly in the Jammu and Kashmir region.

In 1999, India formalized its nuclear doctrine and put forward the "No First Use"<sup>1</sup> option as a central pillar of its policy. Pakistan, for its part, is defending its "second capacity strategy strikes". Regional stability, therefore, depends strongly on the future development of the strategic doctrines of the two countries, which could still vary considerably, in particular with the development of the "Cold Start"<sup>2</sup> military doctrine adopted by the Indian armed forces and the development of tactical nuclear weapons on the Pakistani side.

The current challenge is to achieve a new balance. However, can economic and security factors contribute to this? Are the main actor's ready to commit themselves to maintain overall stability?

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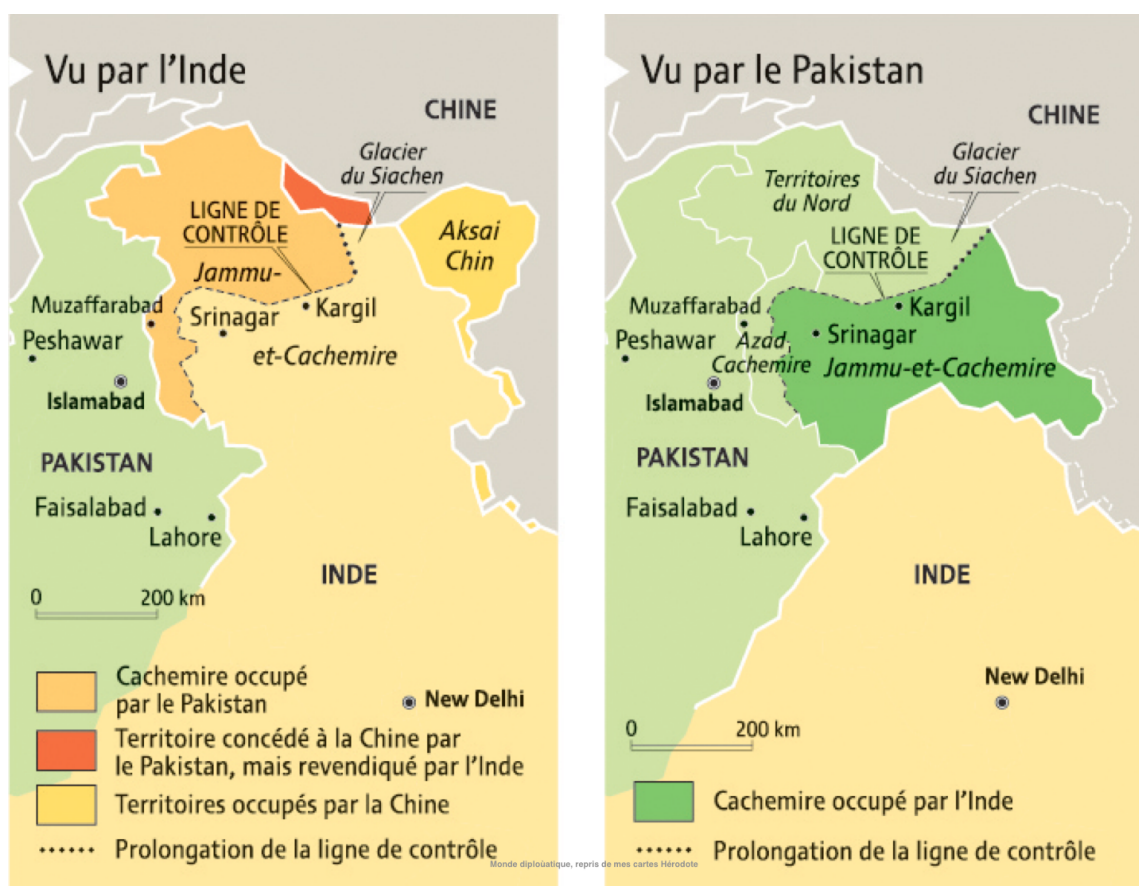
<sup>1</sup> NFU refers to a commitment or policy of a nuclear power not to use nuclear weapons as a means of warfare unless first attacked by an opponent using a nuclear weapon.

<sup>2</sup> Cold Start is the name given to a doctrine developed by the Indian armies designed to quickly seize Pakistani territory without theoretically risking a nuclear conflict.

# 1. Towards strategic stability in South Asia: lessons from the past and challenges for the future

## 1.1 Jean-Luc Racine (CNRS)

For twenty years, the "stability/instability paradox"<sup>3</sup>, a concept forged during the Cold War, has been applied to South Asia as part of the old Indo-Pakistani rivalry, following the nuclear tests conducted by the two countries in 1998.



\* Maps from Jean-Luc Racine, *Cachemire, au péril de la guerre*, Éditions Autrement, 2002

### Following open nuclearisation: tensions and deterrence

As early as 1999, the Kargil war, conducted around the line of control that separates the two parts of Kashmir, demonstrated that the Pakistani military was considering the possibility of a limited war under a nuclear umbrella. After the failed attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001, the mobilisation of troops on both sides of the border did not lead to open conflict. The serious terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 2008, organised from Pakistan, ended the formal and informal dialogue between the two countries. However, the cessation of the dialogue did not lead to an open, even limited, conflict.

<sup>3</sup> The "stability/instability paradox" stipulates that the possession of nuclear weapons by two countries makes a direct military confrontation between them unlikely while promoting limited or indirect wars

The debates that have taken shape in India on the new military doctrine "Cold Start", formulated as a result of these tensions without being formalised for a long time, have been interpreted by Pakistani strategists so as to make possible a conventional Indian intervention on Pakistani soil in the event of serious tensions. The answer to this hypothesis has been, in recent years, the promotion of a possible tactical nuclear response, even on Pakistani soil: the threshold of instability has therefore been lowered, even though India promises reprisals in the event of a tactical nuclear strike or chemical attack.

### **Terrorism and asymmetric wars**

Nevertheless, even before its nuclear capabilities were officialised, Pakistan embarked in the 1990s on a double asymmetric, undeclared war. In Kashmir, after the uprising of some of the Kashmiris from the valley of Srinagar against India, Pakistani jihadist groups were sent to Kashmir: Lashkar-e Tainba, Harkat-ul Ansar - from which Jaish-e Muhammad was to emerge in 2000, as well as the support provided to the local insurgents (Hizb-ul Mujahideen in particular). On the Afghan side, a new force has been organized, based on the Pakistani madrassas hosting Afghan refugees in the Peshawar region, the Taliban, to restore order and ensure Islamabad's influence in a country suffering from anarchy after the Mujahideen's victory over Soviet forces.

The strategic paradigm of Pakistan then emerged, operating on both sides:

- On the East side, by supporting the Kashmir cause, but also allowing terrorist operations in major Indian cities, beyond the infiltration of fighters into Kashmir; what India calls a "proxy war" and "cross-border terrorism".
- On the West side, by manipulating the Afghan Taliban to be influential in Afghanistan and to counter the Indian presence - even non-military - which would put him at risk of being caught in a stranglehold between Delhi and Kabul.

### **Pakistan's strategy after 9/11**

This strategy became problematic after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 against the United States, the fall of the Taliban, and the intervention of NATO forces in Afghanistan. Then at the head of Pakistan, General Musharraf developed an ambiguous policy in this regard, seeking to preserve the Pakistani strategic line. While it welcomed the Taliban, it also led to the arrest of senior al-Qaeda officials, including the September 11 planner, Khalid Shaikh Mohammad. In addition, it has banned jihadist groups operating in Kashmir, while allowing them to reconstitute themselves. This "nuanced" policy towards armed extremism has been poorly received by radicals, and has led to the creation of a new group - the Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) - in Pakistan's tribal areas adjacent to the Afghan border: Pakistani Taliban who have turned against state power, and who have been supported by other extremist groups carrying out terrorist actions in Pakistan.

While the "Talibanization of Pakistan" (Amir Mir, 2010) has remained localized, the proliferation of armed groups has led the military command to take seriously the internal threat, which was considered more worrisome in 2009 than the Indian threat, which is considered structural in its turn. However, the repression of TTP insurgents was only really started in 2014 with Operation Zarb-e Azb, and intensified in 2015 after the attack on the Peshawar Military High School. However, jihadist groups operating against India have still not been decisively addressed, although half measures have been taken against them due to international pressure. The debate finally opened up on the merits and demerits of the policy of instrumentalizing armed Islamism against India.

The stance of denial still prevails, however, as demonstrated by the reactions to Nawaz Sharif's<sup>4</sup> comments on the Mumbai attacks and their deleterious effects, after his forced exclusion in 2017.

### **Afghan imbroglio and Daesh-AQIS competition in South Asia**

After forty years of war, Afghanistan remains a pole of instability. The situation worsened after the departure of most of NATO's troops at the end of 2014. Ashraf Ghani's presidency could neither crush the Taliban nor push them into negotiations. On this point, Kabul accuses Islamabad of unwillingness, but Pakistan retorts that it is not in control of the Afghan Taliban. While the situation on the ground is deteriorating, inter alia through an intensification of urban attacks, a military victory by Afghan forces or their Taliban opponents remains unlikely. International attempts to open dialogue between the two Afghan sides have so far failed: the Istanbul process also known as the "Heart of Asia", Pakistani initiatives with Chinese and American observers in 2015, Russian initiatives with multiple partners in 2016-2017, and the initiative of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in 2018. It remains to be seen whether recent official meetings between American diplomats and the Taliban office in Qatar will open up new avenues.

The situation has also worsened with the appearance of Daesh in Afghanistan; many of whose members are Pakistani Taliban driven from tribal areas, but also Uzbek militants and, in undetermined numbers, fighters withdrawn after the fall of Raqqa in Syria. Indeed, after the proclamation of the Caliphate of Al Baghdadi in Mosul in 2014, the leader of Al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, wanted to recall that his organization still exists, by launching Al Qaeda in the Indian sub-continent (AQIS), without major effect in India, but by stimulating local groups in Bangladesh, which has experienced several attacks. Daesh replied, creating the Islamic State of Khorassan (IS-K) centered on Afghanistan, and spilling over into Pakistan and even Central Asia. This instability and these threats concern Russia, China and Iran, which are in contact with the Afghan Taliban, whose nationalist Islamism seems less worrying than Daesh's transnational ambitions. Nevertheless, the old Pakistani strategic paradigm is still at work: it is about blocking India's expansion in Afghanistan (an expansion that Donald Trump would appreciate, as evidenced by the "American Strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia", formulated in August 2017). However, the withdrawal of the United States from the Iranian nuclear agreement and the sanctions imposed on Iran's economic partners have become a major problem for India, which, it should be recalled, is one of the main importers of Iranian crude oil: which explains why India, like seven other countries, benefited in November 2018 from a few months' derogation from the sanctions imposed on importing countries. New Delhi and Kabul have also obtained that this derogation preserves the trilateral India-Iran-Afghanistan agreement on the Iranian port of Shabahar, India's access route to Afghanistan that bypasses the "Pakistani obstacle".

### **The Chinese influence**

To use an Indian diplomatic concept, China is playing an increasingly important role in the strategic landscape of South Asia and its "wider neighborhood".

While Chinese GDP now weighs five times more than India's, relations between Beijing and New Delhi are part of a complex picture where, despite the border dispute over the Himalayas, Chinese support for Pakistan and Chinese progress in the Indian Ocean, China has become a major trading partner for India. Border tensions following the Chinese advance at the junction point between China, India and Bhutan in 2017 have given way to diplomacy.

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<sup>4</sup> Serving three times as Prime Minister (from 1990 to 1993, from 1997 to 1999 and from 2013 to 2017) who suggested that the bloody attacks of Mumbai that killed 165 and wounded 300 in November 2008, have been indeed orchestrated by Pakistanis terrorists as always been claimed by India.

However, mistrust remains, and the rise of the Indian armed forces is one of New Delhi's responses.

Faced with China's influential policy implemented through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), India has had to redefine part of its regional and foreign policy. In its immediate neighborhood, it must now deal with the increased links forged with unequal success between China and South Asian countries (Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives), while pursuing its aid policy. In the case of Pakistan, the stakes are on a different scale. The Sino-Pakistani economic corridor, which is expected to see some \$60 billion invested in the long term, is a problem for India, as it is not only economic: it also has a strategic dimension by linking Chinese Xinjiang to the Arabian Sea.

This corridor crosses the Himalayan Gilgit Baltistan, under Pakistani control, but claimed by India as part of the princely state of Kashmir. That is why New Delhi decided to boycott the BRI launch forum in May 2017, denouncing the violation of its sovereignty, and warning all China's partners of the risk of an "unsustainable debt" to Beijing. However, Indian regional connectivity initiatives towards Iran, or even Russia via Tehran, as well as towards its neighbors in South-East Asia within the framework of the regional organisation BIMSTEC (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand), would need to be strengthened. The concomitant admission of India and Pakistan to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation<sup>5</sup>, which focuses on Central Asia and is under Sino-Russian leadership, adds to the complexity of a chessboard that is no longer merely continental today.

Beyond the horizon of the Indian Ocean, India now thinks in terms of "Indo-Pacific". Admittedly, the economic, diplomatic and strategic challenges of the Indian Ocean are decisive for India, which is upgrading its military navy, deploying increased cooperation with a number of island states (Mauritius, Seychelles), negotiating with Paris for access to French bases in the region, and activating two maritime forums: the Indian Ocean Rim Association, with an economic and cultural vocation, and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, essentially military. But China's increased presence in the Indian Ocean, among India's neighbors such as in East Africa and Djibouti, where it built its first military base abroad, is also pushing India to broaden its horizons: the Indo-Pacific concept, which now qualifies the 7th American fleet, opens India to the Western Pacific in several ways. The most potentially strategic one refers to the "Quad" project (a quadrilateral security dialogue outlined by Japan, the United States, Australia and India). Close ties with Japan could also contribute to the implementation of the Indo-Japanese project, the "Asia-Africa Growth Corridor" - a way of responding to the maritime dimension of the Chinese BRI - while New Delhi is intensifying its relations with Vietnam, South Korea and Indonesia, while having established in 2014 a Forum for Cooperation between India and the Pacific Island States.

However, India claims that these initiatives do not reflect a desire to contain China. Moreover, it must be noted that tensions with Beijing and those with Islamabad, which are more acute, remain under control.

**Beyond the limited clashes along the Kashmir line of control, and the resumption of an Indo-Pakistani dialogue on their many disputes, strategic stability in South Asia, which is certainly fragile, remains below a threshold that shows a shared desire to avoid the worst, beyond rhetorical jousting and controlled pressure. Preserving geopolitical disagreements at the expense of geo-economic normalisation with India, however, is costly for Pakistan, and also contributes to perpetuating the Afghan crisis.**

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<sup>5</sup> The SCO, established in Shanghai on 14 and 15 June 2001, is an Asian regional intergovernmental organization comprising Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India and Pakistan were admitted as full members on 9 June 2017.

## 1.2 Bernard Hourcade (CNRS)

The main area of conflict between the two major powers, India and Pakistan, is in the Persian Gulf, particularly in Iran, the third most powerful regional player.

### a) Relations between Iran, India, Pakistan and China

The Middle East countries, India and China constitute large entities that consider themselves as "brotherly" countries, dominating the other countries.

- India-Iran: in the Iranian tradition, India and Pakistan are part of the memories of British imperialism; for instance, the Taj Mahal, which is an Iranian or Persian construction. India has been Islamized by Persian-speaking Central Asians, and it is because the presence of Islam in both countries has come from Iran that the dialogue between India and Iran is complicated.
- Pakistan-Iran: for Pakistan, things are a little different, because it is a Muslim country, supported by Saudi Arabia. A great friendship exists between the two countries, but there are still points of friction.
- China-Iran: The last head of state to visit the Shah of Iran was Deng Xiao Ping. Iran saw China as a way to find a "brotherly" state in the region, far enough away to avoid direct political problems. Relationships are excellent and strengthened by their anti-American stance. In addition, China has been approached by Iran as part of its nuclear programme. China was one of the only countries to provide conventional war material to Iran. As a result, relations have improved in terms of trade, making Iran one of China's largest trading partners (while the European Union is lagging behind). As part of international sanctions, China has benefited from derogations to buy oil from Iran, which explains why the Iranian market has been invaded by Chinese products. Relationships are also sophisticated in terms of transport (Alstom-China provides 600 vehicles for the metro).

### b) Historical background information

At the time of the Shah, Iran was seeking to diversify its production. Iran has set up an oil refinery in India, in Madras. But relationships have never gone very far. Hassan Rohani has made only one visit to India. Indo-Iranian relations remain at the diplomatic level, good relations between States because there is in India an anti-Islamic nationalism that poses a problem to the Islamic Republic.

Iranians realize that Pakistan is a complicated neighbor, particularly because of the situation in Afghanistan and Saudi support: they therefore need an ally in eastern Pakistan. There has, therefore, been a development of friendly relations between the two countries to counter Saudi influence. But these relationships are not intense.

The need to normalize relations with Pakistan quickly became apparent: construction of railway lines from Karachi to Tehran (but after the inaugural train, the line was closed); however, the project to export Iranian gas to Pakistan and India remains at a standstill.

The Shia community in Karachi is a problem and is frequently attacked. Tensions are permanent with one of the components of Iranian identity (Shia protector).

The main subject of conflict remains Afghanistan. Iran was not able to conduct a military operation during the war. So much so that the Iranians have long since decided to develop the trade aspect as a

priority. The trafficking of opium and heroin between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran is the largest in the world and constitutes a major economic, security and strategic challenge.

Japan and South Korea remain major economic partners, as well as Malaysia, due in particular to the large Muslim population, which often serves as a gateway between Iran and various states in South Asia.

Iran's nuclear power has been strengthened following the withdrawal of the United States from the Iranian nuclear agreement. However, if the Iranians slam the door, and resume uranium enrichment, they will not technically have the possibility of building an atomic bomb in the short to medium term, (because it is too expensive). But it could be a pretext for Saudi Arabia to resume the construction of a nuclear bomb. The benevolence of countries such as Israel or the United States means that Saudi Arabia could acquire the atomic bomb before Iran.

And the risk is that the region will be re-nuclearized, with a new nuclear triangle.

There is also a reconfiguration of the region, because while the Iranians have never had any real influence in the west, Iran's doors are open to the east: Persian was spoken in Calcutta and China. Being powerless militarily, Iran plays its soft power and controls the western border through commercial and personal relations with Afghanistan, including compromises with the Taliban and drug traffickers.

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## **2. Evolution of nuclear doctrines: Issues and perspectives**

### **2.1 Marc Perrin de Brichambaut (CPI)**

The Indo-Pakistani relationship is unique: it is a very asymmetrical relationship, involving, on the one hand, a major continental power whose dynamics bring it closer to a global actor, India, and on the other hand, a country with a much less flourishing economic, industrial and cultural situation, Pakistan. This power differential makes the subject particularly difficult since it is customary to carry out a comparative analysis of countries with similar capacity powers.

It is difficult for an observer to get a clear idea of the substance and reality of Indian and Pakistani nuclear doctrines, even though both sides have a great diversity of weapons and have achieved strong nuclear capabilities. The absence of "white papers" on this subject makes it difficult to understand the issue of strategic balances.

In addition, the sub-continent is in a particularly precarious situation due to the importance of the terrorism it hosts. The idea of regional stability is thus all the more complex to achieve as non-state actors contribute to maintaining uncertainty about the future of Indo-Pakistani relations, as the two states are unable to control these destabilising actors. In addition, China's growing role in the region also threatens India, which must, therefore, take care of its relationship with Pakistan, but also with China, from a nuclear point of view.



Finally, beyond nuclear weapons and doctrines, the importance of dialogue, transparency and confidence-building initiatives between India and Pakistan must be reconsidered. Communication channels seem to have been largely neglected, even though they are of fundamental importance in maintaining a regional balance.

## **2.2 Rabia Akhtar (University of Lahore)**

The rapprochement between the situation of strategic balances in South Asia and the Cold War period is common. However, this paradigm seems to misrepresent the situation between India and Pakistan: while there are many similarities between the two situations, and India and Pakistan have drawn heavily on the use made of them by the United States and the USSR in their nuclear doctrine during this period, it seems that nuclear deterrence during the Cold War is not the right analytical prism for understanding the dynamics at work in South Asia. This is a comparison that is not very effective for several reasons.

First, the strategic balance during the Cold War was based on three elements:

- The evolution from "delicate" to "stable" deterrence.
- Low vulnerability to preventive and pre-emptive attacks.
- Simple nuclear relations, as well as a balance of power between the United States and the USSR.

However, the strategic balance in South Asia does not meet the same requirements:

- Deterrence is "a delicate" issue: South Asia remains today a region highly prone to crises, despite the credibility claimed by the actors.
- Vulnerability to preventive and pre-emptive attacks is high.
- Regional nuclear relations are complex and asymmetric, not only between states (India, Pakistan, China and the United States), but also between duets such as India-China, China-United States, Pakistan-India.

India and Pakistan have been waging a "war of words" for many years, challenging their common borders. The proximity of the territories, the difficulty of protecting them, and possible reprisals also make the comparison with the Cold War inadequate, especially as other countries outside the region interfere in this complex relationship.

In addition, there is a paradox in terms of stability/instability: at the strategic level, both Pakistan and India seem to believe that nuclear weapons ownership has a stabilizing effect on the region. The problem lies precisely in the belief of these two countries in the nuclear arms race, which is based on the idea that there would remain a significant space at their disposal to "challenge" each other without this leading to escalation. However, as long as they believe that this space still exists, they will continue to test their mutual vulnerability, creating an extremely unstable situation<sup>6</sup> as shown in the following table:

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<sup>6</sup> An abstract from "Nuclear Learning in South Asia and the Levels of Analysis", a study by R. Akhtar and D. Das, RCSS Report, June 2014, compares the situation of both countries.

INDIA	PAKISTAN
<b><i>Decision-making process by elites</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum credible deterrence</li> <li>• Decisions and doctrine decided by a political-scientific committee</li> <li>• Command and control structure affirmed by civilian control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum credible deterrence</li> <li>• Decisions and doctrine decided by a politico-military committee</li> <li>• Command and control structure affirmed by military-civilian control</li> </ul>
<b><i>Strategic vision</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A declared nuclear doctrine</li> <li>• Doctrine of non-use first (NFU - No First Use)</li> <li>• Doctrine of massive retaliation designed to inflict unacceptable damage, "insured" retaliation</li> <li>• Nuclear weapons as an instrument of punishment</li> <li>• From a strong to a low level of strategic ambiguity</li> <li>• Counter value and counterforce involve</li> <li>• Robust ballistic and remote-controlled missile programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of official nuclear doctrine</li> <li>• No doctrine of non-employment first</li> <li>• Doctrine of the balance of terror (MAD - Mutual Assured Destruction) by massive and "assured" reprisals</li> <li>• Nuclear weapons for pure defensive use, not designed for war</li> <li>• Maintaining strategic ambiguity on nuclear policy</li> <li>• Counter value and counterforce involved</li> <li>• Robust ballistic and remote-controlled missile programme</li> </ul>
<b><i>Global nuclear order</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External threat: Pakistan and China</li> <li>• Strategic partnership with the United States</li> <li>• Realistic aspirations and power projection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External threat: India</li> <li>• Strategic partnership with China, cooperation on nuclear energy with China</li> <li>• Realistic aspirations and maximizing safety</li> </ul>

Despite these differences, India and Pakistan have some similarities.

Both were "threshold" states before 1998. Since then, they have joined the club of nuclear-weapon States. Their doctrine, which can initially be described as existential deterrence, has evolved towards that of minimal credible deterrence. Today, each of them, as they continue their efforts to increase the size of their nuclear arsenals and distribution systems, are both dependent on the United States to manage their strained relations.

The cross-border dimension is important for Pakistan's internal security: not only is Pakistan still unable to control its non-state actors who foment terrorist acts in India, but also within its borders. Pakistan is indeed home to many terrorist groups, and since September 11, the country has paid a

heavy price: more than 35,000 Pakistanis have been killed in terrorist attacks. While this domestic threat is not nuclear, it still has major implications for the issue of strategic balances in South Asia: as long as Pakistan is unstable, threatened internally and externally, real security cannot be achieved in the region.

Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons has a dual objective: to deter both conventional warfare and nuclear war with India. Pakistan being a smaller country (the population ratio to India is 1 to 7), it is unlikely to win a conventional war against India if it were to occur. Therefore, enriching its nuclear arsenal is precisely intended to deter India from considering such a possibility: if a conventional war were to occur, it would soon lead to an escalation in view of Pakistan's limited conventional resources. A double deterrent is at work here.

With regard to India's strategic vision, the determinants are mainly external: the country has increased its conventional military resources following the Pakistani nuclear arms race. India has thus sought to modernize its arsenal and acquire ever more effective weapons.

This precarious strategic relationship must be read in conjunction with another actor, China, which complicates an already fragile balance.

Among the external factors of regional stability, it is also worth mentioning the prominent role played by the United States. Whenever an Indo-Pakistani crisis has occurred, Washington has fulfilled its role as an intermediary by talking to both sides to ease tensions.

This was the case during the Kargil conflict in 1999, as well as in 2001-2002 following the attack on the Indian Parliament and the clashes that followed, and in 2008 in Bombay. During all these crises, both sides spontaneously turned to the United States, which acted as crisis manager. While China has also been able to help ease tensions in the region, it is not as important as the United States because of its geographical proximity: sharing a border with both countries, in the event of a nuclear escalation, it will not be spared, making both countries more reluctant to use it.

India-US and Pakistan-US relations have followed a rollercoaster path from engagement to sanctions. In particular, the United States has sometimes taken a neutral stance towards India, separating its relations with that country from the geopolitical conflict.

Broadly speaking, the relationship between the three states can be summed up as that between two children - India and Pakistan - fighting, and the adult - the United States - soothing the situation. As long as the two "children" feel that an adult will intervene as a last resort to calm the game, they will continue to challenge this unstable balance. The latter presupposes the existence of a third-party peacemaker whose intervention is internalized by them. Since then, India and Pakistan have been exploring, in a way, the space available to confront each other.

Nevertheless, this already precarious situation becomes even more so with the arrival of Donald Trump's administration: The United States' intervention as a last resort cannot now be considered a mechanical fact. The failure of such data to be valid today does reveal a certain Indo-Pakistani immaturity in terms of nuclear doctrine and strategy.

Finally, there are a number of lessons to be learned from the Cold War experience. The great mistrust that prevailed between the United States and the USSR was overcome in order to achieve a balance of terror and a form of global stability, even though it seemed unrealistic at the time. So, the United States and Russia could lead India and Pakistan into a form of dialogue to overcome their historical rivalries by teaching them how they achieved it themselves.

However, these lessons are limited in their application, as it is likely that no third country will be able to conduct a dialogue instead of India and Pakistan. In this regard, it is imperative that both countries reduce their dependence on the United States, seek dialogue and conduct joint prevention exercises against possible nuclear disasters.

### **2.3 Nicolas Blarel (Leiden University)**

According to the definition given by the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of "Nuclear Terrorism", it seems rather improbable in South Asia. However, in the current situation, the increasing role of terrorists and non-state actors can lead to an escalation of the threat. This new aspect, which did not exist during the Cold War, is worth mentioning because it places States in a complex situation. Indeed, how can non-state actors who are supported by a state possessing nuclear weapons, or who are themselves on the territory of a state possessing nuclear weapons, be managed?

In this regard, the Indian Ambassador to Pakistan stated in 2016: "People who live in a glass house shouldn't throw stones".

While cross-border terrorism is not a new phenomenon in the sub-continent, two events that occurred in the late 1980s have significantly changed the regional situation:

- on the one hand, Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons,
- on the other hand, the insurrection that broke out in the Kashmir region in 1987.

Thus, 3 open crises have occurred since 1998:

- The 2001-2002 crisis following the attack on the Indian Parliament by a Pakistani group, which led to a military escalation along the border with Pakistan in the months that followed.
- In 2008 in Bombay, a series of ten terrorist attacks by a Pakistani Islamist group in a train station, two luxury hotels, a tourist restaurant, a hospital, a Jewish community centre in Lubavitch and police headquarters.
- In 2016, an attack on an Indian army base in Uri, which resulted in an evolution of Indian military doctrine from a focus on surgical strikes.

Consequently, the use of mercenaries under the nuclear umbrella appears to have been a deliberate strategy of Pakistan. However, an internal challenge to this strategy is beginning to emerge.

In 2018, Pakistani President Nawaz Sharif said: "Militant organisations are active. Call them non-state actors, should we allow them to cross the border and kill 150 people in Mumbai? Explain it to me", while Rehman Malik said in 2009: "Some part of the conspiracy has taken place in Pakistan".

Beyond these controversies, questions remain: how to measure the influence of non-state actors in deterrent expectations? How do these actors shape the nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan?

With regard to India's nuclear doctrine, the first document was produced by the Indian National Security Advisory Board in 1998. This is a first draft of Indian nuclear doctrine, while India's first official nuclear doctrine was published in 2003.

This is based on the idea of a "minimum credible deterrent" consisting of:

- The commitment not to use nuclear weapons first (no-first-use pledge).
- The assumption that a small number of nuclear weapons create sufficient risk in assessing the threat that the adversary may pose to have a deterrent effect.
- An "assured" rather than "massive" response.

Nevertheless, following the various crises that have occurred since 2003, there are pressures to modify this doctrine and enrich the range of tools available:

- **On the origin of attacks (objective and perceived)** - Sponsoring state / ambiguity / host state.
- **On responses (operational and potential)** - response / coercive diplomacy / limited retaliation
- **On counter-responses** - second strike / credible nuclear deterrence / tactical nuclear weapon.

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## **CONCLUSION** **by Alexandre Malafaye**

"First of all, I would like to warmly thank our partners, the Forum du Futur, the Association des auditeurs IHEDN Paris Ile-de-France, the Société d'encouragement de l'Industrie Nationale, and the Direction générale des relations internationales et de la stratégie of the Ministère des Armées (DGRIS), through which we were able to organize this symposium. We have now become accustomed to organising such events together, around ever more ambitious projects: this is an excellent illustration of this.

Synopia regularly organizes or co-organizes, in parallel with its work on governance, events on geopolitical issues, all of which have a direct or indirect impact on national and international governance issues.

We therefore felt it necessary to propose this conference on South Asia, a subject which, as you will have noticed, is not on the front page of French news. However, it will also have not escaped your attention that globalization is fascinating in that it generates such complex geopolitical dynamics that it is now more necessary than ever to analyse them, well beyond what is stirring the French, and even European, public debate at the time.

Beyond the security challenges specific to the region and the dynamics they generate, studying the strategic balance in South Asia provides, by extension, a better understanding of the evolving strategies of powers such as China and Iran, as we have seen, all essential subjects both in terms of their importance on the international scene and in terms of redefining our strategy towards these major players in a changing world.

While the Iranian nuclear issue remains central and uncertain, this morning finally reminds us of the importance of nuclear doctrine in geostrategy, but also and above all of the growing role of non-state actors and terrorism, which reveal more than ever the "powerlessness" to quote Bertrand Badie. Analysing these non-traditional actors seems more than necessary today because they have, particularly in this region, a disruptive effect that is all the more important because they disrupt giant states. »

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## Speakers biographies

### Dr. Rabia AKHTAR



Rabia Akhtar is Director of the Centre for Security, Strategy and Policy Research at the University of Lahore. She holds a PhD in Security from Kansas State University.

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A former Fulbright student, Dr. Akhtar is the editor-in-chief of Pakistan's first "Strategy and Foreign Affairs" magazine, "Pakistan Politico", launched in May 2018. Her shared research work was published in a monograph entitled "Nuclear Learning in South Asia" in January 2015 by the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Her latest book (released in the fall of 2018) is entitled: "The Blind Eye: US Non-Proliferation Policy towards Pakistan, from Ford to Clinton" (University of Lahore Press).

### Nicolas BLAREL



Nicolas Blarel is Assistant Professor of International Relations at the Nicolas Politics Institute of Science at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. He focuses on foreign and security policy issues in South Asia, as well as India's relations with the Middle East.

His most recent book is "The Evolution of Israeli Politics in India: Continuity, Change and Compromise since 1922" (Oxford University Press, 2015) and he co-edited the Oxford Handbook of India's National Security (2018).

In addition, Nicolas has published book chapters and articles on India's nuclear policies, India's soft power relations with the United States, and insurgent movements and the Indian state. He has worked for the Centre d'analyses et de prévisions of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on issues related to Afghanistan, South Asia and nuclear proliferation.

Nicolas Blarel has been a visiting researcher at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and Carnegie-India in New Delhi.

## **Bernard HOURCADE**



**Bernard Hourcade** is a geographer and emeritus research director at the CNRS. Former director of the French Research Institute for Iran during the Islamic Revolution (1978-1993), then founder and director of the CNRS "Iranian World" research team (1993-2005), he has carried out research, often in collaboration with his Iranian colleagues, on the political consequences of the transformations of Iranian society, the city of Tehran and Iran's geopolitics.

Outside academic circles, he intervenes in the media and think tanks on issues related to Iran's geopolitics and the relationship between politics, territory and society in Iran.

Bernard Hourcade is an associate (1969) and doctor of geography (Paris-Sorbonne, 1975).

## **Alexandre MALAFAYE**



**Alexandre Malafaye** is the founding president of SYNOPIA, an independent think tank created in 2012 whose work aims to improve the effectiveness and ethics of governance models, practices and strategies. He is also a teacher at Sciences Po Paris and an auditor at IHEDN.

At the age of 18, he took over the management of the family business and turned it around. He then created two companies, in service and fashion, before joining Compagnie Générale de Santé in 1993, then Sodexo in 1996, to hold several operational management positions. In parallel, between 1983 and 1985, he co-hosted a political programme on a free radio station as an amateur journalist and wrote an essay entitled *La 6<sup>e</sup> République* at the age of 18. He resumed writing in 2008 and published 5 thrillers, then, in 2014, a new essay with SYNOPIA: *(Re)take power! Demonstrates for our right to be well governed.*

## **Marc PERRIN de BRICHAMBAUT**



**Marc Perrin de Brichambaut** is an Honorary State Councillor. He has held various senior positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence in France as well as in the United Nations Secretariat. As Director of Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he headed the French delegation to the Rome Conference, and signed the Rome Statute for France.

From 2005 to 2011, he was Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). He teaches at Sciences Po Paris.

## Jean DE PONTON D'AMECOURT



A former ambassador, **Jean de Ponton d'Amécourt** has had a career in the senior public service and the private sector. In January 2011, he left Afghanistan where he had been French ambassador for nearly three years. He was previously Director of Strategic Affairs at the Ministry of Defence.

A former student of the ENA, Jean de Ponton d'Amécourt is a graduate of Sciences Po Paris and holds a DESS in Law and a DESS in Economics from the University of Paris Assas. He is an officer of the Legion of Honour and a knight of the National Order of Merit. He is the author of "Diplomat at War in Kabul", published in 2012. He is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Forum du Futur.

## Jean-Luc RACINE



**Jean-Luc Racine** is Director of Research Emeritus at the CNRS (Centre d'Études de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales) and Senior Researcher at Asia Centre.

He works on the internal dynamics of the transformation of contemporary India, on the ways in which emerging India is integrated into the new world order and on the geopolitics of South Asia, in particular India-Pakistani relations and Pakistan's regional policy, including in their Afghan and Chinese dimensions.

He has published or edited a dozen books on South Asia and edited the *Annuaire Asie à la Documentation française* (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016).

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