

The 2001-2002 India-Pakistan standoff

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Introduction: attack on the Indian Parliament

On 13th December 2001, around 11.20 *a.m.*, five armed men infiltrated the Indian Parliament House complex by breaching the security cordon at Gate 12, in a white Ambassador bearing special Parliament and Home Ministry labels. Both houses of Parliament – the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha – had just been adjourned, and about 700 Members of Parliament (MPs), together with top government officials, were still in the premises. The terrorists drove into Indian Vice-President Krishan Kant's car – Kant too was still in the Parliament building at the time – and opened fire on the Vice-President's guards and security personnel who had spotted the intrusion. The attackers, a gardener, a Parliament guard as well as five policemen were killed, and 18 others injured. The ministers and MPs were unhurt¹.

While the Indian Parliament Attack was clearly the triggering event of the crisis, one cannot prove that it was actually carried out, directly or indirectly, by Pakistan. On the other hand, as it will be developed further, it is India that first mobilised its troops and threatened the use of force. Therefore, one should consider that *India is, at least formally, the initiator of the conflict* – bearing in mind, however, that the situation was already tense and that Pakistan cannot be considered altogether 'innocent' in the outbreak of the crisis.

Chronological evolution of the crisis

To meaningfully analyse the evolution of the crisis, we have identified four main phases. Military exercises –mobilisation or demobilisation, start/stop trading artillery fire...– and key official

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¹ "The militants had the home ministry and special Parliament label », *Rediff India*, December 13, 2001; "The Stand-Off: How jihadi groups helped provoke the twenty-first century's first nuclear crisis", *The New Yorker*, February 13, 2006.

announcements by leaders of both countries have been particularly useful in identifying such stages. Each phase of the crisis corresponds to a different level of tensions: we considered that the crisis entered a new phase when tensions ebbed or raised significantly.

14th December 2001 – 12th January 2002: The escalation

On 14th December – despite Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's declarations condemning the attack – Indian Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani stated: “We have received some clues about yesterday's incident, which shows that a neighbouring country, and some terrorist organisations active there are behind it.”² The ruling Indian National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was blaming Pakistan, as well as Jaish-e-Mohammed³ (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Toiba⁴ (LeT), two Islamic terrorist organisations operating mainly from that country, for the attack. The same day Advani accused Pakistan⁵ of being involved in the Parliament attack, India's Foreign Secretary Chokila Iyer demanded, in a formal *démarche* to Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, that “Pakistan apprehend the organisations' [JeM and LeT] leaders and that Pakistan curb the financial assets and the groups' access to these assets”⁶.

On 20th December, amidst calls from the United Nations (UN), the United States (US), Russia and the United Kingdom (UK) to ‘exercise restraint’, India started mobilising and deploying its troops to Kashmir and the Indian Punjab⁷. The codename for this mobilisation was Operation Parakram (‘valour’ in Sanskrit). The next day, for the first time since the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, India recalled its High Commissioner to Pakistan. The country also put its air force and navy on ‘high alert’, and deployed its Prithvi short-range, nuclear-capable missiles in East Punjab (Talbot, 2009, p.395). Pakistan responded in kind, moving troops to the border and the Line of Control and deploying its ballistic missiles. On both sides, the deployment was the largest since the 1971 conflict⁸.

12th January – 14th May: Defusing the crisis?

Early in January, while military deployment was at its height – 800,000 troops along the borders⁹ - on both sides of the LoC and the International Border, diplomatic pressure on Pakistan

² “Parliament attack : Advani points towards neighbouring country”, *Rediff India*, December 14, 2001.

³ JeM was founded in March 2000 by Maulana Masood Azhar, who had been released from an Indian prison in December 1999 following the hijacking of an Air India plane flying from Kathmandu (Nepal) to Afghanistan. It is claimed that JeM is closely linked to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam – Fazal-ur-Rehman (JUI(F)), a religious conservative party in Pakistan. The US government froze JeM's assets on 14 October 2001. (Talbot 2009 : 394)

⁴ LeT was founded in 1990 in Afghanistan by three *jihad* activists from Palestine and Pakistan. Its headquarters are located in Muridke, in the Pakistani Punjab. LeT's primary objective is to ‘free’ Kashmir from Indian sovereignty ; however, this goal is seen as part of a wider, global struggle against Hinduism and Judaism. (*Ibid*)

⁵ “Parliament attack: Advani points towards neighbouring country”, *Rediff India*, December 14, 2001.

⁶ “Govt blames LeT for Parliament attack, asks Pak to restrain terrorist outfits”, *Rediff India*, December 14, 2001.

⁷ « Musharraf vows to stop terror activity in Pakistan », *USA Today*, June 22, 2002.

⁸ Global Security 2002 ; CIDCM 2010

⁹ “Musharraf accuses Vajpayee of brinkmanship over Kashmir”, *AFP*, 5 February, 2002.

intensified. British Prime Minister (PM) Tony Blair made a short visit to both countries, and signed a joint declaration with Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee “condemning all those who supported or financed terrorism” (Talbot, 2009, p.396). US President George Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell also called both parties in an attempt to ease the tensions, and urged Pakistan to stop supporting or tolerating terrorist groups¹⁰.

On 12th January, President Musharraf gave a reassuring televised speech. Although he did not accept all of the conditions imposed by India – as we will see below –, Tony Blair lauded Pervez Musharraf’s “forceful defence of a tolerant and moderate Islam”, George Bush termed the speech “candid, courageous and statesman-like”, and the Indian President told his general staff that an attack was not in the plans ‘for now’¹¹. Tensions ebbed after this speech, which is often seen as a turning point in the crisis¹² – but no troop withdrawal followed on either side of the border (Talbot, 2009). Had the next twelve months passed without the perceived risk of armed conflict rising again, 12th January would have marked the peaceful end of the crisis. However, such was not the case.

14th May - early June: Bloodshed

On 14th May, tensions re-escalated as three militant separatists opened fire, in Kaluchak, a town in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, on the passengers of a tourist bus they had got on, then on Indian Army family members in their quarters located nearby, before getting killed by Indian soldiers. The death toll is uncertain, ranging from 31 to 38 depending on the sources, including a majority of civilians – notably several children¹³. Following the attack, India and Pakistan traded artillery fire over the border for five consecutive days, and on 21st May, clashes killed an Indian soldier, six of his Pakistani counterparts, as well as civilians.

The tension between the two neighbours was at its height, both governments declared to be ‘ready’. Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee declared on 22nd May: “now the time has come for a decisive fight and in this war we will win (...) we are ready for it, we are prepared for it”¹⁴; Pervez Musharraf responded two days later, stating that his country was ready, even though they did not want war¹⁵. On 26th May, India deployed its warships closer to Pakistan, in the Arabian Sea, sending a strong message to its neighbour.¹⁶

¹⁰ “THE INDIA-PAKISTAN TENSION : THE DIPLOMACY ; Bush Speaks To Leaders And Urges Negotiation”, *The New York Times*, 13 January, 2002 ; “In Pakistan, Powell Vows To Speed Talks”, *The New York Times*, 17 January, 2002.

¹¹ « The Stand-Off : How jihadi groups helped provoke the twenty-first century’s first nuclear crisis », *The New Yorker*, 13 February, 2006.

¹² CIDCM 2010 ; CoW 2013.

¹³ Global Security 2002.

¹⁴ “Times has come for a ‘decisive fight’ : Vajpayee in Kashmir”, *AFP*, 22 May, 2002.

¹⁵ “We do not want war – Musharraf”, *Press Trust of India*, 24 May, 2002.

¹⁶ “Indian navy said ‘prepared for action’”, *BBC Monitoring South Asia – Political*, 26 May, 2002.

A few days later, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee made a proposal of “joint patrolling”¹⁷ to Pakistan at a news conference in Kazakhstan. This was the first step made by India towards Pakistan; however, in the face of India’s previous continued refusal to dialogue with its counterpart, Pakistani authorities rejected the offer.

June – October: Remaining tensions, progressive de-escalation

Soon after this aborted deal, India finally acknowledges Pakistan’s efforts to fight Islamist groups¹⁸, thus easing the tensions between the two countries. The Indian leaders considered these efforts to be a key factor in the de-escalation, and New Delhi withdrew its warships from the Arabian Sea. Pakistan soon followed¹⁹.

In spite of these reassuring movements, tit-for-tat missile tests were conducted by India and Pakistan on 4th October 2002, preventing the situation from easing completely.

The withdrawal of troops from the borders was announced on 17th October by both countries. At that time, the number of troops on the frontiers had reached nearly 700,000 for India, and up to 300,000 on Pakistan’s side.²⁰ A ceasefire agreement was only signed in November 2003.

Characteristics of India’s polity

A key assumption underpinning this paper is that the characteristics of a political unit usually play a significant role in the decision-making process during a crisis. As a consequence, there is a need to analyse the political regime, the hubristic presentation of its leader, and the ‘enemy representation’ of the belligerent. The regime will be defined according to the level of democracy in the country studied; the level of democracy will be determined by the degree of freeness of the political process – especially elections. As part of our project, the hubristic presentation of the leader will be defined particularly by the architecture, especially with buildings linked to the government. Finally, the enemy representation has to be found in the rivalry between India and Pakistan, notably in the rhetoric used by both countries’ authorities.

Political Regime in India: A democratic regime marked by violent electoral politics

India is a parliamentary democracy, in which citizens elect their Prime Minister through General Elections held every five years to designate their representatives in the Lok Sabha – ‘House of the People’ . The President and his Vice-President are also elected every five years, but indirectly,

¹⁷ “India calls for joint border patrols”, *The Cincinnati Post*, 5 June, 2002.

¹⁸ “Indian navy begins withdrawing warships off Pakistani coast”, *Agence France-Presse*, June 11, 2002.

¹⁹ “Pakistan’s withdrawal of warships ‘reciprocal’ : India official”, *Agence France-Presse*, June 14, 2002.

²⁰ “Pakistan to withdraw forces from border with India ‘shortly’”, *AFP*, October 17, 2002.

through elected members of Parliament. India has a fairly open democratic political process. Congress Party domination, which marked much of the first decades of independent India, started declining from the late 1970s, with a concomitant rise in pluralism – at the time of the crisis studied here, PM Vajpayee got to power in 1998 after his 25-party (!) coalition won the election. While the 1998 election was deemed one of the fairest in India's history, violence remained a common feature of the country's electoral politics²¹.

According to Freedom House, in 2001-2002 India is qualified as a “free country” – concerning “political rights”, India gets a 2 (1 being the best note, 7 the worst). Nonetheless, India has to deal with corruption in politics. According to Transparency International, in 2001 India was ranked 71st out of 91 countries on the Corruption Perception Index. Despite recurrent violence, corruption and the very complex nature of political participation – which is influenced by caste, class, religion, language, regional identity...-, India had, in 2001-2002, a democratic regime²².

If we consider a scale concerning political regimes, a “score 3” would stand for an authoritarian regime, and a “score 0” for a democratic one. Then we give a “score 1” to India as it is a democratic regime, but as corruption and violence in politics are present, the country's polity cannot receive the perfect mark of 0.

No hubristic presentation of the Indian Prime Minister

Indian architecture is not relevant in this case study. Thus we can make the hypothesis that Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee did not present any hubristic image of himself and of India. Especially because we make the assumption that a hubristic presentation of the leader can be detected in the way new buildings are designed – the size and the budget are relevant for example. However, it is not the case for India. Nonetheless, we can describe main government's buildings.

To begin with the President of India, his official residence is the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The whole estate – building and gardens – is an enormous property built at the beginning of the 20th century. The Rashtrapati Bhavan is one of the world's largest presidential residences with its 340 rooms. Originally it was built for the British Viceroy. It is occupied by Indian presidents since 1950. As for the Prime Minister, he lives at the 7, Race Course Road, which is also his main workplace. Indian Prime Ministers occupy this residence only since 1984. One should note that the Rashtrapati Bhavan is located next to the Secretariat Building. This latter includes several ministries' homes – the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of External

²¹ “40 dead in Indian election violence.”, *Scotland on Sunday*, September 19, 1999 ; “Congress Wallows In Poll Misery As Killing Goes On”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, September 20, 1999.

²² Marshall, M.G. (dir.) (2010), *Polity IV Country Report 2010 : India*.

Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs -. Thus, most of important members of the Indian government live in the same area; there is a kind of centralisation of power in the capital as the main members of the Cabinet, the President and the Prime Minister – whose residence is not far away – have their official residences in the same area. This gives an image of unity. The Secretariat Building and the Rashtrapati Bhavan had both been designed by British architects – Herbert Baker and Edwin Lutyens – at the beginning of the 20th century. Therefore, Indian colonial History is still very present in political life, regarding the government buildings. There was no intention to have other buildings after the independence, government officials preferred staying in the official houses designed during the British dominion. This does not create a real shift from the past; the country respects the tradition and its History. Apart from the greatness of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, we cannot conclude that Indian architecture is relevant to understand any charismatic legitimacy. It is much more a question of tradition in the country as it is the case in the great majority of democracies nowadays.

According to Ian Talbot – author of *Pakistan: a modern history* – and John R. Wood - specialist in South Asian and Comparative Politics, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was not a very charismatic leader. His legitimacy was equivalent to any Congress leader after Indira Gandhi – in office until 1984. He had a moderate position within the BJP – the Hindu nationalist party. He was also respected at the international level because of his intelligent handling of nuclear capability.

If we consider a scale concerning the hubristic representation of the leader, a “score 3” would stand for a strong hubristic representation, and a “score 0” for the absence of it. Then we give “score 1” to India’s hubristic representation of its leaders as no change was noticed in the representation of the leader regarding his predecessors – the Indian prime minister did not give a hubristic presentation of himself. The relatively free electoral process and the absence of a cult of personality make for a legal-rational type of political legitimacy in India, with “traditional” charismatic elements deriving from the country’s social and federal organisation, notably in terms of caste and regionalist sentiments.

Arch-Enemies: Historically and religiously informed rivalry

The origins of the tensions between India and Pakistan are to be found in 1947, with the end of British colonial rule and the division of the two countries, along religious lines. This Partition took place in a blood bath, which left deep scars on both sides, and set the stage for a continued, religiously informed rivalry. The hostility between the two countries was further aggravated by the bloody 1971 conflict between West and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), in which India intervened in favour of the latter, which had declared independence and put in place a secular state.

As a matter of fact, in 2001-2002, the ruling Indian NDA coalition was led by the Bharatiya Janata Party, which is the main Hindu nationalist party, and which had been surfing on – and feeding – anti-Muslim sentiments. Riots on an unprecedented scale broke out in the BJP-ruled northern Indian state of Gujarat, leaving thousands dead –mostly Muslims–, and further putting the two communities at odds.

Having a look at the officials' speeches for the celebrations of Independence Day in both countries – 14th August in Pakistan, 15th August in India - we can notice that although there are historical tensions between India and Pakistan since the Partition in 1947, the vocabulary used by leaders does not really illustrate a Manichaean vision. Instead of representing an opposition between the two countries, leaders generally prefer to use expressions such as "the neighbour"²³.

In December 1999, the Indian Airlines Flight 814 from Kathmandu to New Delhi was hijacked by some Islamists based in Pakistan. A few days later, top government officials accused Pakistan of being behind this hijacking, especially Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee²⁴ who even asked that Pakistan be considered a terrorist state. However, a few months later, the Minister of External Affairs rejected²⁵ this idea. Union Home Minister also made a statement²⁶ in which he denounced the continuing “proxy war” Pakistan still led against India. Moreover, Indian's Minister of External Affairs made a statement on 1st March, in which he clearly accused Pakistan of being involved in the IC-814 hijacking with the involvement of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI).

Therefore, besides the territorial dispute over Kashmir and religious tensions, the security factor also has to be taken into account. Indeed, India considered Pakistan as a danger because of its links with extremist or terrorist groups. Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee also denounced the propaganda Pakistan conveyed about its neighbour in a statement²⁷ about Jammu and Kashmir in February 2001.

Even if the elements developed earlier showed long-standing tensions – mainly territorial and religious – between the two neighbours, the Indo-Pakistan rivalry *appeared* less fierce. It is important to notice that efforts were made from both countries to establish peace and normalise relations. In July 2001, President Pervez Musharraf was invited to a *banquet* in his honour in New Delhi. This visit was even qualified as a “historic one” by President Narayanan, during which he

²³ "Our neighbour claims to oppose terrorism (...) We wish to have good neighbourly relations with Pakistan...", Indian Prime Minister's Independence Day speech 2002.

²⁴ « Indian's Vajpayee says hijack was 'Pakistan-backed' », *Reuters News*, January 3, 2000.

²⁵ "it was factually incorrect to assert that India had been demanding that Pakistan be designated as 'this, that, or the other'", in External Affairs Minister's meeting with the media, September 12, 2001.

²⁶ Union Home Minister's Statement (Indian Airlines Flight IC-814), January 6, 2000.

²⁷ "It is my hope that Pakistan will act, even now, and abjure violence, give up their continuous hostile propaganda against India, stop promoting and aiding cross-border terrorism" - Statement to both Houses of Parliament, February 22, 2001.

declared that his country and Pakistan had to “rule out violence from [their] relationship”²⁸ through dialogue and implement healthy bilateral relations.

Official declarations do not show fierce rivalry against Pakistan in the short period before the 2001-2002 crisis. Indeed, following the Kargil War of 1999, Indian PM Vajpayee was trying to secure peace with Pakistan; harsh vocabulary and systematic opposition were gradually removed from public discourse. However, the opposition between the two countries remains at the top of their respective foreign policy agenda.

If we consider a scale concerning the enemy’s representation, a “score 3” would stand for very strong and strict images, and a “score 0” for the absence of any representation or dogma concerning the enemy. Then we give a “score 3” as a few declarations cannot overshadow the historical, deeply entrenched rivalry which goes back to 1947.

To sum up the various information analysed in this first part, India has a score 1 for its political regime; a score 1 for the hubristic representation of its leaders; and also a score 3 for the representation of Pakistan.

Policies before the crisis

To analyse the deterrence strategies before the crisis, it is particularly useful to look at the military balance, and at Pakistan’s past behaviour. The past reassurance strategy will be identified with the offensive/defensive options and the indistinct nature of offensive and defensive weaponry. Finally, the economic situation and the potential recognition difficulties will be analysed.

Deterrence policy: Moderate

India could afford vastly greater military expenditures than Pakistan. Over the few years before the crisis, India had spent three to five times more than Pakistan on military forces (Cordesman, 2002, p.4). India also had a much larger industrial base for defence, and got most of its weaponry from Russia, a more advanced supplier than Pakistan’s – China and Eastern European countries. Although both armies were relatively professional, the Indian land forces then had 1.1 million actives, while Pakistan ‘only’ had 550,000 regular soldiers. The latter country had the advantage as far as reserve troops – 500,000 vs. 300,000 -, but those were not deployable immediately. India had over 3,400 tanks, 1,500 light armoured vehicles, 180 pieces of self-propelled artillery, 738 combat aircrafts. Its neighbour possessed 2,300 tanks (most of them less modern), 1,150 light armoured vehicles, 250 self-propelled artillery pieces and 353 combat aircrafts. One should note that neither country had previously been very efficient in air warfare. As far as sea power, the

²⁸ President’s Speech at the Banquet hosted for President Musharraf, July 14, 2001.

Indian Navy was twice as numerous as its Pakistani counterpart, and had 16 submarines to 7 for Pakistan (Cordesman, 2002, pp.4-6, p.9). Despite India's considerable advantage in conventional warfare capabilities, the fact that both countries possessed nuclear-capable ballistic missiles complexified the military balance. Indeed, nuclear exchange could kill millions, and India may not have been ready to take this risk, even if it would probably end up winning a potential war. Therefore, nuclear posturing was thought to be Pakistan's most efficient way of deterring India from launching a conventional attack (Cordesman, 2002, p.4).

As for Pakistan's past behaviour, one should remember that the previous crisis in which the country was involved escalated into the Kargil Conflict, which took place between May and July 1999. As it happens, the other belligerent country was, once again, India. The conflict is also known as Operation Vijay ('victory' in Hindi), from the codename of the Indian Army's operation to clear the Kargil region. The conflict was caused by the infiltration of Kashmiri militants and Pakistani soldiers on the Indian side of the Line of Control. At first, Pakistan blamed the infiltration on 'Kashmiri freedom fighters', but evidence of Pakistan's involvement were soon brought out. In the first stages of the conflict, Pakistan adopted a bullying attitude, stating that it was ready to use 'any weapon' if the conflict escalated²⁹. However, when a major Indian offensive unfolded in early June, Pakistan sought international support in de-escalating the crisis. As US President Bill Clinton refused to intervene until Pakistan had withdrawn from the Indian side of the Line of Control, Pakistani forces eventually retreated.

If we consider a scale concerning deterrence policy before the crisis, a "score 3" would stand for a strong deterrence policy, and a "score 0" for the absence of any deterrence. Then Pakistan's deterrence strategy has "score 2": given the military balance, tilted towards India, and the latter's victory during their previous confrontation, one could think that Pakistan's deterrence strategy would be ineffective in the 2001-2002 standoff. However, Pakistani forces remained very sizeable, making for a long and difficult war if India were to embark on it; moreover, nuclear capabilities was an important deterring factor. As a consequence, we estimate the efficiency of Pakistan's deterrence strategy before the crisis to be *moderate*.

Reassurance Policy: Weak

Despite an unfavourable balance of power, Pakistan had a number of advantages in engaging in asymmetric warfare in Kashmir. The uneven, mountainous terrain makes it very difficult to lead counterinsurgency operations and to seal off borders. A number of Indian officers believed that it would take a manpower superiority of thirty to fifty-to-one to secure certain areas (Cordesman,

²⁹ "Pakistan May Use Any Weapon", *The News*, May 31, 1999.

2002, p.3). Furthermore, the majority-Muslim population of Kashmir generally favoured the Pakistani side. Pakistani forces would have excellent defensive positions in Kashmir, and making limited progress across the Line of Control would accomplish little for India, as it would put them in the same uneasy tactical position, only in a different location. According to Anthony Cordesman, “Pakistan can deploy a holding force and support insurgents at a far lower cost than India must pay to deploy the forces necessary to occupy Kashmir and defend the dividing line.”³⁰ Clearly, offensive options in Kashmir are not very promising for India – defensive solutions seem far sounder.

The indistinct nature of offensive and defensive weaponry makes it crucial to be able to determine the potential enemy troops’ objectives along the border. However, in the case of India and Pakistan, while there had been formal commitments towards controlling and getting information about the mission of each other’s troops along the mutual border, these seldom translated into practice. At the time of the crisis studied here, the latest illustration of this – aside from the Kargil War – was the ‘unilateral withdrawal’ of Pakistani troops from the Line of Control in 2000, in an attempt to normalise relations with India. However, an estimated 20,000 soldiers, who should have left the area after winter exercises, remained stationed near the Line of Control³¹. This kind of devious manoeuvres was far from exceptional, and kept feeding the – already well-entrenched – distrust between the two neighbours.

If we consider a scale concerning reassurance policy before the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for a strong reassurance policy, and a “score 0” for the absence of any reassurance. Pakistan has a weak reassurance policy before the crisis, so we give a score 1. In sum, while it is highly doubtful that India feared for its territorial integrity, one can see that its difficult strategic position in Kashmir, coupled with mutual mistrust, made for a less-than-reassured India as far as a potential offensive in Kashmir.

Economic Considerations: of limited importance, either before or during the crisis

Indeed, control over the disputed region of Kashmir never was about accessing resources; rather, it had been a highly symbolic matter – though not understood in the same way as in the following section –, both in historical and religious terms. This will be further discussed below.

If we consider a scale concerning economic considerations before the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for a very difficult economic situation, and a “score 0” for a good one. Then India has score 1 as the economic situation in 2001 was correct: the country did not have economic problems regarding its GDP and its growth rate, and was not sanctioned by the international

³⁰ *Ibid*

³¹ Global Security 2002

community.

Symbolic Difficulties: Moderate recognition issues

Here again, very little can be said. If in 2002, India indeed arguably played a lesser role than its demographic, economic and military power could suggest, it was not a significant issue, and we believe it to be a negligible factor as far as the India-Pakistan standoff is concerned. While Pakistan, on the other hand, did have recognition difficulties, it was not the initiator of the crisis; therefore, their study falls beyond the scope of the present paper. As stated above, the conflict's symbolic stakes are high, but these have to do with the two countries' common history, and religious considerations that stem from it.

Finally, one should note that the Parliament attack on 13th December is a highly symbolic event, hitting at the heart of Indian democracy.

If we consider a scale concerning symbolic difficulties before the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for great recognition problems, and a “score 0” for the absence of any problem. Then Pakistan has score 1 with minor problems.

In sum, before the crisis, Pakistan has score 2 for its deterrence strategy; score 1 for its reassurance policy; and score 1 for the symbolic problems. While India has a score 1 for its economic situation.

Policies during the crisis

As in the previous section, we will have a look at four policies: deterrence, reassurance, economic (sanctions or incentives) and symbolic policies (recognition or lack thereof). This analysis will help us weight out the determining factors in the triggering, evolution and outcome of the crisis.

Each part of the crisis – as defined at the beginning of this paper – will be analysed through deterrence, reassurance and symbolic policies implemented by Pakistan. In this particular case, the economic policies will not be analysed as there were neither economic incentives nor material sanctions. Thus, the score for the economic policy during the crisis is 1: it means that nothing was proposed by Pakistan to India (our scale concerning the economic policy gives score 3 if economic compensations are proposed to the initiator of the crisis, score 2 if something else is proposed, score 1 if nothing is proposed and finally score 0 if economic sanctions are mentioned).

13th December 2001 – 12th January 2002

Some elements of deterrence policy

In response to India's accusations at the beginning of the crisis, the Directorate of Inter-Services

Public Relations Rashid Qureshi warned that India would “pay heavily if they engage in any misadventure”³². Pervez Musharraf himself did the same at the Pakistani television. He warned India, by saying that Pakistan had the “capabilities, force and commitment to defend” themselves, and that in case of an attack from the Indian troops, Pakistani military forces will “hit back very strongly”³³; President Musharraf reminded his neighbour that Pakistan’s force is complete, i.e. “on the ground, air or high seas”³⁴. These threatening declarations are typical elements of a deterrence strategy.

As far as mobilisation of the armed forces, Pakistan largely responded similarly to India’s preparations. As the latter had mobilised half a million troops along the Line of Control and the international border, Pakistan deployed 300,000 men to that region, which is less, but this was because of Pakistan’s lesser capabilities; besides, it was sizeable enough to deter a less-than-reassured rival. Likewise, Pakistan deployed nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and Navy when India did the same, and was actually the first to put its forces on ‘high alert’³⁵.

If we consider a scale concerning deterrence policy during the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for a strong deterrence policy, and a “score 0” for the absence of any deterrence. Then Pakistan has score 2. Indeed, Pakistan’s policy contained deterrence elements. But it is difficult to say that it is a 'strong' one because Pakistan did not deployed more military forces than India did. It was rather a tit for tat military response. That is why the higher score (3) is not relevant. The threatening declarations are also important.

A moderate reassurance policy

“We are hoping for the best, but we are prepared for the worst.”³⁶ President Pervez Musharraf said on 30th December. This sentence clearly resumed the whole situation from the Pakistani point of view. This looks like a mixed policy: Pakistan deployed its troops to be prepared in any case, but at the same time government officials declared that they did not want war with India. The military mobilisation was a way for Islamabad to prove its strength: even if the military balance tilted towards India, Pakistan did not want to lose face. It is mostly a question of recognition.

The same day Pakistani authorities warned India about the repercussions that might occur in case of an attack from India, Pervez Musharraf made it clear that his country would cooperate with his neighbour to find the responsible of the Parliament attack. Even though it is not an important reassurance policy as it is only declarative in nature, this has to be taken into account as Pakistan

³² “Pakistan forces put on high alert : Storming of parliament”, *Dawn*, December 15, 2001.

³³ « Pakistan wants peace but not with loss of honour : Musharraf », *AFP*, January 2, 2002.

³⁴ « Musharraf rules out handing over terrorists to India », *Press Trust of India*, January 3, 2002.

³⁵ Global Security 2002 ; « Pakistani forces put on high alert : Storming of parliament », *Dawn*, December 15, 2001.

³⁶ « Pakistan wants peace but ready to fight if attacked : Musharraf », *AFP*, December 30, 2001.

could have refused to react, and just denied its implication in the attack. According to Sartaj Aziz – then Pakistani Foreign Minister – a joint investigation³⁷ was proposed by Pakistan, but India refused it.

Then, in January 2002 was scheduled the SAARC – South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation – Summit in Kathmandu, in which India and Pakistan were invited. Pakistan maintained its desire to talk to Indian PM Vajpayee; but Indian authorities rejected the idea. What is important to remember here is that Pakistan made some efforts to renew the dialogue with its neighbour, whereas the latter refused.

Another declaration that fits into the reassurance strategy concerns Pervez Musharraf on 28th December: he said Pakistan would not be the initiator of the war with India as his country “stands for peace”³⁸ and would only enter a war if it is initiated on them, thus putting Pakistan in a passive, defensive attitude.

Pakistani authorities also made efforts as far as the struggle against extremist groups. It was said that these efforts would be intensified to tackle such groups, mostly tougher control and regulation³⁹ on young activists showing interest in jihad groups. Moreover, President Musharraf announced in January the closure⁴⁰ of the Inter Services Intelligence wing supporting terrorist groups in Kashmir. This decision was a step forward in terms of reassurance.

It seemed that Pakistan was always taking a step forwards by declaring itself ready to open dialogue, while India took a step backwards by refusing it. The initiative usually came from Pervez Musharraf, as was the case during the SAARC summit when, concluding his speech, he walked over to the Indian Prime Minister’s seat to shake his hand.

By early January, Pakistan authorities also arrested 120 militants⁴¹ from organisations such as Sipah-e-Sahaba and Tehrik-e-Jaffria. These arrests were mostly a consequence of pressures from India and Western countries – especially the US and the UK.

If we consider a scale concerning reassurance policy during the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for a strong reassurance policy, and a “score 0” for the absence of any reassurance. Then we consider Pakistan has score 2. As seen above, Pakistan always expressed its will to develop talks with India. These declarations are part of the reassurance policy. But at the same time, no big efforts were made on the material side. For instance, no withdrawal of troops was mentioned by Pakistan. Yet, President Musharraf began to strengthen its policy against terrorism following mounting pressure coming from its neighbour.

³⁷ “Sartaj Aziz endorses Musharraf’s stance on joint inquiry, sharing of evidence”, *Pakistan Press International*, December 20, 2001.

³⁸ “URGENT Musharraf says Pakistan will never initiate war”, *AFP*, December 28, 2001.

³⁹ « Musharraf adopts tougher line against extremists », *Financial Times*, December 28, 2001.

⁴⁰ « Musharraf turns off ISI tap in Kashmir », *The Times of India*, January 3, 2002.

⁴¹ « Pakistan arrests 120 militants to ease tensions : Pressure from west : Musharraf tries to appease skeptical Indian government », *The Daily Telegraph*, January 5, 2002.

Recognition policy

The day after the Parliament attack, Pervez Musharraf expressed himself about it, declaring he strongly condemned those attacks, but also showing some compassion towards the victims in a message⁴² sent to Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee. By conveying condolences to India, Musharraf shows recognition towards his neighbour's sufferings, thus putting himself and his country on the same level as India.

On the other hand, Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar made a little differentiation between India and Pakistan. Indeed, it seems to him that there exists a 'typical' Indian behaviour: "playing the role of complainant and judge at the same time"⁴³, suggesting the refusal from Indian authorities to accept the joint investigation with Pakistan; in addition President Musharraf's reaction towards India's decision to withdraw its ambassador from Islamabad: the Pakistani President said India was very "arrogant and kneejerk"⁴⁴. It means that Pakistan considered India's behaviour as reckless because their reaction was automatic, instinctive. Furthermore, Pakistani authorities' discursive practice suggested India's "superiority complex" avoiding real equal-to-equal talks between the two neighbours. One should notice that these elements raised the symbolic costs of an aggressive policy.

Pervez Musharraf also tried to consider India's Prime Minister as a "friend"⁴⁵, putting his neighbour on an equal level. Therefore recognition policy is also used during that sequence.

Moreover, Pakistan's demands towards India respected Indian sovereignty. There were no depreciations from Pakistan, no recognition denial.

If we consider a scale concerning recognition policies during the crisis, a "score 3" would stand for a strong policy of recognition, and a "score 0" for the absence of it. Score 1, there are some elements trying to discredit India; but those elements are restricted to India's potential behaviour during the crisis, not to India's legitimacy as such.

In sum, Pakistan's deterrent strategy is moderate (score 2), its reassurance policy has score 2; and finally its recognition policy is quite weak, so it's score 1. The probability of war is then stable. The deterrence policy did not really prevent India from attacking Pakistan. It did not mostly because there were no sufficient reasons for attacking, no real proofs of the involvement of Pakistani authorities in the Indian Parliament attack. The second element is that both countries possess the nuclear weapon – as we will develop below –; therefore, engagement in any war would bring the threat of a nuclear escalation. Tensions increased between the two countries

⁴² "Musharraf condemns attack on Parliament House", *Hindustan Times*, 14 December, 2001.

⁴³ "Musharraf not to ask for meeting with Vajpayee at SAARC meet", *Press Trust of India*, December 20, 2001.

⁴⁴ « Musharraf condemns India's 'arrogant and kneejerk' actions », *AFP*, December 22, 2002.

⁴⁵ 'I certainly consider Vajpayee as my friend' in « Musharraf rejects India's demand for handing over criminals », *Press Trust of India*, January 6, 2002.

during the first month because of the deterrence strategy used by both countries.

12th January 2002 – 13th May 2002

Deterrence policy: Moderate

This ‘tit for tat’ policy was consistent throughout the crisis. Indeed, even at the time when President Musharraf made his conciliatory speech on 12th January 2002, he never accepted to withdraw even a small part of his troops before India would. However, as far as rhetoric goes, Pervez Musharraf’s address marked an important shift. Thus, overall, we consider Pakistan’s deterrence strategy, from the speech onwards, to be moderate because the threatening declarations were similar to those made at the very beginning of the crisis, i.e. the fact that Pakistan is prepared to any potential attack from New Delhi as its armed forces are fully deployed.

However, one should note that in an interview to the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, General Pervez Musharraf seemed a bit more aggressive as he talked about the nuclear response⁴⁶ in case of any attack; but even if it will be used as a “last resort”, this declaration remains deterrent. As the nuclear option had not been mentioned before by Pakistani President, the deterrence policy is a bit stronger with this declaration compared to the first sequence’s policy.

If we consider a scale concerning deterrence policy during the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for a strong deterrence policy, and a “score 0” for the absence of any deterrence. Score 1 for Pakistan during this period as there were no new mobilisation of troops but Pakistani President still used deterring declarations towards India; tit-for-tat military response does not allow us to give a higher score. The declaration in *Der Spiegel* about a possible nuclear response also specifies that it would be used only as “last resort”.

Reassurance policy: Reassuring declarations, military stalemate

From President Musharraf’s address, Pakistan’s declarations were markedly less aggressive. In this speech, Pervez Musharraf first addressed Indian PM as the president of Pakistan, and then as the commander of the armed forces of Pakistan. As the president of Pakistan, he declared that a peaceful dialogue was necessary to avoid a bigger conflict about Kashmir: “if one wishes to normalise Indo-Pakistani relations and bring harmony to the ties, the Kashmir dispute has to be resolved peacefully through dialogue...”. Even if at the same time, he declared being “ready to face a challenge” when he spoke as the commander of the armed forces of Pakistan. The address itself contained many elements of reassurance; besides the ban on JeM, LeT, Sipah-e-Sabha Pakistan, Tehrik-e-Jaferia Pakistan and Tanzim Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi – three sectarian

⁴⁶ « Musharraf ready to use nuclear arms says Musharraf », *The Guardian*, April 6, 2002.

organisations -, further measures included the registering of foreign students and teachers, of religious schools, as well as a more limited use of loudspeakers in mosques. While “declaring continued diplomatic and political support for Kashmiris”, Pervez Musharraf stated Pakistan would not tolerate subversive or terrorist activities, on its soil or elsewhere. Also, he announced the establishment of “speedy trial courts” to try those involved in sectarian killing and terrorism (Talbot, 2009, pp. 395-396). Pakistani authorities also arrested militants from terrorist groups, to match with what was announced by Pervez Musharraf, i.e. the ban on such groups. Those arrests were reported in the media⁴⁷ a few days after the 12th January speech.

President Musharraf still maintained his will of avoiding war with India, while he continued to claim Pakistani armies were prepared if any attack would come from the neighbour. But as India refused any talks, Pakistani President came to the conclusion that de-escalation was only possible with a third party mediation. Thus, he proposed another answer in April by calling for the intervention of United Nations troops⁴⁸ on the Line of Control. These attempts are part of the reassurance policy conducted by Pakistan.

Between January and May, Pakistani officials kept stating that they would not withdraw unilaterally, and that India had to take the first step. Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar even declared, “de-escalation was possible through dialogue”⁴⁹. In March, Sattar also declared Pakistan was ready to sign an anti-terrorist agreement with India⁵⁰. This clearly shows Pakistan’s attempts to reassure India – and the international community – about its non-aggressive intentions. President Musharraf called to end the ban on fly-overs, declaring he wanted to “remove all obstacles”⁵¹ to ease the tensions with India.

Finally, besides politics, another field can be interesting in this case study: sports. India had suspended its sporting ties with Pakistan after the Parliament attack, as it had closed bus lines. Pakistan wished those ties could be renewed with its neighbour, particularly during the hockey World Cup⁵².

If we consider a scale concerning reassurance policy during the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for a strong reassurance policy, and a “score 0” for the absence of any reassurance. Score 3, reassurance policy is stronger than it was before the 12th January speech. Authorities took concrete measures to act against terrorist groups.

⁴⁷ « Musharraf rounds up another 700 militants », *The Financial Times*, January 15, 2002.

⁴⁸ « Musharraf calls for deployment of UN troops on LoC », *Pakistan Press International*, April 2, 2002.

⁴⁹ Global Security 2002.

⁵⁰ "Pak prepared to sign anti-terrorism pact: Sattar", *The Hindu*, March 10, 2002.

⁵¹ "Musharraf calls for India, Pakistan to end air restrictions", *AFP*, March 7, 2002.

⁵² « Musharraf urges India to revive sports with Pakistan », *AFP*, February 6, 2002.

Recognition policy: Elements of symbolic policy

Pervez Musharraf's pledge to combat sectarian fighting and terrorism clearly was an important symbolic shift, legitimising India's demands and establishing the fight against terrorism as a common struggle.

On a different note, Pakistan's increasingly frequent mutual de-escalation declarations, and accusations of India's military deployment being "coercive and intimidating"⁵³, also were an attempt to increase the symbolic costs of perpetuating the tensions along the LoC for India – although this did not yield results. We can therefore argue that, from 12th January onwards, there were some elements of symbolic policy in Pakistan's strategy.

President Pervez Musharraf wanted to implement a fair concession with India. In January 2002, he declared on CNN "I think I've been taking a lot of initiatives. It's high time that he (Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee) takes some initiatives himself as well."

By the end of January, Pakistan proposed a common withdrawal of troops from the border. According to Foreign Ministry spokesman Aziz Ahmed Khan, the dialogue on Kashmir would be only possible if a withdrawal – at least partial – of troops was effective. But as Indian authorities refused to engage in talks, Pakistan lost patience and gave some recommendations on how India should act to ease tensions: "Prime Minister Vajpayee should accept my offer of a dialogue" Pervez Musharraf declared on Kashmir Day.

If we consider a scale concerning recognition policies during the crisis, a "score 3" would stand for a strong policy of recognition, and a "score 0" for the absence of it. Then it's a score 2 during this period.

To sum up, Pakistan's deterrent strategy is weak (score 1) while its reassurance one is very strong (score 3); its recognition policy is considered to be moderate (score 2). The probability of an armed conflict is then stable. During this second sequence of the crisis, we can see that Pakistan's reassurance policy is important as it marked a shifting the crisis. Indeed, Pervez Musharraf's speech eased the tensions between the two countries, even if in a first part India waited for more concrete actions. Pakistan often declared itself ready to talk with India, but received no positive answer. This period thus proved a standoff. Tensions ebbed thanks to the reassurance policy President Musharraf tried to impulse.

14th May – 11th June*Deterrence policy*

On 14th May, three militants from terrorist groups attacked a bus in Kaluchak – in Indian state Jammu and Kashmir – and opened fire on the passengers. After this second attack, Indian Prime

⁵³ Global Security 2002.

Minister A.B. Vajpayee declared “time for a decisive fight”. The tensions re-escalated very quickly, especially because the tensions did not ebb before the attack as the military deployment had not been reduced. Pervez Musharraf still made some threatening declarations, as he did in his television speech on 27th May. On the occasion, he was wearing his military uniform. He proved Pakistan could also be on the offensive, not only on the defensive towards India: “we are very capable of an offensive defense.” Top military spokesman Major General Rashid Qureshi declared once again that a strong military response would be sent if there is “Any incursions into Pakistani territory or Azad Kashmir”. Yet, President Musharraf’s declaration was not seen as a turning point on the Indian side, Indian Home Minister even declared it was not a “radical change”.

Pakistan also moved some of its troops from the Afghan border⁵⁴ to reinforce the security on the east border with India. Furthermore, missile tests were conducted by Pakistani authorities just after President Musharraf’s speech in which he declared several times Pakistan did not want war and would not be the initiator of a conflict. This strategy was probably interpreted as a way to show their determination to defend themselves, but also a concrete manner to prove Pakistan was “ready for war”⁵⁵. Therefore, he publicly announced the success of the nuclear capable missile tests: “I want to convey to the entire nation and to you that today (...) we tested our indigenous Ghauri missile with a range of 1500km. It reached its target with great accuracy and great success.” Pervez Musharraf’s declarations and this missile tests were seen as contradictory by Indian government.

If we consider a scale concerning deterrence policy during the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for a strong deterrence policy, and a “score 0” for the absence of any deterrence. Score 2 here, once again this is not a strong deterrence policy, even if we have to take into account Pervez Musharraf’s behaviour – especially his declarations and the missile tests – and the tit-for-tat military response as some deterrent elements.

Reassurance policy

After the 14th May attack in Kaluchak, Pervez Musharraf said his country did not wish war⁵⁶, even if Pakistan would defend its soil in case of an attack. By saying “we do not want war”, President Musharraf uses a reassurance policy. Moreover, Pakistan also tried to reassure by asking international community to act in the region, to pacify India in order to ease tensions. Pervez Musharraf asked for “neutral observers” too, because he considered India could not be a proper judge because of its involvement in the crisis.

⁵⁴ “Pakistan troops alert”, *Scottish Daily Record*, May 31, 2002.

⁵⁵ « Pakistan test-fires missile, Musharraf says ready for war », *AFP*, May 25, 2002.

⁵⁶ “We do not want war - Musharraf”, *Press Trust of India*, May 24, 2002.

A defense source noted that shelling has ebbed a lot at the borders after 27th May, saying that it could be linked to President Musharraf's address to the nation. It could be both the effects of a deterrence and a reassurance strategy.

If we consider a scale concerning reassurance policy during the crisis, a "score 3" would stand for a strong reassurance policy, and a "score 0" for the absence of any reassurance. Pakistan has score 2 because the elements of reassurance are only declarative in nature.

Recognition policy

The rhetoric used by Pakistan was still the same. Pakistan still denounced India's complex of superiority which was a threat to Pakistan's sovereignty. Nothing changed during this period for the recognition strategy, as there was no new elements, the rhetoric used by Pakistani authorities remained the same. Thus we put the same score.

If we consider a scale concerning recognition policies during the crisis, a "score 3" would stand for a strong policy of recognition, and a "score 0" for the absence of it. Score 2 during this period.

To sum up, Pakistan's deterrence, reassurance and recognition policies all get score 2 (moderate deterrence, good reassurance and moderate recognition). From January to May, tensions remained, but the reassurance policy Pervez Musharraf presented was helpful. But the Kaluchak attack revived the tensions. Once again, the tit-for-tat deterrence strategy explained the resurgence of tensions between India and Pakistan.

11th June – 17th October

Deterrence policy

On 11th June, Indian authorities declared the withdrawal of warships⁵⁷ based near Pakistan. However, elements of deterrence strategy still existed after this day, because as Pervez Musharraf said, danger was not over yet. During this last period, the elements of deterrence policy were the same as in the previous sequences, that is to say President Musharraf making declarations in which he announced Pakistan would be ready in case of an attack from India. These deterrent elements were similar to the previous ones: "We are totally prepared for them and we will teach them a lesson if they come across the Line of Control (...) They dare not violate our international border, they dare not violate the Line of Control. We will teach them a lesson on the ground, in the air."⁵⁸ Pervez Musharraf declared in a TV interview.

⁵⁷ « India pulls warships back from Pakistan », *The Times*, June 12, 2002.

⁵⁸ "Pakistan will 'teach India a lesson' if it invades : Musharraf [Corrected 06/22/02] », *AFP*, June 22, 2002.

If we consider a scale concerning deterrence policy during the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for a strong deterrence policy, and a “score 0” for the absence of any deterrence. Score 1 for this last period, there are only weak elements of deterrence.

Reassurance policy

As for the deterrence policy, elements of reassurance policy were similar to those previously announced: President Musharraf’s intention to ease tensions with its neighbour because he wanted to avoid war.

If we consider a scale concerning reassurance policy during the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for a strong reassurance policy, and a “score 0” for the absence of any reassurance. Then Pakistan has the same score as during the previous period: score 2 for a good reassurance policy.

Recognition policy

On 14th August, President General Pervez Musharraf sent his greetings to Indian PM Vajpayee for the celebrations of Independence Day. The common history is thus respected between the two countries, and it is clearly an element of recognition.

However, President Musharraf continued criticizing India’s behaviour⁵⁹ that did not help easing the tensions.

If we consider a scale concerning recognition policies during the crisis, a “score 3” would stand for a strong policy of recognition, and a “score 0” for the absence of it. As for the previous period, it’s also score 2 for Pakistan’s recognition policy.

To sum up, Pakistan’s deterrence strategy gets score 1 (weak), while its reassurance and recognition policies both get score 2 as during the previous months. Deterrence and reassurance strategies were both weak as the situation did not evolved despite Pervez Musharraf’s attempts to ease tensions. The next step had to be taken by India. And such was the case when India accepted to withdraw some of its troops from the border on 17th October. Then a ceasefire was signed only a year after, on 25th November 2003⁶⁰.

The Crisis in Perspective: the “War on Terror” and the nuclear factor

Fanning the Flames: The “War on Terror”

“You are either one hundred percent with us or one hundred percent against us – there is no grey area”, was US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage’s statement to Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence chief Mahmood Ahmed on 12th September 2001. The 9/11 attack and the ensuing “War on Terror” declared by President G.W. Bush was about to – quite dramatically – alter the

⁵⁹ “The reality is that it is Indian intransigence, the Indian rigidity, the Indian desire towards hegemonian in this area [Kashmir] that is leading to instability” in “Musharraf continued blaming India for rejecting talks on Kashmir”, *Channel NewsAsia*, September 5, 2002.

⁶⁰ « UPDATE 1-India and Pakistan start ceasefire in Kashmir », *Reuters News*, November 25, 2003.

rules of the game of international politics.

Ethnically and culturally very heterogeneous, Pakistan's fragile unity largely relies on Islam as a cohesive force. For that reason, Islamabad had always been keen on supporting Islamic militancy, overtly and covertly, on their soil and abroad – notably in neighbouring Afghanistan, which has strong ties with the Pakistani Pushtuns. The Taliban were viewed favourably by the government and public opinion. However, after 9/11, Pakistan was forced to make a choice – at least officially.

They formally sided with the US and its allies. It is not that they had changed their minds regarding the Taliban or other radical Islamist groups such as Al-Qaeda; but defying the US in this context would have been seen as evidence of their involvement with terrorism. Furthermore, as always, Pakistan's central focus was the rivalry with India. They feared that the US would side with their arch-enemy if they refused to back the War on Terror, and hoped that their alignment with Washington would strengthen them *vis-à-vis* New Delhi (Katz 2011; Mukherjee 2012).

On the other hand, Pakistan did not want to alienate themselves from their Islamist friends, for the reasons mentioned above and also because the latter potentially represented allies against India, notably in the struggle over Kashmir. Therefore, Pakistan's policy in the War on Terror has been ambivalent, overtly supporting the US against the Taliban and al-Qaeda, but at the same time sheltering and covertly supporting the latter against the former.

Under BJP rule, Islam was perceived as a threat to India's political and social integrity, including within the country, where – organised – killings of Muslims were on the rise. After the 13th December attack, India resumed their efforts to have Pakistan considered a rogue – or even a failed – State by the international community, and they broadened their 'politics of brinkmanship'⁶¹ (Desai 2002).

New Delhi's aggressive stance towards Pakistan reached new heights after 9/11, as India's decision to “piggyback its own war on terrorism on America's” (*Ibid.*: 3456) stemmed mostly from Pakistan's Islamic militancy. They adopted a policy of creating presumptions about Pakistan's support to Islamist terrorism, for example in the aftermath of 13th December, instead of leading real investigations. Indeed, India never presented credible evidence that Pakistan was behind the 13th December attack.

In sum, India and Pakistan's involvement in the War on Terror was underpinned by mutual concern over the balance of forces between the two countries, with a view to undermine the other's legitimacy in the eyes of foreign powers. This situation heightened the tensions, as India started pushing their 'politics of brinkmanship' and Pakistan engaged in double-dealing with the

⁶¹ Coined during the Cold War, the 'politics of brinkmanship' refer to the aggressive policy of pushing dangerous events, seemingly leading to the verge of war, in order to yield the most advantageous results.

US on the one hand, and the Taliban and Al-Qaeda on the other.

Another key factor in the development of the crisis was the nuclear factor – as both countries possess nuclear capability.

Mutual nuclear deterrence as a key factor

The consequences of nuclear proliferation have been a matter for debate for decades, and the relations between India and Pakistan are of great interest for international relations analysts concerned with the nuclear factor (Hummel 2008). Pessimists emphasize the risks of conflicts: the nuclear symmetry would allow any nuclear State to launch an attack against another, wreaking havoc on an unprecedented scale. On the contrary, optimists think proliferation can reduce conflicts as symmetry deters a State from launching a nuclear war, since the other state could retaliate with nuclear power (Suzuki 2015).

The 2001-2002 India-Pakistan standoff is the first crisis of the 21st century involving two nuclear-capable states. This factor was a central concern of the international community. As tensions were escalating along the LoC, foreign officials made efforts to ease the tensions from both sides. In this regard, it is interesting to compare Indian and Pakistani nuclear doctrines.

Published in August 1999, the National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine presents India's nuclear policy, which is based on the concept of Credible Minimum Deterrence. It is based on No First Use (NFU), with a second-strike capability. On the other hand, Pakistan did not publicly develop a nuclear doctrine after its first nuclear tests in 1998, thus creating ambiguity around it – itself a part of the deterrence strategy. However, then-Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar declared on 25th November 1999: “Minimum nuclear deterrence will remain the guiding principle of our nuclear strategy”. As for the NFU doctrine, the country did not adopt this policy. Therefore, Pakistan could theoretically launch a nuclear attack first. Its foreign policy being largely India-centric, Islamabad's nuclear doctrine was developed mainly to deter any aggression – nuclear or conventional – from New Delhi (Chakma 2006), as they feel insecure vis-à-vis their much bigger rival.

During the crisis, India deployed its Prithvi missiles in East Punjab, and Pakistan responded in kind with its nuclear-capable ballistic missiles. In April 2002, President Musharraf declared in an interview to *Der Spiegel*: “as a last resort the use of atom bomb is also possible”; then tests were conducted with the Ghauri missile, which was a “great success” according to President Musharraf. These tests and declarations show the presence of the nuclear factor during the standoff.

As both India and Pakistan deployed their nuclear-capable missiles, it proves that tensions were escalating between the two neighbours. However, the nuclear factor also played an important role

in the resolution of the crisis. Both countries' nuclear doctrines are based on the concept of Credible Minimum Deterrence; however, Pakistan's policy is more aggressive as they did not adopt NFU. This factor was a key element, as both countries possessed a comparable amount of nuclear warheads. President Musharraf's policy – notably influenced by the US –, based on reassurance and firmness, together with Pakistan's nuclear capability, prevented New Delhi from launching an offensive. The symbolic costs were also high for India to launch any conventional attack against Islamabad. As far as Pakistani leaders, they had an interest in reassuring India: although Pakistan had the nuclear weapon, India had the advantage in conventional military capabilities. Thus, the symbolic costs of launching an attack first were not as high for Islamabad, but the risk would be important in terms of military losses.

Since the beginning of 2000s, Pakistan and India have expanded their nuclear capabilities, doubling their stockpiles between 2007 and 2015⁶². According to SIPRI, Pakistan had in 2014 between 100 and 120 warheads while India had between 90 and 110. We can see that the 2001-2002 crisis reinforced Pakistan's idea that mutual deterrence is effective in its rivalry with India.

Crises between India and Pakistan shed light on the 'proliferation debate'. The conflict was already avoided between New Delhi and Islamabad during the 1990 crisis thanks to the uncertainty and ambiguity over each other's nuclear capabilities (Ganguly & Hagerty 2005). The 1999 Kargil War did escalate to armed conflict, but mutual deterrence largely limited its scale, unlike pre-nuclear wars such as 1971 (Hummel 2008). Regarding the 2001-2002 crisis, the optimists' analysis seems relevant as well: India's aggressive stance did not yield as much as they hoped. Indeed, President Musharraf made accommodating statements, but was not impressed by India's show of force, and the crisis was mostly confined to the declarative realm. We can then argue that mutual deterrence greatly diminished the threat of all-out war in South Asia, as one side can hardly ignore the other's nuclear retaliation capability – and, by the same token, one's own strength. This analysis can be extended to crises between nuclear-capable States in general, *provided their nuclear capabilities are roughly equal*, where mutual deterrence is likely to produce comparable, containing effects.

Conclusion

The conflict was triggered mainly because of the historical context – the long-standing, deeply entrenched tension between India and Pakistan –, which also made it harder for the crisis to quickly cool off. The 2001-2002 standoff was underpinned by the constant concern of both States with each other's strength, and by strong symbolic implications as each nation consider the

⁶² « Pakistan has more nukes than India, shows new infographic », *The Times of India*, March 10, 2015.

other their arch-enemy. Thus, the image each country sought to project – to the international community and to their own public opinion – played a key role in the escalation of the crisis. Considering India as the formal initiator, we argue that they attacked first because decision-makers felt that after the Parliament attack, if they did not react strongly, the symbolic image of the Indian State would be undermined. The attack could not remain unpunished, even if it was not carried ‘officially’ by Pakistan.

From our analysis, the easing of Pakistan’s deterrence strategy – at least at the rhetorical level –, together with elements of reassurance and positive symbolic declarations, was concomitant with a significant cooling of the tensions; 12th January and President Musharraf’s speech mark this turning point. These compromises may have proven enough to effectively defuse the crisis, had Pakistan’s behaviour been limited to the official positions and actions of the state. However, such was not the case, as both the beginning and the end of the crisis – between peace and war – were triggered by unofficial/covert operations, which Pakistan, despite its claims, did support, even if indirectly. Unofficial behaviour therefore seems to have been a major factor in the bellicose end of the crisis. Lastly, the distinctive historical (and religious) context in which the crisis took place explains much of the rapid escalation, and the slow easing of the tensions.

Finally, the 2001-2002 standoff must be put in perspective. The international context of the “War on Terror” and the nuclear factor both impacted the course of the crisis – albeit very differently.

In the post-9/11 context, both countries’ involvement in the “War on Terror” was focused on undermining each other’s legitimacy, which heightened the tensions. India pushed further its ‘politics of brinkmanship’, while Pakistan played an ambiguous game, supporting the War on Terror and sheltering some of its main targets at the same time.

On the other hand, mutual deterrence, allowed by the balance of nuclear forces, proved efficient in limiting the scale of the conflict, as was the case in the 1990 crisis and – to a lesser extent – the 1999 Kargil War. India’s aggressive stance did not yield much as Pakistan, conscious of their own nuclear strength, were not impressed. We then argue that mutual nuclear deterrence played, and should keep playing a key role in containing India-Pakistan conflicts, as well as conflicts between States with roughly equal nuclear capabilities.

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