

International Relations of India since 1947:

The Quest for Major Power Status

Anne Viguiier

Inalco

Trieste 2024

Introduction

Aspiration to a position of great power (that they don't have yet) :

Objective reasons :

India is the world's most populous country but still has an undersized economy.

Historical reasons:

When the current world order was established India was a British colony: it was unable to gain a permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

Now, India aspires to :

- A return to the role it played for centuries as a civilisation.
- Revenge for colonial humiliation

And claim to have something unique to contribute to the world.

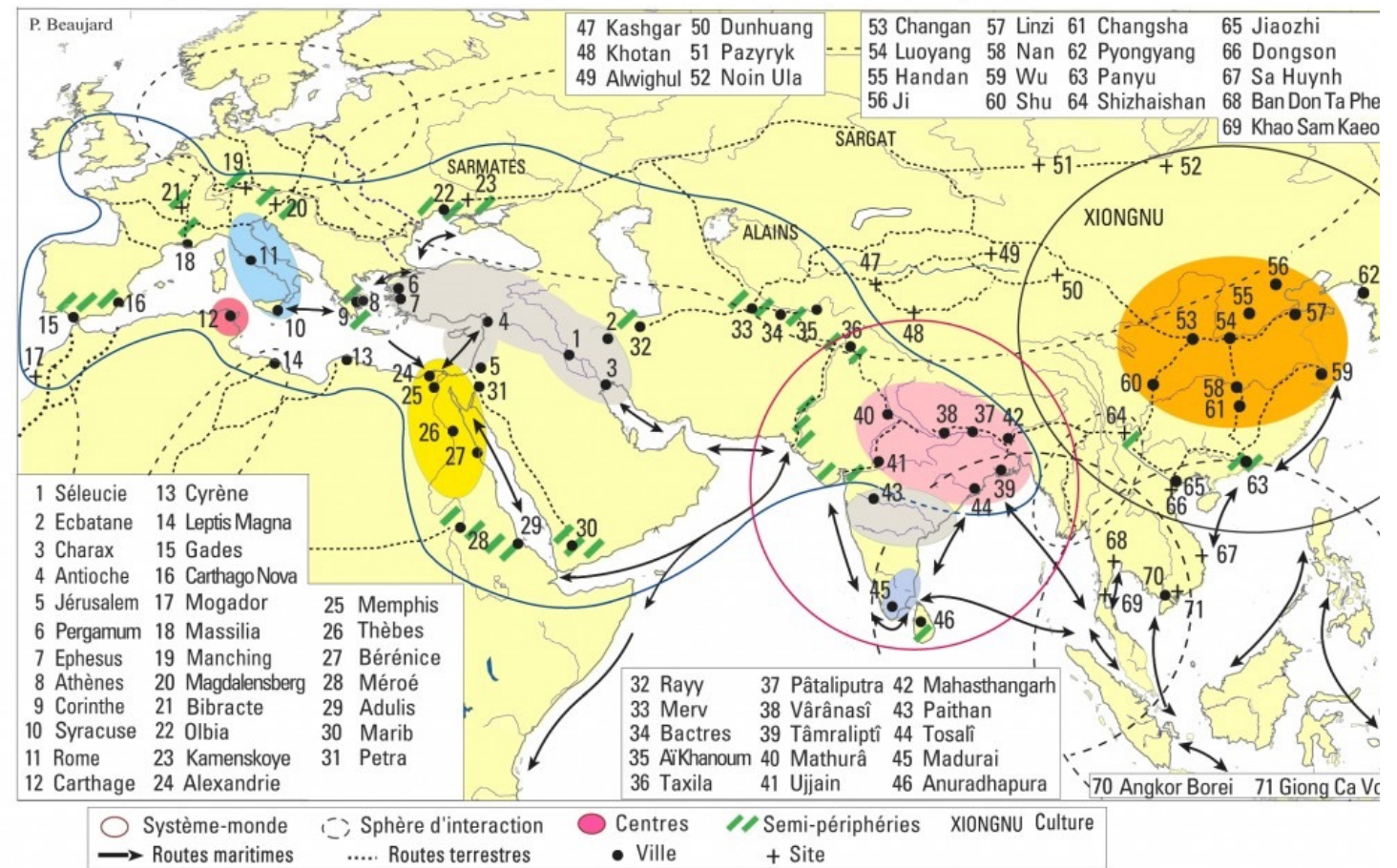
I. A brief review of the long history of relations between India and the rest of the world

A) India has been an attractive space, a reservoir of wealth and wisdom for centuries.



As far back as Antiquity:

- Economic exchanges (trade balance very favourable)
- Cultural exchanges (spread of Hinduism and bouddhism)

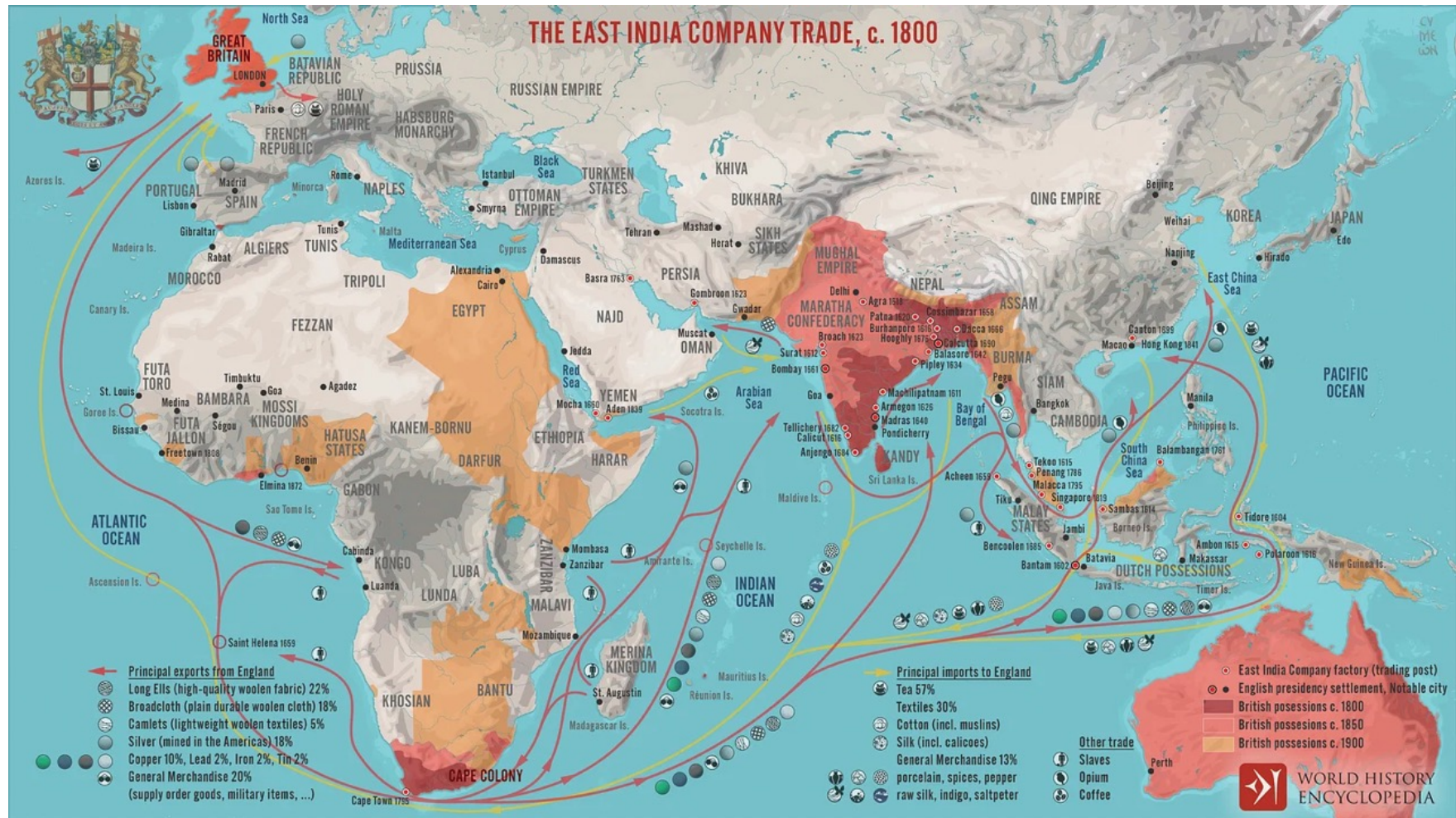


Afro-Eurasian world-systems between 350 BC and the of the first millenium AC

In the Middle Age, Islam arrives in India by sea and land through long-term exchanges with Arabia, Central Asia and the Persian World.
From India, it was spread to Indonesia



India, a crucial pivot for the British imperial economy



B) The colonial period marks a turning point for South Asia: colonial India is deprived of a foreign policy

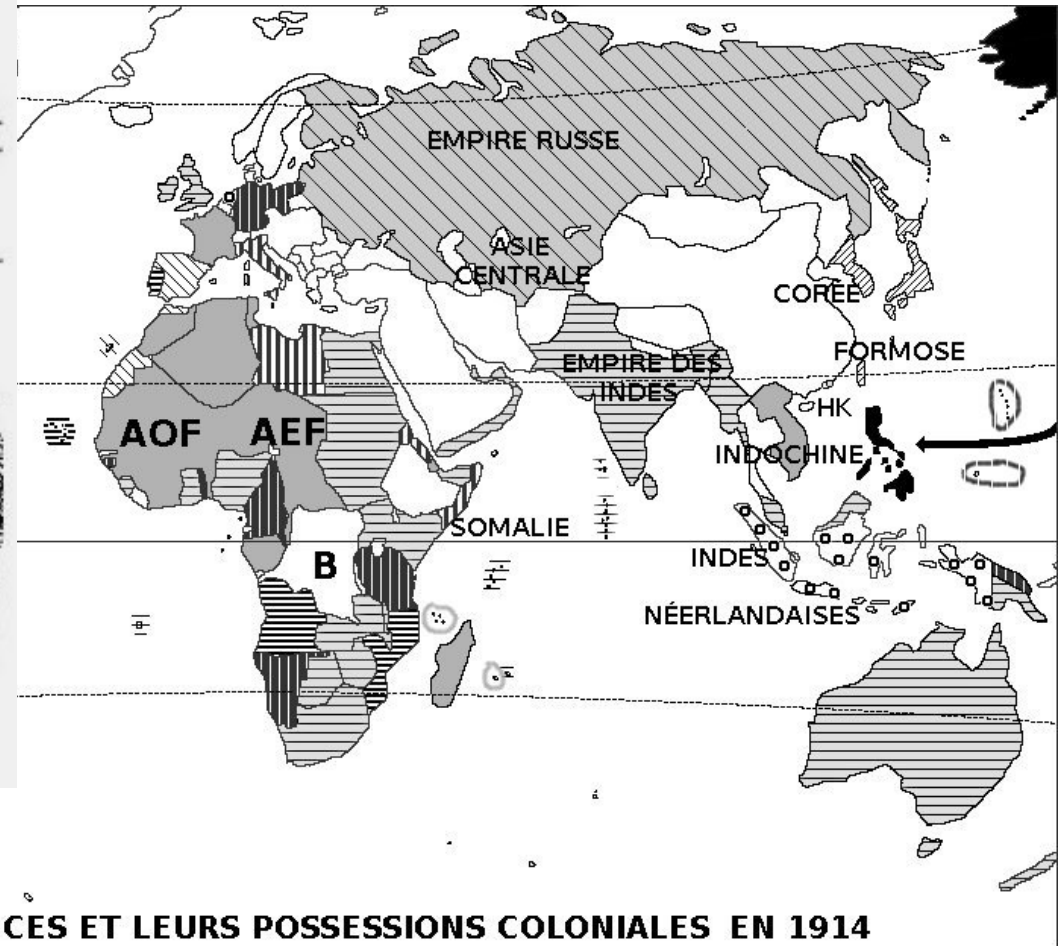
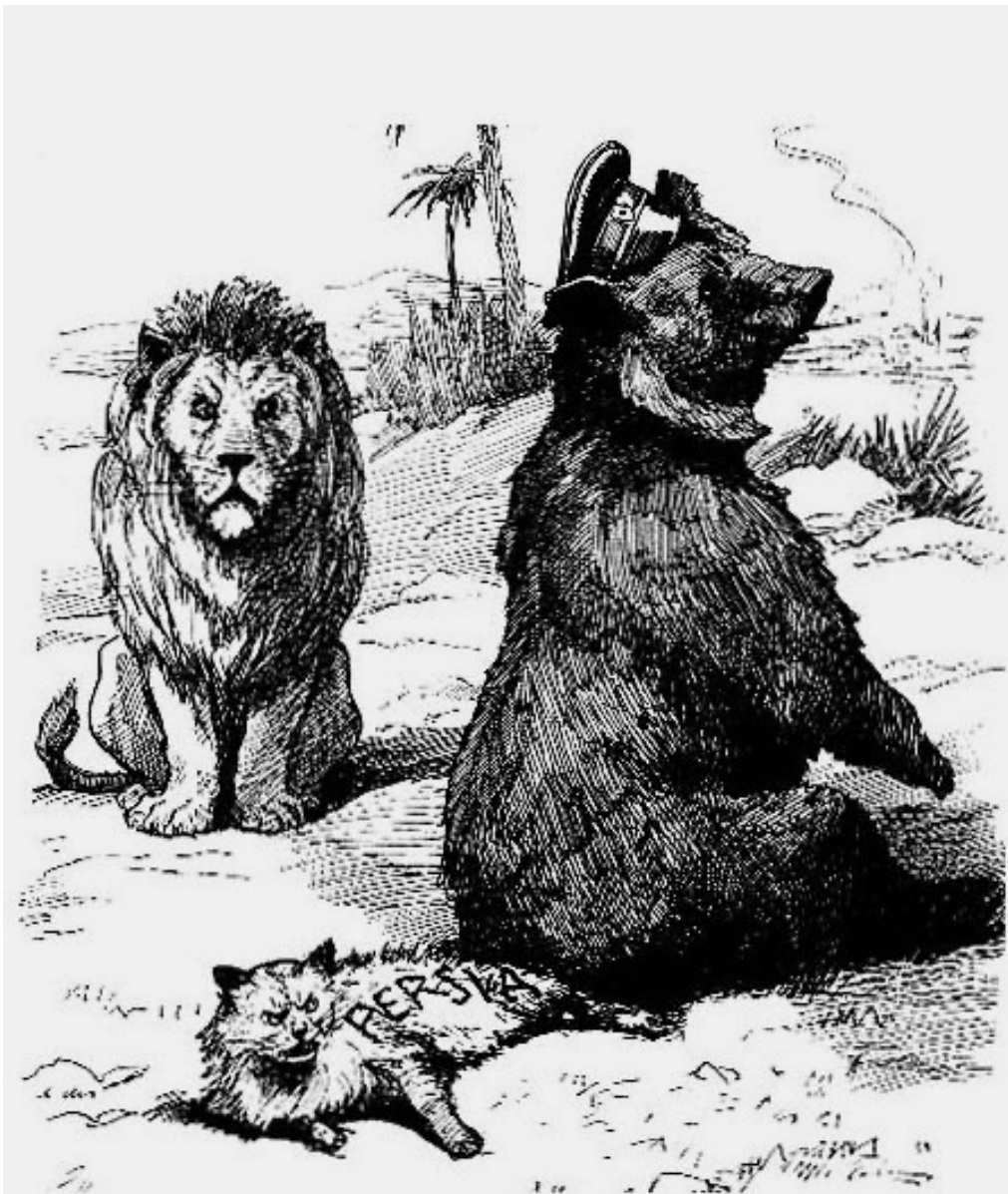
1) Serving the empire

- Soldiers
- Essential products for trade (opium, indigo, cotton)
- Workforce for use throughout the empire

2) Paradoxically closed to the world

The result: border issues that remain unresolved today

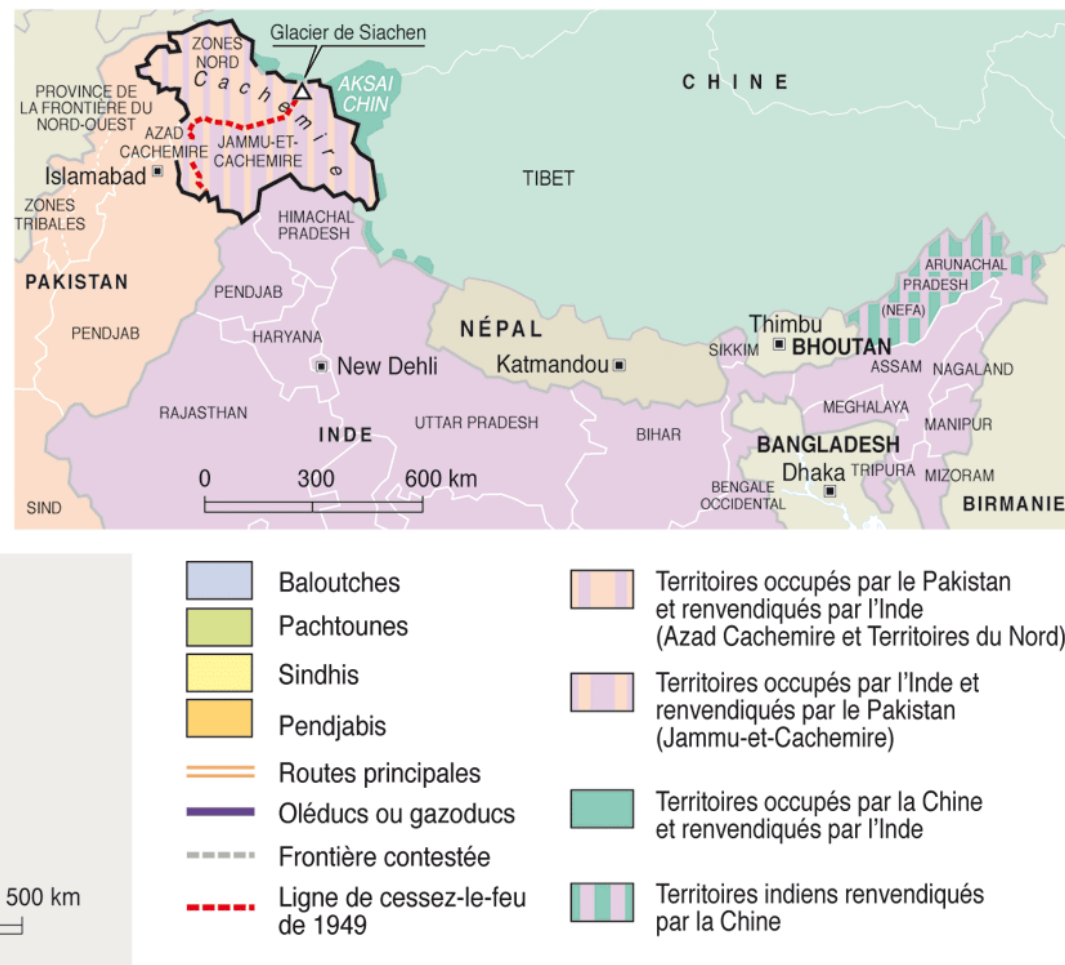
The Great Game in Central Asia



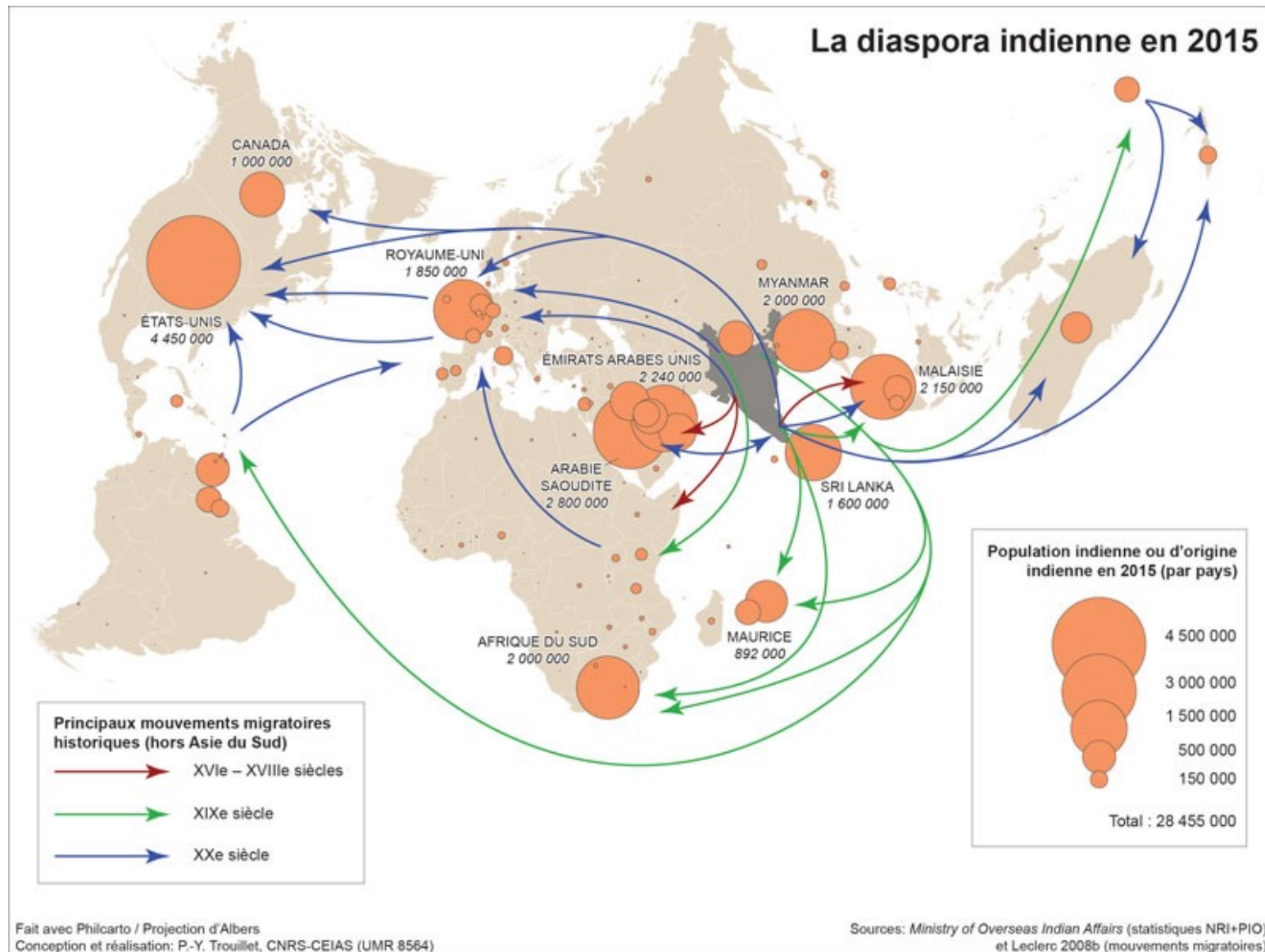
LES GRANDES PUISSANCES ET LEURS POSSESSIONS COLONIALES EN 1914

 Royaume-Uni	 Allemagne	 Belgique	 Espagne	 États-Unis	 Japon
 France	 Portugal	 Italie	 Pays - Bas	 (et influence)	 Russie

Xavier Martin 2008



3) The diaspora: a new way of opening up to the world



Over 2 million Indians left the country between 1850 and 1914

II. India in the Cold War



Partition de l'Inde, 1947

État à majorité hindoue

État à majorité musulmane

1971 Indépendance du Pakistan oriental devenant le Bangladesh

Capitales

Personnes déplacées

→ Réfugiés hindous (9 millions)

← Réfugiés musulmans (6 millions)

Zones contestées du Cachemire

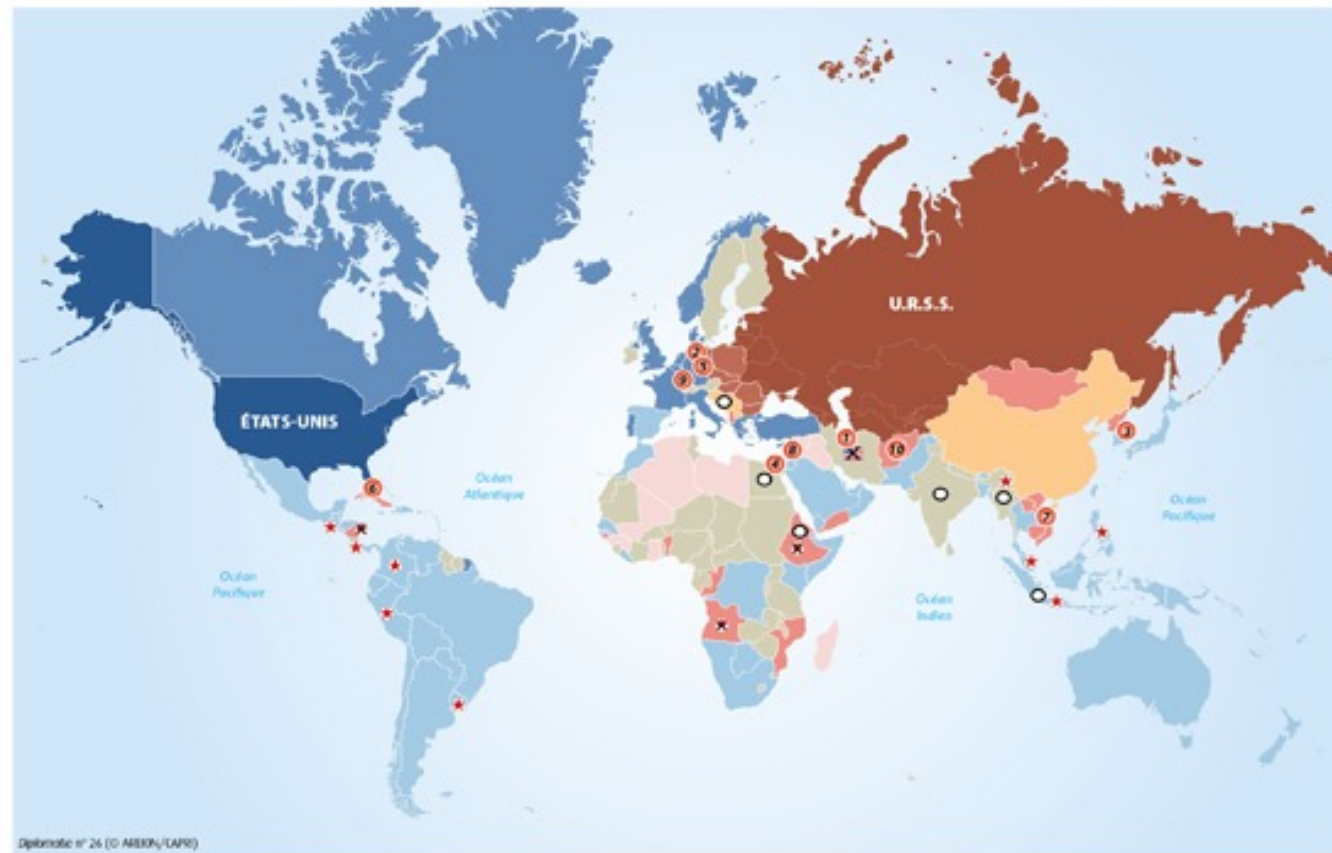
Conflit sino-indien 1962 (zone revendiquée par la Chine)

Établissements français dans l'Inde intégrés à l'Union de 1952 à 1956

Inde portugaise jusqu'en 1961

A) India and non-alignment

LA GUERRE FROIDE : ÉTAT DU MONDE EN 1980



Diplomatie n° 24 (© ARBON/CAPRI)

Le bloc communiste en 1980

- Union soviétique
- Pays allié de l'U.R.S.S. membre du pacte de Varsovie
- Pays allié aligné avec l'U.R.S.S.
- Pays dans la sphère d'influence soviétique
- Autre pays communiste
- Présence dans le pays d'une guérilla communiste

Le bloc capitaliste en 1980

- États-Unis d'Amérique
- Pays membre de l'OTAN avec les États-Unis
- Pays allié aligné avec les États-Unis
- Présence dans le pays d'une guérilla anticomuniste
- Pays ayant cessé d'être l'allié des États-Unis

Les pays neutres en 1980

- Pays neutre et/ou non aligné
- Pays initiateur de la politique de non-alignement
- 1 Les 10 principaux événements qui auraient pu entraîner une troisième guerre mondiale (voir chronologie page 55)

Source : CAPRI

Bandung (Java), 1955



Nasser

Sukarno

Nehru



Jawaharlal Nehru (Prime Minister of India from 1947 to 1964) was the real architect of Indian foreign policy.

1) The Indian definition of non-alignment :

- Non-alignment does not mean neutrality or neutralism
- Non-alignment is not equidistance
- It is not building a 3rd bloc as an intermediary between the East and West.

Two periods :

- Before the war with China (1962)

India supported decolonisation movements.

India was poor but a significant world nation and played a mediating role in specific crises.

- After 1962

India reviewed its security options, allocating a larger share of its budget to military expenditure. Nehru's death in 1964 = the end of a certain idealism.

2) A policy little appreciated by the United States

At independence, India represented a potential: 350 million inhabitants. It was at the crossroads of the Euro-Western and Far Eastern worlds.

Nehru was haunted until his death by the theme of the oneness of the world: this is the source of Indian multilateralism

But this opening up to the world was accompanied by an economic retreat. This strategy is hardly appreciated by Western countries, particularly the United States.

The Americans did, however, contribute to development through deliveries of agricultural products. From 1951 to 1966), American grants and loans accounted for 52% of all authorised aid (8.4% for the Soviets !).



3) The importance of regional constraints

The Pakistani constraint:

War in 1948, 1965, 1971

The Chinese constraint

India Recognised Mao's government and Tibet as part of China and, at the same time, welcomed the Dalai Lama in 1959

Above all, there was the unresolved border issue of the colonial era war, with the Chinese invasion in 1962

4) Indira Gandhi and the rapprochement with the USSR

Indira Gandhi (Nehru's daughter) came to power in 1966.

Her reign was marked by a policy of power, with two periods:

- Before 1971, the continuation of Nehru's line
- After 1971, there were increasingly closer relations with the USSR.



Indira Gandhi (1917-1984)



Conclusion:

During the Cold War, Pakistan and India struggled to assert themselves on the international stage.

India had some influence thanks to its two leaders, Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

But it was already adopting a singular position: its desire for independence implied discussions with everyone, according to its interests.

III. India's Foreign Policy since 1991

A) The main principles of India's post-Cold War foreign policy: all-out bilateralism

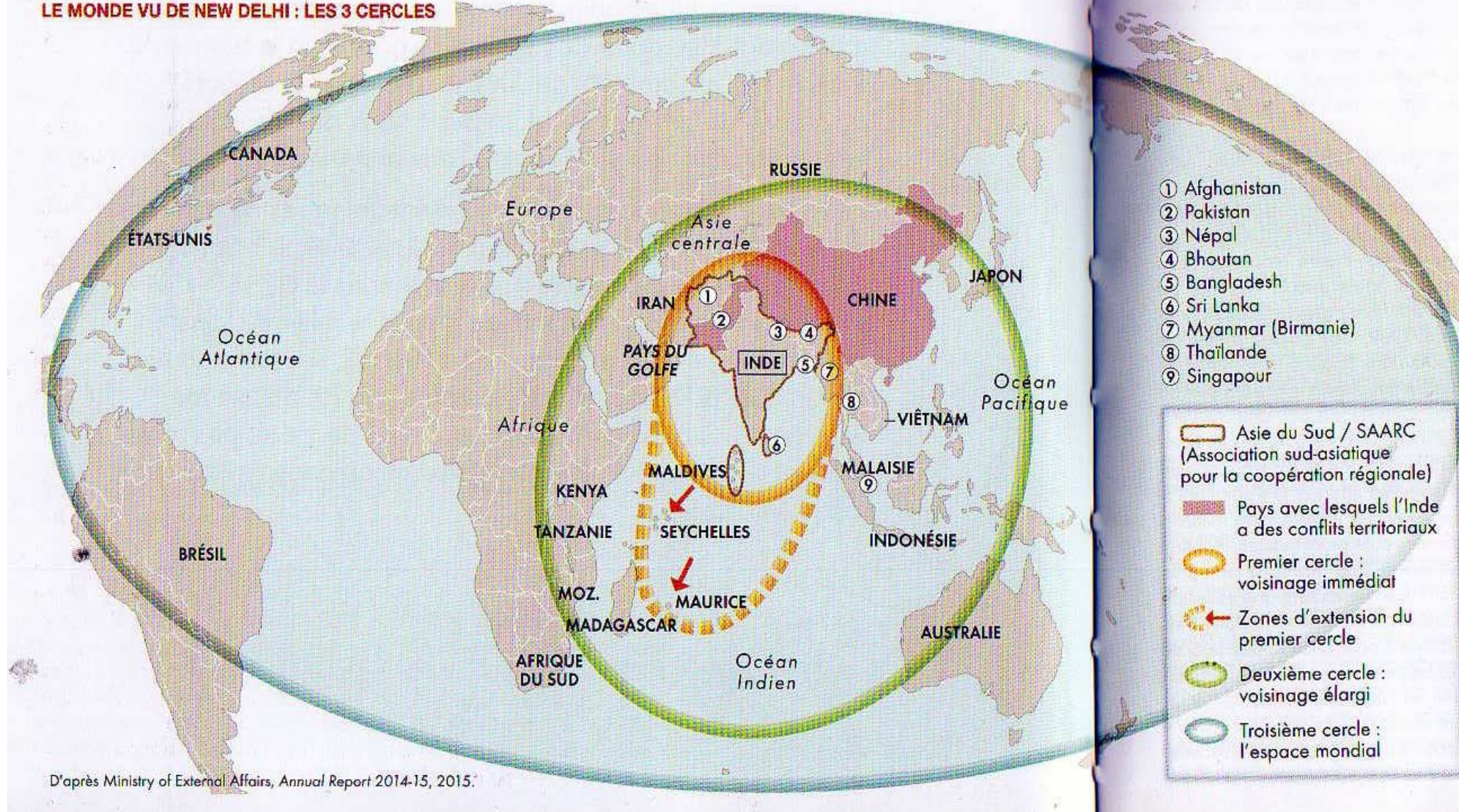
Today's official military doctrine : "defensive defence", non-aggression and the maintenance of "credible" conventional and nuclear deterrent forces.

The “Gujral Doctrine”

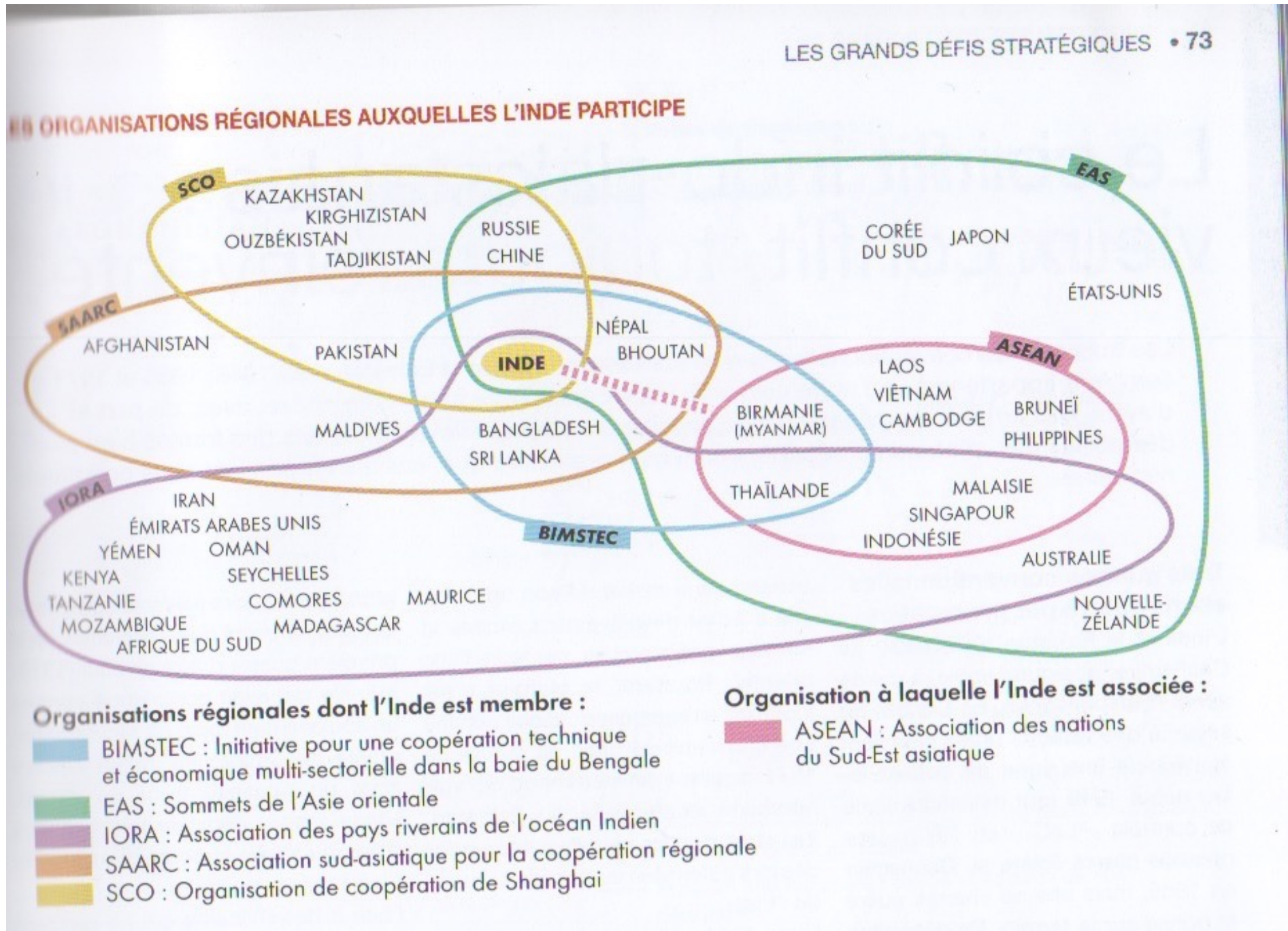
(Inder Kumar Gujral was a senior foreign minister in the 1989-90 and 1996-97 governments and then Prime Minister in 1997-1998).

3 circles of influence

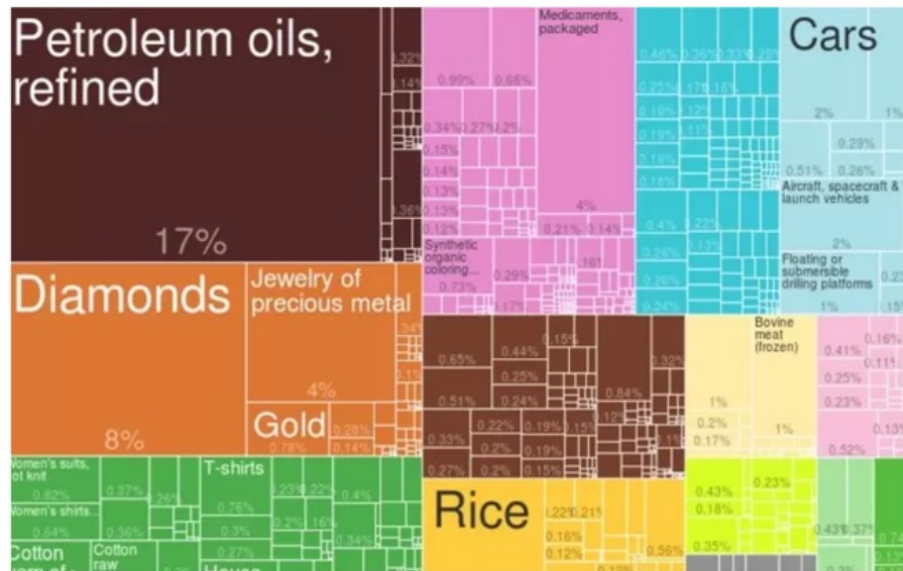
LE MONDE VU DE NEW DELHI : LES 3 CERCLES



Pragmatism or opportunism ? India has signed agreements with a large number of partners that may seem difficult to reconcile

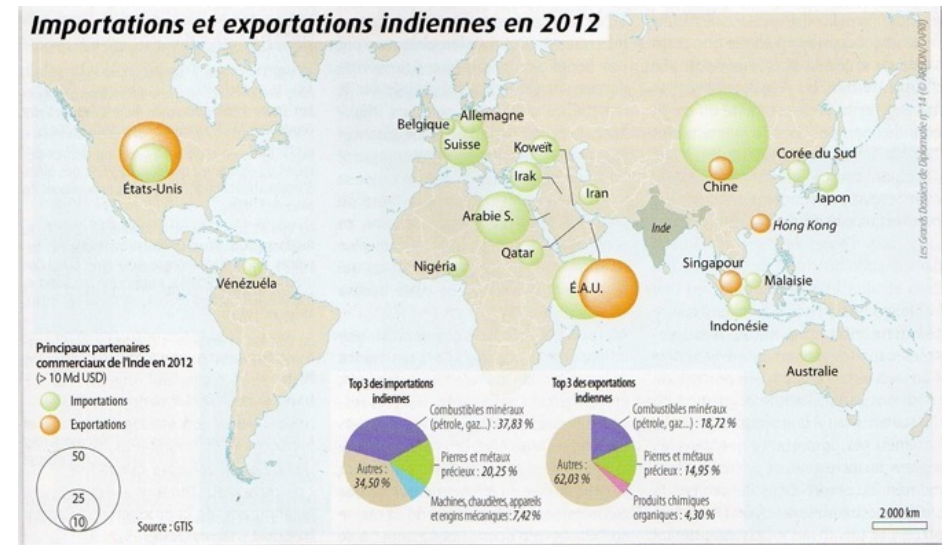


External trade of India



lepetitjournal.com Bombay 06/04/2022

Importation and exportation (2012)



All this is not the result of changing policy,
but of economic and military needs.

Military needs

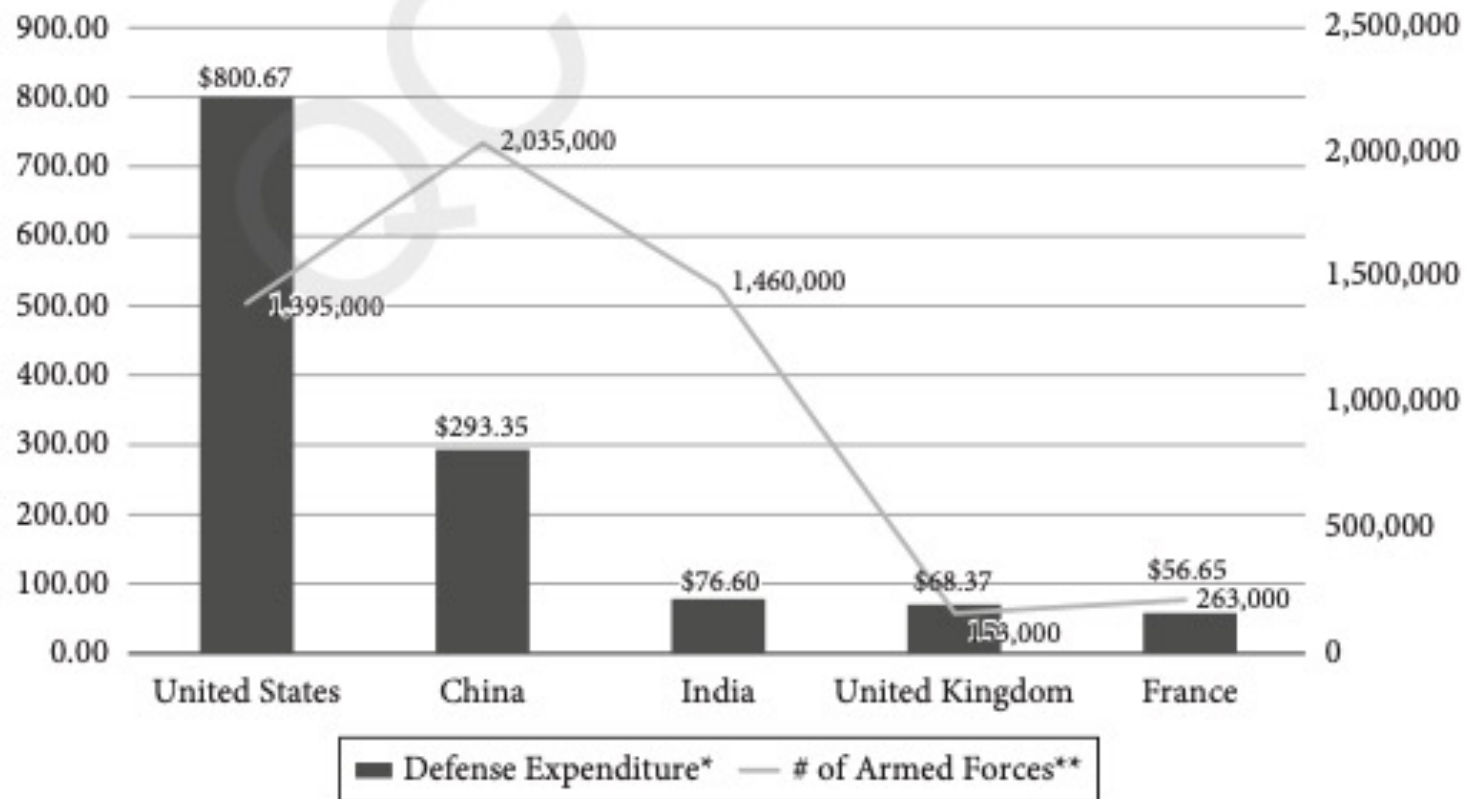


Figure 3.1. Top five military spending countries, the percent of military spending in their GDP, and the size of their armed forces.

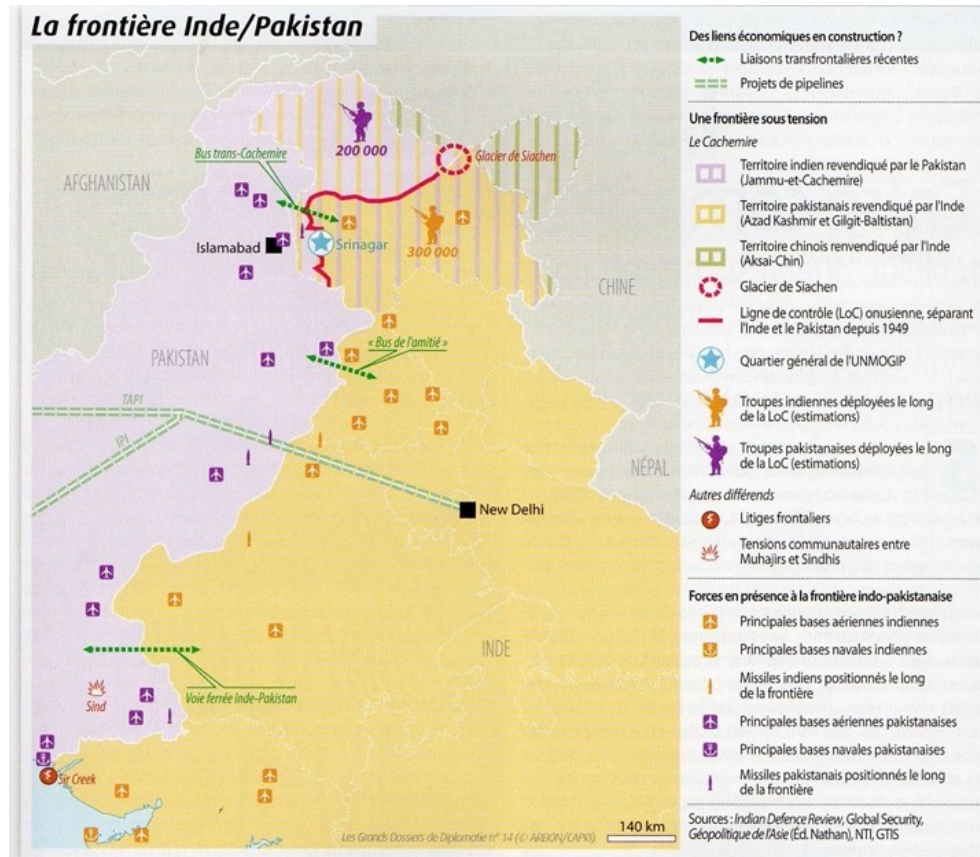
* Current U.S. million dollars.

Source: The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 2022* and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *Arms Transfers Database, 2022*.

Compiled and adapted by Mohammed Yusuf Yilmaz and Daniel Smit.

Source : T.V. PAUL, *The Unfinished Quest India's Search for Major Power Status from Nehru to Modi*, Oxford University Press, 2024

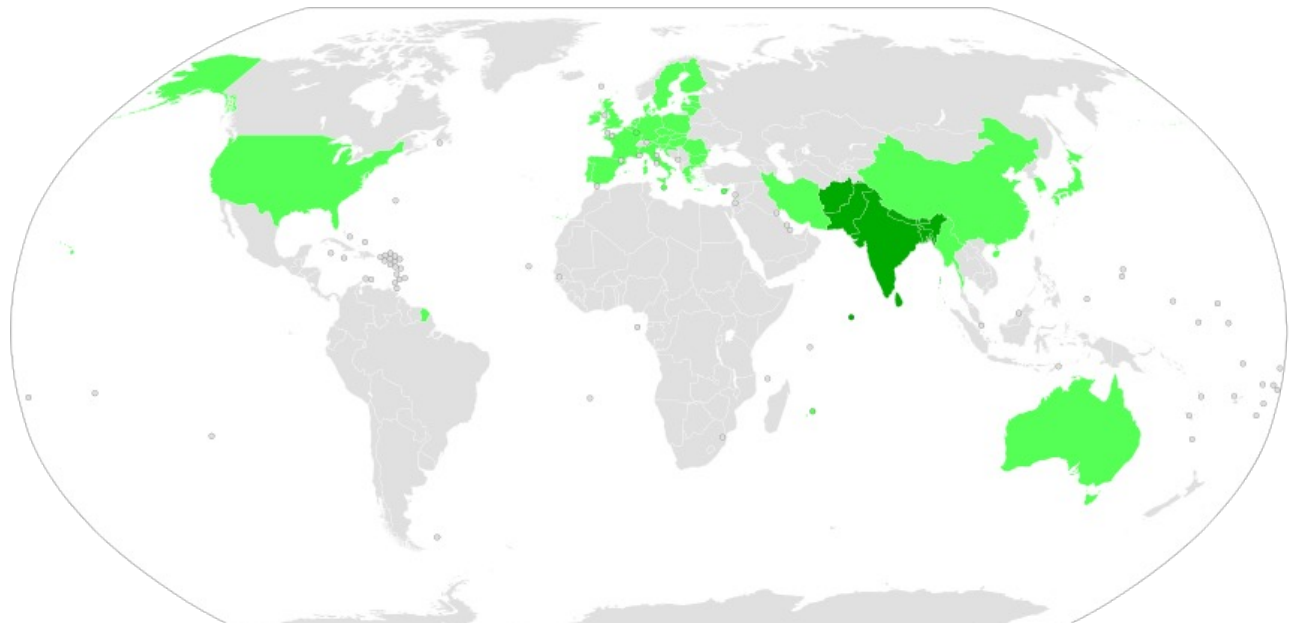
To secure its immediate surroundings



B) The 3 circles

1) The first circle : South Asia and the Indian Ocean

South Asia



- SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) created in 1985

21% of the world's population

2004, South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) but...

a fairly meagre track record.

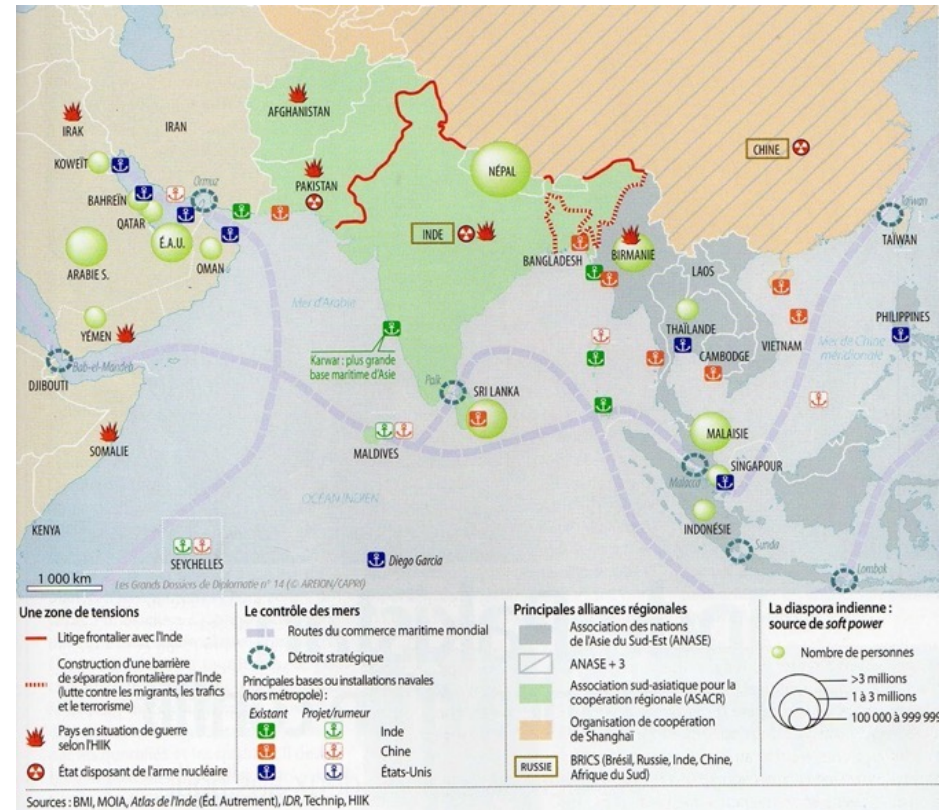


- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif
- in New Delhi on May 26, 2014, during the investiture of the new Indian Prime Minister



And Indian Ocean

- Competition with China but joint naval manoeuvres with the fleet of the People's Republic of China in 2007
- Bilateral General Security Agreement for the Exchange of Military Information (GSOMIA) signed with the United States in 2002.
- Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) in 2013
- Maritime treaties with Myanmar (1986) and Bangladesh (2015)





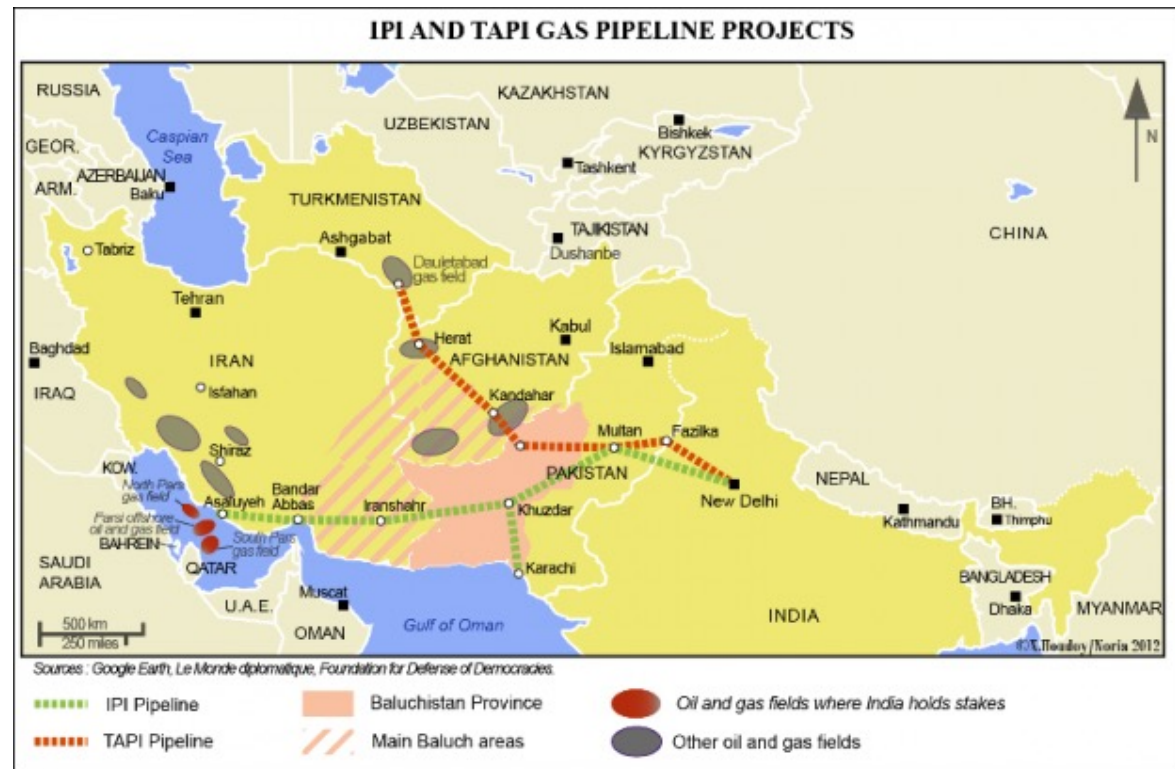
Indian Ocean Rim Association
(IORA), 1997

**23 Member States and 11
Dialogue Partners**



2) The 2nd circle

Vital issues relating to
gas and oil supplies



Central Asia



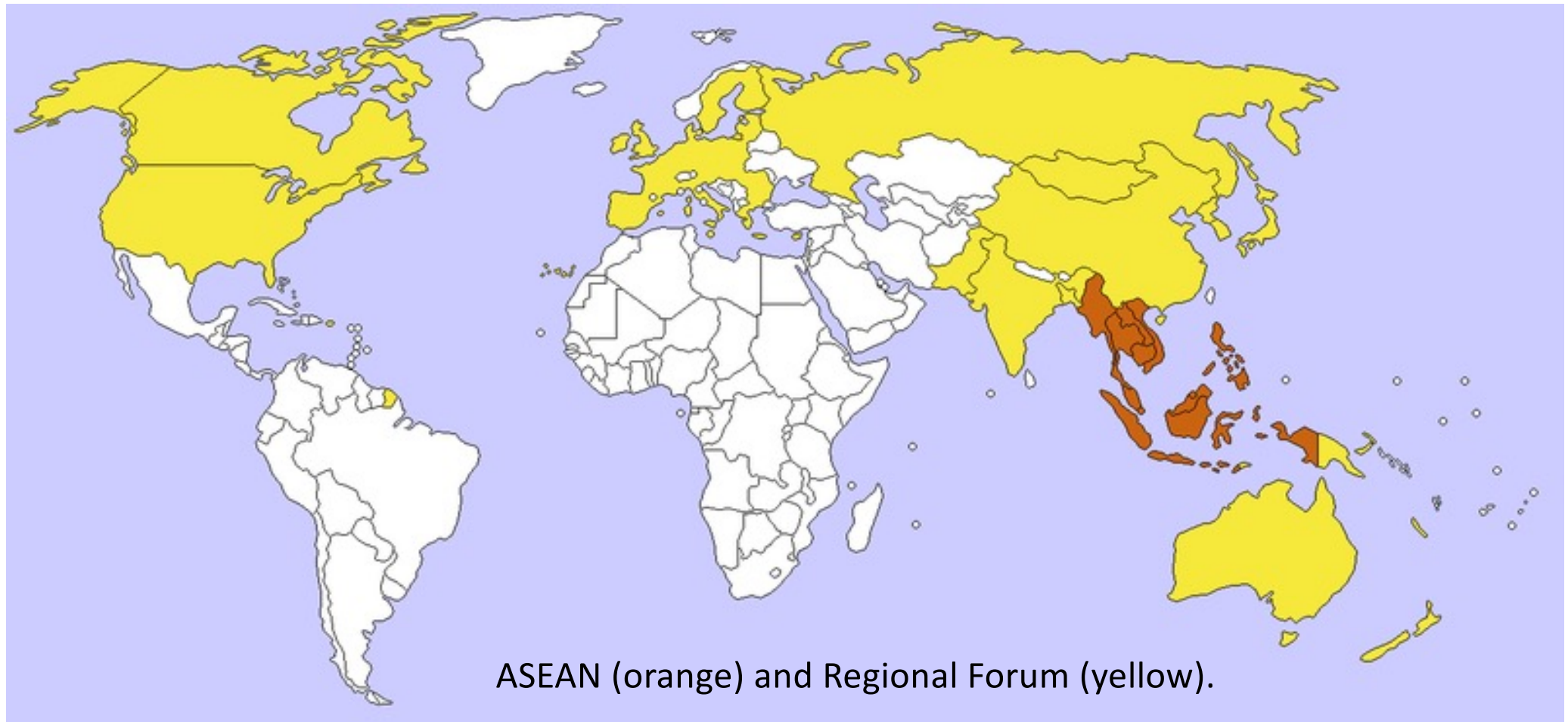
Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2012

Towards the Middle East

A free trade zone was created in 2004 between India and the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (6 monarchies)



« Look East » Policy (1991) and « Act East » Policy (2014), with South-East Asia)



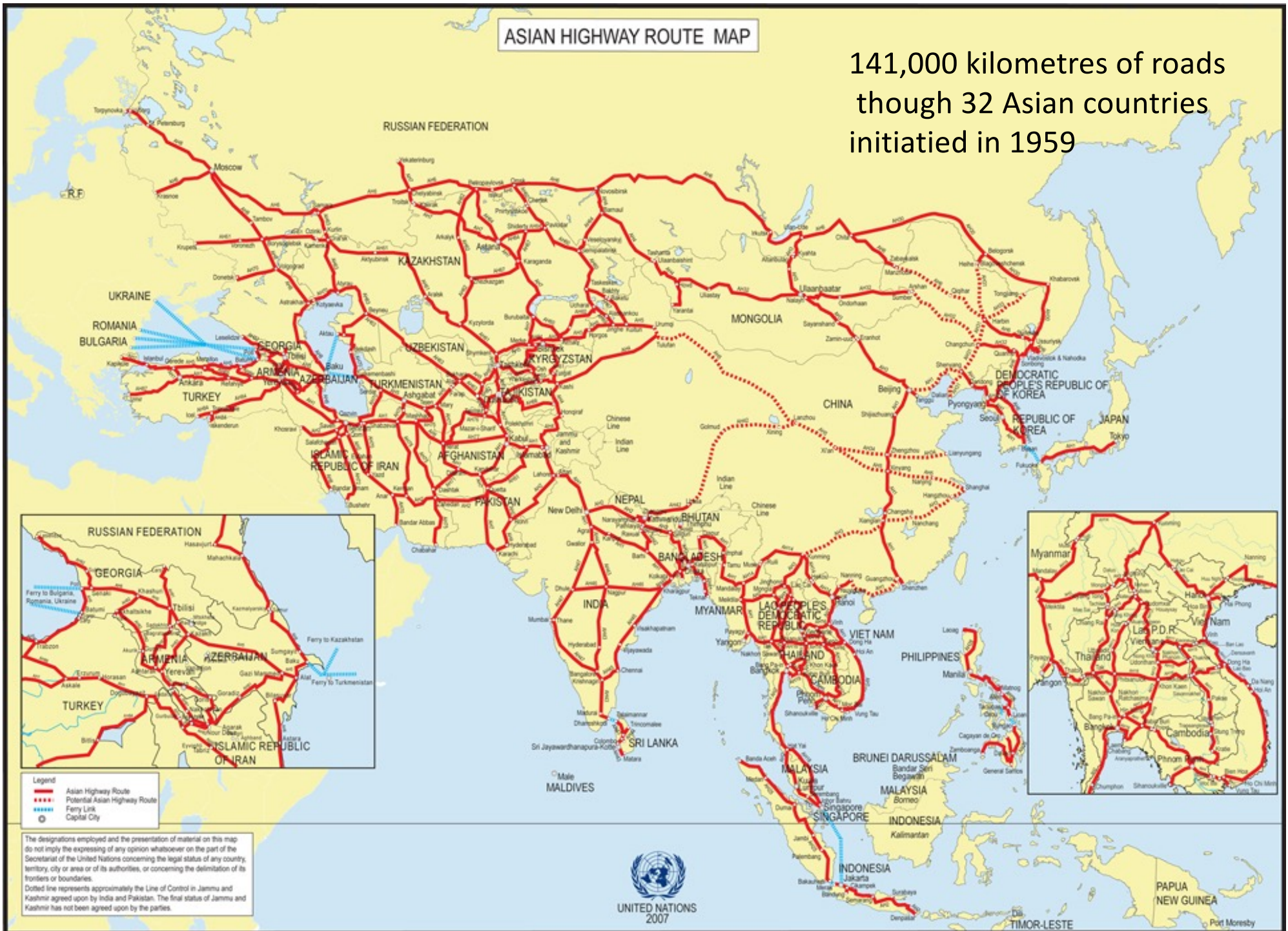
The European Union participates as a single entity.

India is part of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (AIFTA). The final treaty was signed in 2009.



ASIAN HIGHWAY ROUTE MAP

141,000 kilometres of roads
though 32 Asian countries
initiated in 1959



BIMST-EC created in 1997

(Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)

to establish economic cooperation between states bordering the Bay of Bengal

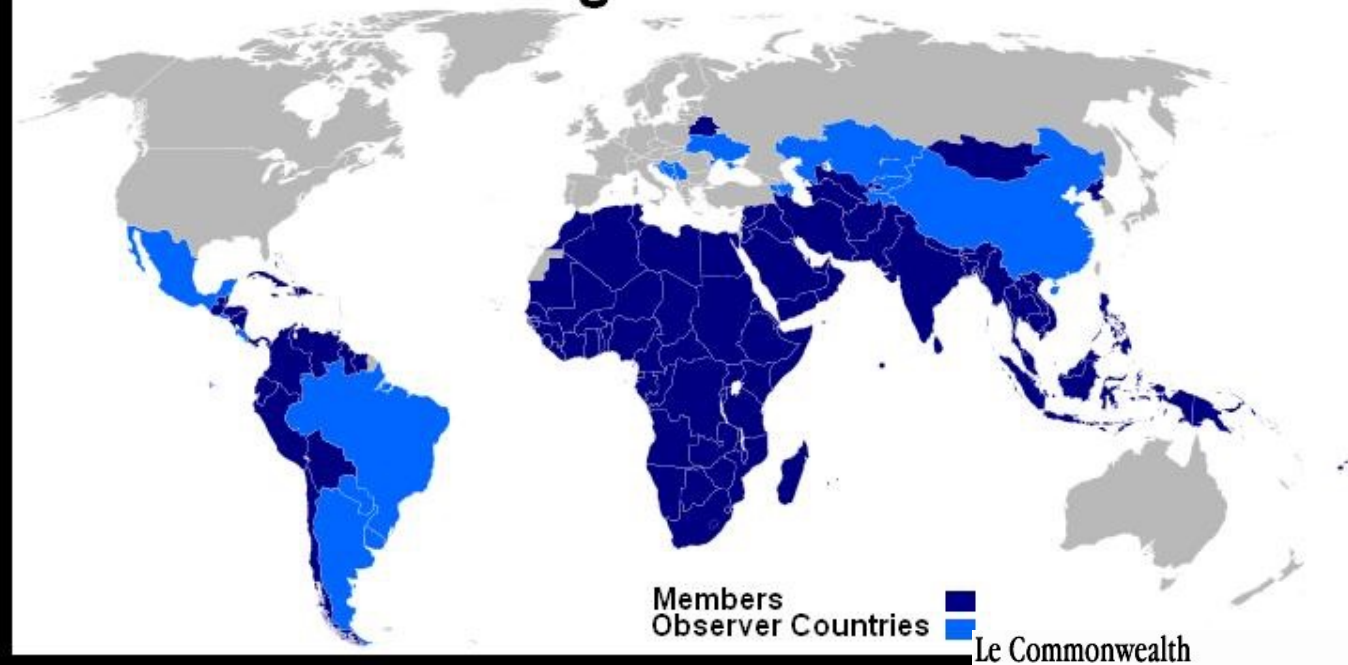


BIMSTEC

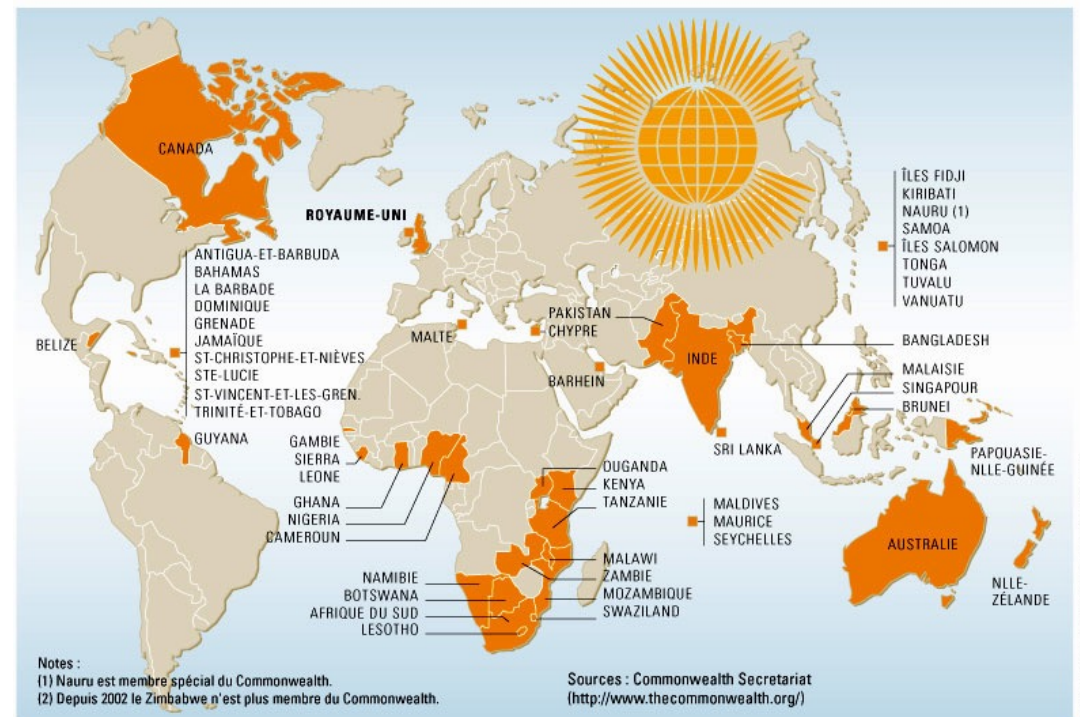


3) The 3rd circle

Non-Aligned Movement



Old Alliances...



Closer ties with the United States



Obama, invité d'honneur pour le Republic Day le 26 janvier 2015
assiste au défilé militaire.

But Russia remains our "most loyal ally".

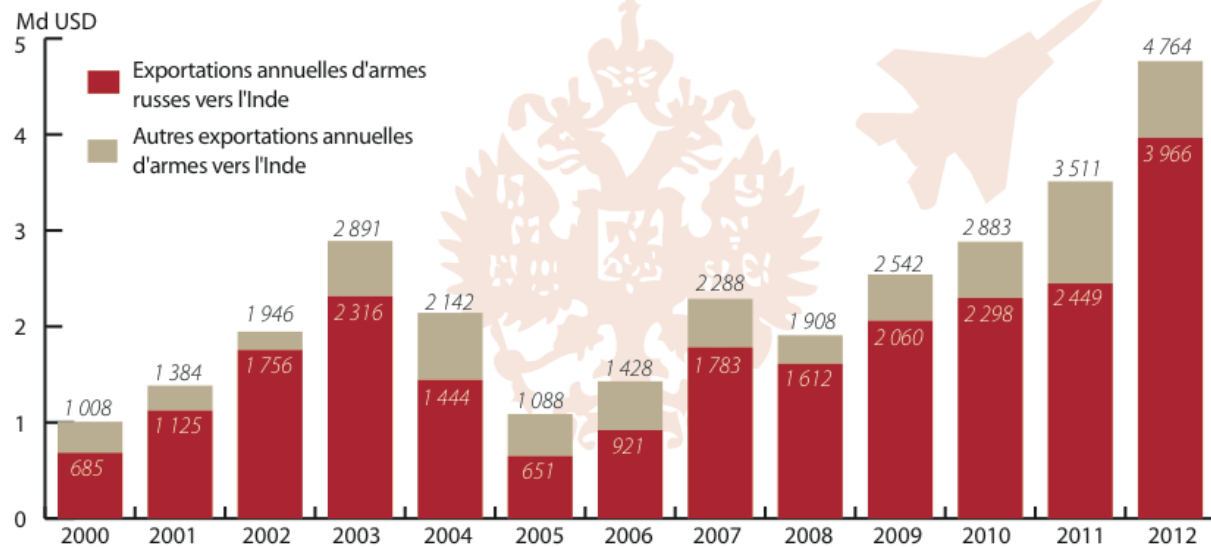
Putin/Modi meeting in December 2014 :

Narendra Modi declared that "Russia is India's closest friend" and its "privileged strategic partner".

Décember 2021: « During Putin's visit India and Russia signed **28 MoUs** on several different areas including **cooperation on outer space, defense, and energy security** involving government departments and commercial organizations of both countries. Among the agreements and MoUs signed during the visit was an existing agreement for the [joint production](#) of around 600,000 AK-203 assault rifles at a manufacturing facility in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and an extended [pact on military cooperation](#) for 10 years from 2021 to 2031. Despite the fact that India has been trying to diversify its defense trade partners, Russia continues to be an important player, maintaining a dominance of about 70 percent of the Indian defense inventory. » *The Diplomat*, 14 december 2021



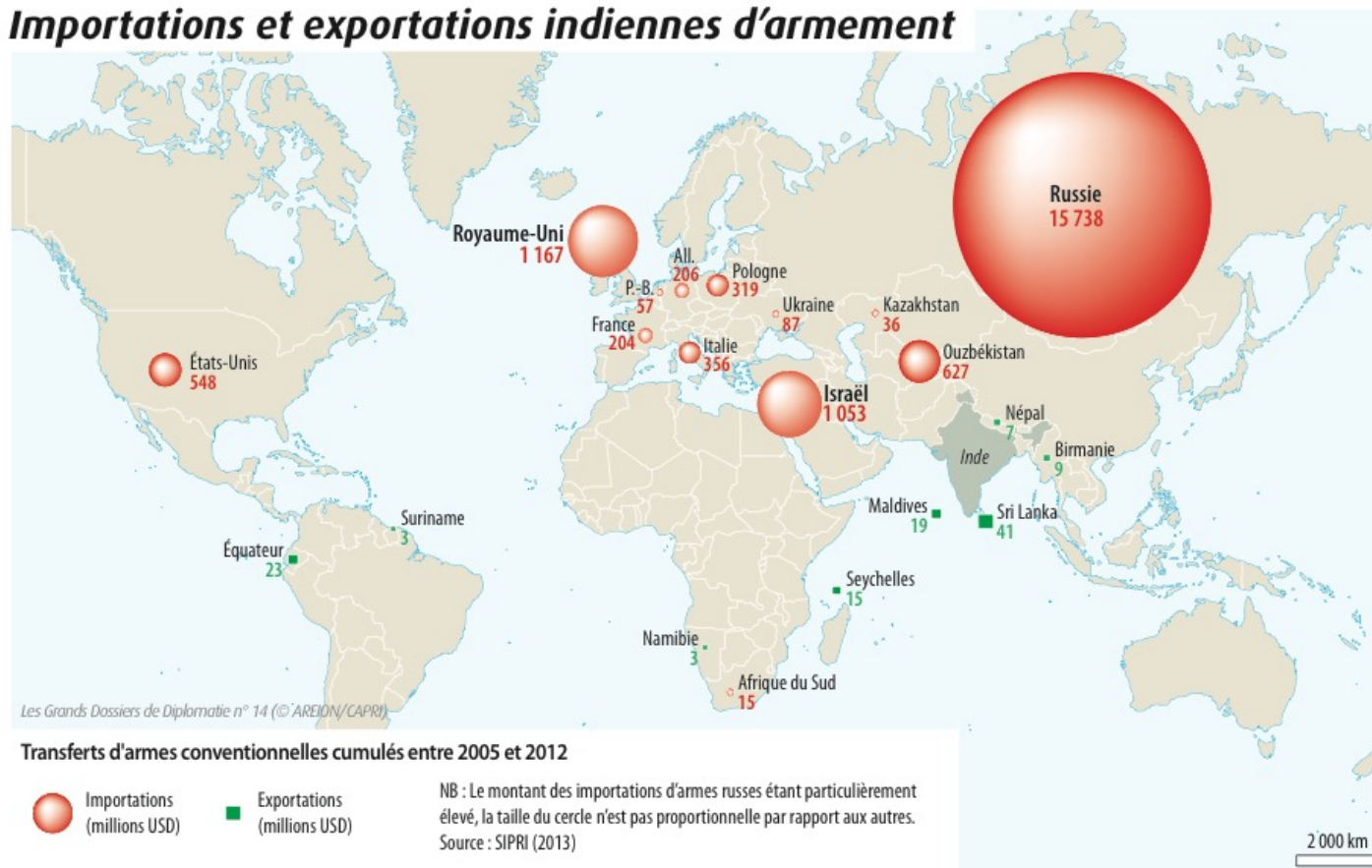
Exportations d'armes vers l'Inde depuis 2000



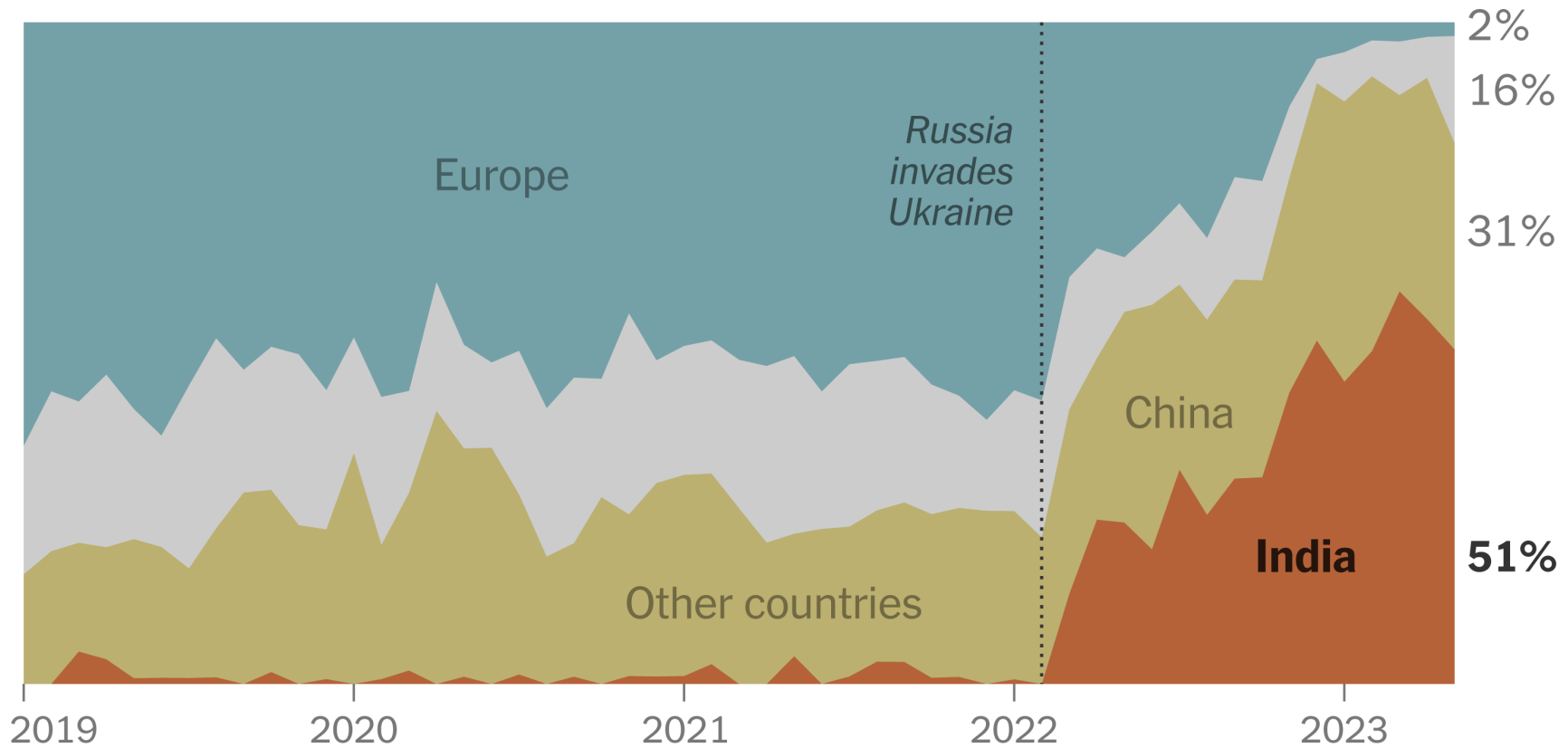
Les Grands Dossiers de Diplomatie n° 14 (© AREION/CAPRI)

Source : SIPRI (2013)

Importations et exportations indiennes d'armement



Where Russia exports its oil by sea



Source : *New York Times*, 22/06/2023

2) With China: constant hot and cold that the BRICS are helping to calm



5 décembre 2018, meeting of the RIC during the G20



<http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr/glossaire/bric>

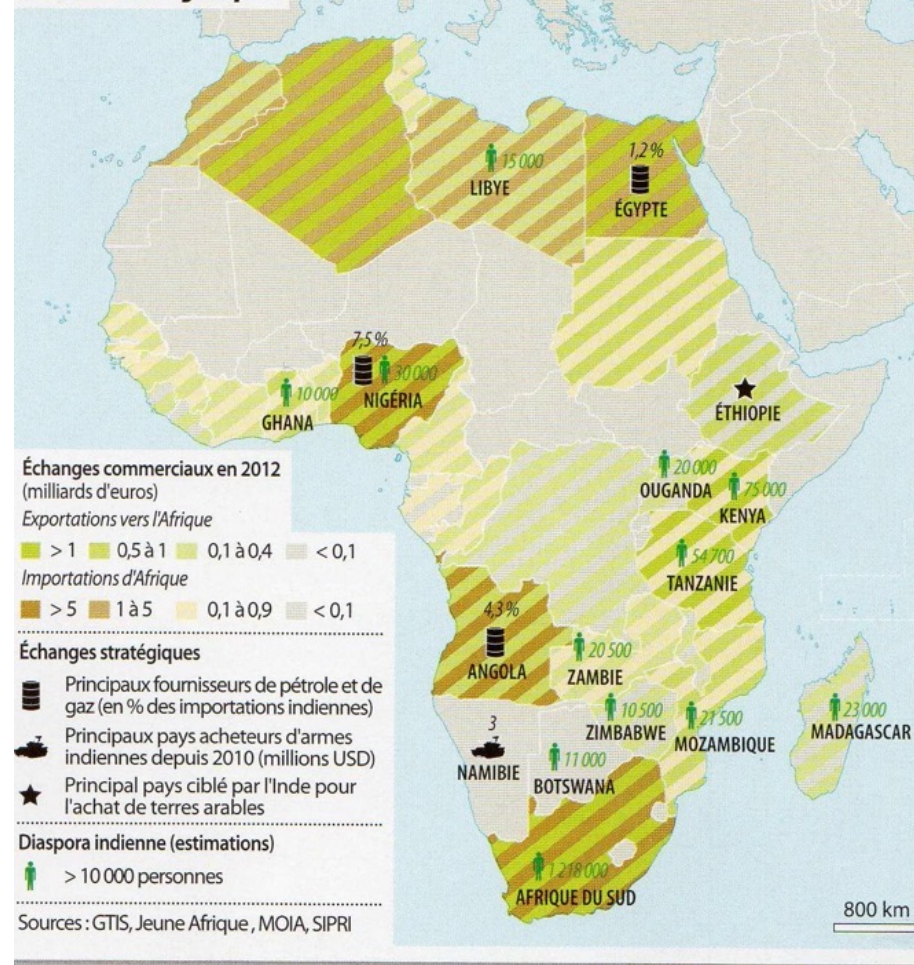
Quelques indicateurs de la puissance des BRICS comparés à l'Union Européenne et aux États-Unis

	Population en millions (ONU via Banque Mondiale 2018)	PIB en PPA, en milliards de dollars (Banque Mondiale 2018)	Pétrole (Réserves prouvées en milliards de barils de brut (OPEP 2016))	Nombre d'ogives nucléaires (Federation of American Scientists 2013, Wikipedia)	Statut à l'ONU
Brésil	209	3 366 (8e)	13	0	État membre (*)
Russie	144	4 051 (6e)	80	4 450 (2016)	Membre permanent du Conseil de sécurité
Inde	1 352	10 498 (3e)	5,5	80 à 100	État membre
Chine	1 393	25 361 (1er)	26	environ 200	Membre permanent du Conseil de sécurité
Afrique du Sud	57	793 (29e)	< 1	0 (**)	État membre
Total BRICS	3 155	44 069	135	environ 4 900	2 membres sur 5 du Conseil de sécurité
Union Européenne	513	22 435	11	300 (France) + 225 (Royaume-Uni)	2 membres sur 5 du Conseil de sécurité
États-Unis	327	20 494 (2e)	32	4 018 (2016)	Membre permanent du Conseil de sécurité

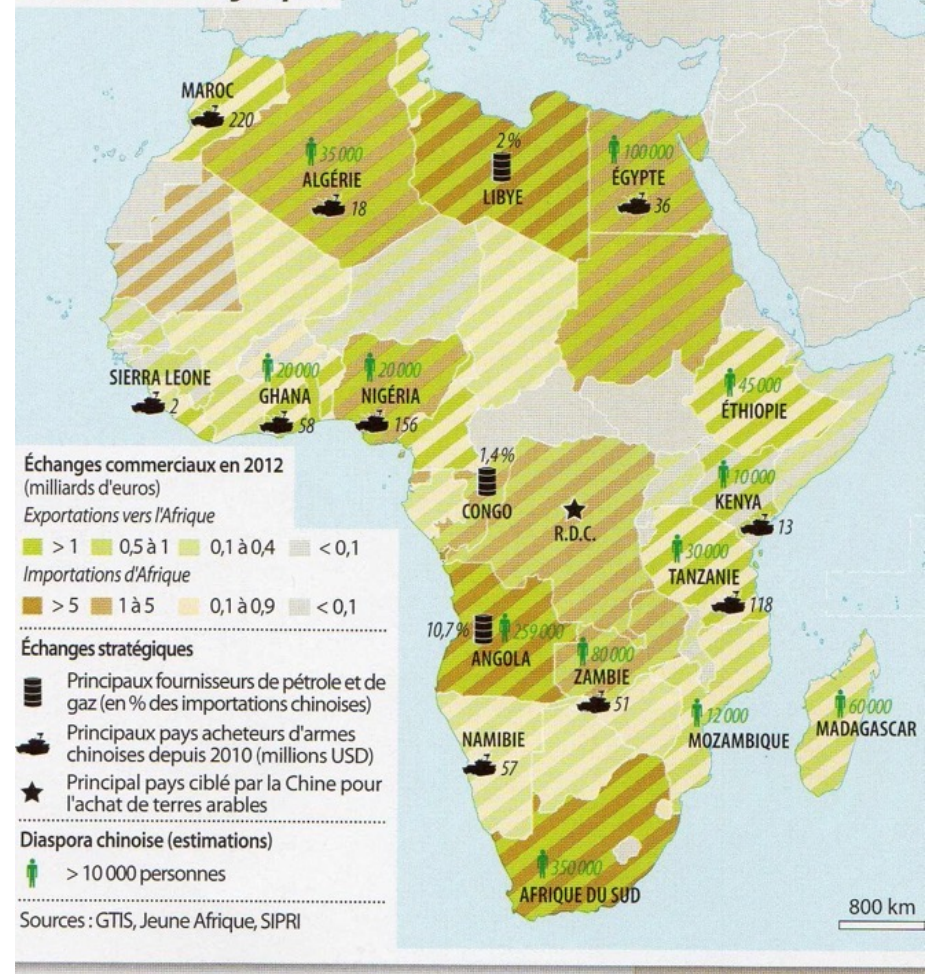
Notes : (*) Depuis 1947, le Brésil s'exprime en premier lors des Assemblées générales (*Le Monde*, 2013) (**) L'Afrique du Sud possédait 6 ogives avant de mettre fin à son programme nucléaire en 1990.

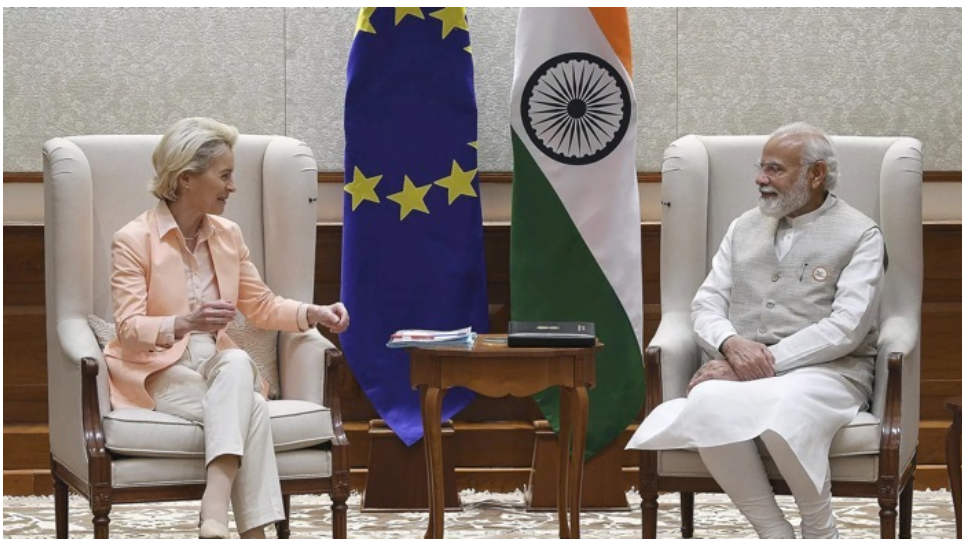
Rivalry in Africa

L'Inde et l'Afrique



La Chine et l'Afrique





EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sit during their meeting in New Delhi, April 2022 AP/AP

With Europe...

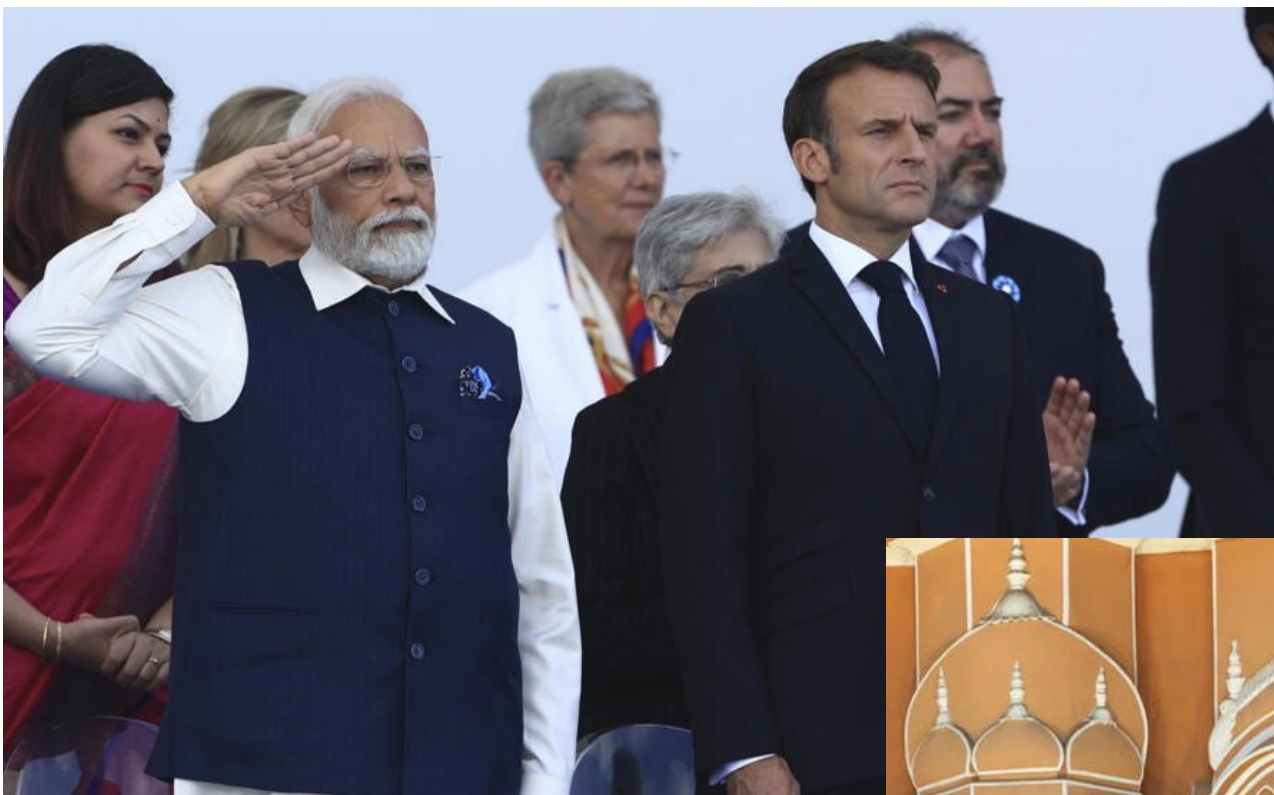
EU and India carry out joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Guinea

🕒 06.11.2023 🧑 Press and information team of the Delegation to GHANA

On 24 October, India and EU conducted their first joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Guinea, in an effort to reinforce maritime security cooperation in support of the region. The exercise followed the third meeting of the EU-India Maritime Security Dialogue on 5 October in Brussels.



Source : <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/>



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi salutes Indian troops as French President Emmanuel Macron looks on during the 14 July military parade in Paris on Friday 14 July 2023.. AP - Aurelien Morissard

India, France and the Rafales
 1) 36 Rafales for IAF in 2016.
 The Narendra Modi government modified the deal when it came to power in 2014. An earlier decided tender for 126 aircraft was scrapped.

2) 20 déc. 2023 — India has initiated the USD 6 billion *deal* with France for the acquisition of 26 *Rafale Marine* aircraft.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron in Jaipur, India /Photo taken on 25 January 2024/REUTERS/Bureau d'information de la presse indienne © Thomson Reuters

C) Modi's foreign policy: continuity or rupture?

- For a strong army
- More East than West Policy
- With China: partnership without rivalry?
- With the USA: refusal to abdicate India's independence, but... support from the American diaspora

So, there is no significant break with the past, but there are a few changes.

Quad has grown in importance at the same time (Australia, India, Japan, USA) to counter China in the Indo-Pacific

Narendra Modi before a crowd of about 18,000 Indian Americans (Madison Square, september 2014)



2) Specific role of the diaspora

PIO (Person of Indian Origin) status was introduced for all people of Indian origin except those from ASU countries in 2002.

But dual nationality has not been introduced.

January 2015: the Overseas Citizen of India Card Scheme replaced the PIO Card
:Multi-entry, same rights as NRIs for the economy, entry to national monuments, exercising liberal professions, etc.

Bobby Jindal, governor of Louisiana 2008-2016



Kamala Harris, born 20 octobre 1964 in Oakland, en Californie,
Vice-Présidente of the United-State since the 20 january 2021



Sadiq Khan, mayor of London since 2016
Born in 1970



Lakshmi Mittal, (born in) 1950



Rishi Sunak (born in 1980) in Southampton, Prime Minister since the 25 octobre 2022.



Conclusion

- India has the hard power of a medium-sized power (5th largest economy in the world, Indian industrialists going global, foreign currency reserves). Still, it has all the foundations of power (economic, military, diplomatic).
- It also benefits from the influence of soft power: the influence of cinema and literature (an advantage over China) and, until recently, democracy, political liberalism.
- But with Narendra Modi, the regime is no more seen as liberal democracy, even of it is still an electoral regime.