

India-France Bilateral Dialogue: Discussions on AI Development in Military Sector

written by Ezba Walayat | March 13, 2024



On March 4, 2024, India and France conducted a bilateral dialogue in New Delhi. According to a statement from the Indian Foreign Ministry, “The two countries discussed about developments in disarmament and non-proliferation relating to the nuclear, chemical, and biological domains, as well as outer space security, conventional weapons including AI in the military domain and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, and multilateral export control regimes.”

India-France Relations

France has been India’s trusted Western partner. France and India agreed to form a strategic alliance in 1998, focusing on defense, space collaboration, and civil nuclear cooperation. India and France have cordial and friendly ties, the two countries celebrated 25 years of strategic partnership in 2023. The Indian Embassy in Paris said that for the first time, the entire value of trade for the fiscal year 2022–2023 crossed \$13 billion, with exports from India surpassing \$7 billion.



The two countries have a strong and long-standing defense alliance that is a fundamental component of their strategic partnership. Over the last decade, France has emerged as India's second major arms supplier after Russia, while simultaneously officially backing India's bid for permanent membership in the Security Council and UN reforms. In 2021, India accounted for around half of France's total arms exports, while France provided for about 47% of India's arms imports. In January 2024, following talks between the French President and the Prime Minister of India, the two countries signed various accords, including a "defense industrial roadmap" to collaborate on defense production, military weapons design, and space cooperation.

Conclusion

The defense and strategic relationship between France and India is expected to strengthen further. As India and France look into AI for military uses, they should prioritize responsible development being key actors in the global arms race. AI is rapidly making changes in many industries, and militaries around the world are actively researching its possible applications. AI has the potential to change warfare by improving battlefield logistics and intelligence collection, as well as developing autonomous weapon systems. For that matter, international cooperation in this particular area is important to establish regulations and prevent an uncontrolled arms race. It is true that artificial intelligence has the potential to revolutionize the military domain but it is critical to examine ethical considerations, transparency and precautions surrounding AI-powered weaponry in order to avoid unforeseen outcomes and promote responsible development..