

**FAZ Interview with External Affairs Minister (EAM), Dr. S. Jaishankar**  
**English Translation**

**India's foreign minister**

**"We sent the terrorists a signal"**

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India's foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar talks about the conflict with Pakistan, the partnership with Russia – and about how Germany is increasingly finding its way in a world that is not so comfortable anymore.

Interviewer:

Mr. Foreign Minister, how far away was the world from a nuclear conflict between India and Pakistan?

EAM:

Very, very far away. I'm frankly astonished by your question. We have struck terrorist targets. Those were very measured, carefully considered and non-escalating steps. After that, the Pakistani military opened fire on us. We were able to show them that we could disable their air defense systems. Then the firing stopped at their request.

At no point was a nuclear alert level reached. There is a narrative as if everything that happens in our part of the world leads directly to a nuclear problem. That disturbs me a lot because it encourages terrible activities like terrorism. If anything, much more is happening with the nuclear issue in your part of the world.

Interviewer:

Has the ceasefire restored the situation before the four-day conflict with Pakistan?

EAM:

We did what we set out to do. We have sent a clear signal to the terrorists that there is a price to be paid for carrying out such attacks, as they did on us in Kashmir in April. The firing was then started by the Pakistani military. We fired back in self-defense and once the Pakistanis understood that they were taking a harmful course, we were able to stop firing. This situation has not changed for two weeks, that is the status.

Interviewer:

Do you have the impression that Germany understands your position?

EAM:

Yes, absolutely. Foreign Minister Waidephul called me on his first day in office. We have received strong support for our zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism. It is clear to our international partners that terrorism has to be responded to and terrorists must

not be allowed to get away with attacks like the ones India has suffered. Terrorism is a common threat. Today our country is hit, tomorrow it could be yours.

Interviewer:

You have been able to convince your partners that the link between Pakistan and the terrorists is clear?

EAM:

Anyone who is not blind can see that the terrorist organizations are openly operating from the cities and towns of Pakistan. That is no secret. The UN Security Council terror list is full of Pakistani names and places, and these are the very places we have targeted. So please don't think that something is only going on behind the scenes. In Pakistan, terrorism is a very open business. A business that is supported, financed, organized and used by the state. And by their military.

Interviewer:

Do we have America to thank for the ceasefire, as Washington portrays it?

EAM:

The cessation of firing was agreed between the military commanders of both sides through direct contact. The morning before, we effectively hit and incapacitated Pakistan's main airbases and air defense system. So who should I thank for the cessation of hostilities? I thank the Indian military because it was the Indian military action that made Pakistan say: We are ready to stop.

Interviewer:

You said in 2022 that Europe needs to grow out of the mindset that Europe's problems are the world's problems. Has Europe arrived in the new reality?

EAM:

Yes, absolutely. I see big changes in Europe and Europe's thinking, that obviously has to do with what's happening in other parts of the world. I see that Europe is much more multipolar in its own mindset, that it feels that it should be more independent and more resilient. For us, this is a Europe that we want to engage with very intensively.

Interviewer:

How do you assess America's role?

EAM:

America is still the most powerful country in the world. Therefore, every other country must constantly observe how the Americans approach the world and world affairs. And as everyone has noticed, something has changed. But it's not a new situation for us. We have never had the comfort and continuity that was enjoyed in Europe.

Europe had long decades of growth, progress and stability after 1945, even during the Cold War. Only now is that changing. Things were different for us. We had to operate in a difficult environment and had to struggle with it. We have done well and have learned to always make decisions in the interests of our national interests and security. We do everything necessary to achieve this.

Interviewer:

You have just met the Chancellor and Foreign Minister in Berlin, India and Germany are celebrating 25 years of strategic partnership. Why is it that despite this partnership, India and Germany have not been able to reconcile their positions on Russia and the war in Ukraine, where India continues to maintain a close partnership with Moscow and does not support sanctions?

EAM:

Relationships do not develop because one partner simply adopts the concerns of the other as their own. Relationships are built on finding common ground. For you in Europe, other concerns and worries are important than for me in Asia. When you think of conflict, you think of Ukraine. When I think of conflict, I think of Pakistan, terrorism, China and our borders. Our perspective cannot be the same.

Interviewer:

But in an increasingly multipolar world, surely we can agree that the importance of international law is increasing in order to monitor the rules of the game? And that Russia is violating it.

EAM:

As soon as you bring a rule or norm into play, it is again linked to the situation that is your priority. You talk about rules and think of Ukraine. I talk about rules and I think of my own borders, of Pakistan, which has violated my borders, and China, which has done the same. So when you talk about borders and territorial integrity, I ask you: What about my borders?

Interviewer:

You once said about India's foreign policy that not only costs play a role, but also feelings and beliefs, that it is also about comfort zones in dealing with others, that it is easier to work with societies with which you share values. How does this fit in with India's partnership with such an aggressive and authoritarian Russia?

EAM:

Let me ask you a question: Does Germany do business with China? Yes, it does. And you would agree that China has a different political social system...

Interviewer:

...Yes, but it has not invaded any country...

EAM:

My point is that you sound as if you can do business with states that are different, but we cannot. My neighbor Pakistan has caused every conceivable problem under the sun, from nuclear weaponization, to the transfer of nuclear technology to irresponsible partners, to terrorism. But doesn't Germany also do business with Pakistan?

We have international relations. If the other state is a market economy and treaties apply, I trust it more. If I know that we are both constitutional states and democracies, I feel more comfortable. So values and comfort zones play a role. I'm not cynical about world affairs. I am realistic. That's a big difference.

Interviewer:

The German government wants to deepen the security partnership with India - also with regard to armaments.

EAM:

Germany has long imposed restrictions on itself in some of its security and defense relationships. This was your right to decide. In recent years, however, Germany has realized that it has to do more for its security and defence if it can no longer outsource it to someone else. Otherwise you only make life more difficult for yourself. You need partners all over the world for this. The fact that Germany has already started to rethink many of the restrictions under the previous government is a step in the right direction.

Interviewer:

Are you still bothered by specific restrictions?

EAM:

We are making progress, but the conditions are not yet perfect. I have now addressed this in Berlin. For example, we would like to see much stronger technological and defense cooperation, but to achieve such cooperation you need the right policies.

Interviewer:

Do you have the impression that the Germans are only going down this path to reduce India's dependence on Russian defense equipment?

EAM:

Germany is doing this because it has realized that the world is not such a comfortable place and that you have to take responsibility. In such a world, it is useful to have a partnership with countries like India. We realized this much earlier because we never had an alliance to protect us and had to take care of it ourselves. That's why we are always open to more partnerships. Germany is starting to find its way in this world and make its own decisions. There is a lot to be said for this country, the third largest economy, a technological powerhouse. All Germany needs is friends like India.

Interviewer:

And has Germany understood what is important to India in the Indo-Pacific in terms of security policy?

EAM:

It is growing and moving in the right direction.

Interviewer:

Also with a view to the fact that India's problems could also become ours? For example, in dealing with China.

EAM:

When I look at Germany ten years ago, I see an enormous evolution. I see much stronger prospects for our partnership. I see a Germany that is much more engaged in the world and recognizes what it needs to do to assert its interests.

Interviewer:

Has China played a role in the conflict with Pakistan?

EAM:

You know, many of the weapons systems that Pakistan has are of Chinese origin and the two countries are very close. You can draw your own conclusions from that.

Interviewer:

Is one of the prospects for the partnership that the free trade agreement between the EU and India will finally be finalized?

EAM:

Progress is being made. Prime Minister Modi and EU Commission President von der Leyen have made it clear that the project should be completed by the end of the year. So our teams are under instruction to move forward. I think we will succeed if the political leadership understands that it is not just about trade. The agreement has strategic importance. We can send a message of stability and resilience. That will be good for India, for the EU and for the world.