

India's Wars: The Indo-Pakistani Wars and the India-China Border Conflict

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Since India gained its independence in 1947, it has waged four wars intermittently by the 1970s against Pakistan (Indo-Pakistani Wars) and China (the India-China War). While all of these wars were caused by territorial disputes, the termination of the wars was largely influenced by internal factors as well as the contemporary international situation on each occasion.

I. Indo-Pakistani Wars

1. The Kashmir dispute as a root cause of the Indo-Pakistani Wars

The Kashmir dispute was the root cause of the Indo-Pakistani Wars. The map below shows all of South Asia (inset) and Kashmir. Pakistan and India in the maps were formerly integrated and made up British India. Kashmir was also a part of British India, and a “princely state” ruled by the Maharaja. Although the Maharaja was Hindu, about three-fifths of the population of the princely state was Muslim (followers of Islam). The difference in religion between the Maharaja and the population was the starting point of the Kashmir dispute, and remains so to the present.¹

India and Pakistan were respectively founded by being partitioned and gaining independence from British India in August 1947. When being partitioned and gaining their independence, the territory was divided into India, which was predominantly Hindu, and Pakistan, which was predominantly Muslim. As a result, Pakistan consisted of East and West Pakistan, where many Muslims lived.

In the case of Kashmir, the Maharaja was granted a degree of authority to decide whether to belong to India or Pakistan. Some contend that the Maharaja dreamed of gaining independence, without making his decision clear. However, when Srinagar, the capital of the princely state, nearly fell to the militia which were sent in by Pakistan soon after its independence and flooded into Kashmir, the Maharaja made his ultimate choice, on October 2, 1947, to join India.

¹ Regarding the Kashmir dispute, this paper mainly referred to the following publications: Takenori Horimoto, “1970 Nendai Iko no Kashimiiru Mondai” [The Kashmir Dispute Since the 1970s], Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1992. “Minami Ajia no Chiiki Funso: 1970 Nendai Iko no Kashimiiru Mondai” [Regional Conflicts in South Asia: The Kashmir Dispute Since the 1970s], *Minami Ajia Kenkyu* [Journal of the Japanese Association for South Asian Studies], Vol. 5 (October 1993). “Kashimiiru wo Meguru Inpabei no Teiritsu [Trilateral Contest between India, Pakistan, and the United States Over Kashmir], *Kaigai Jijyo* [Journal of World Affairs], Vol. 50, No. 2 (February 2002). “Kashimiiru Mondai no Yukue: Inbei no Kakushitsu” [Prospects of the Kashmir Dispute: India-U.S. Discord], *Tokyo Shimbun* (Sunday edition), October 27, 2002.

(Map of Kashmir)



https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E3%82%AB%E3%82%B7%E3%83%9F%E3%83%BC%E3%83%AB#/media/File:Kashmir_map_big.jpg

2. Kashmir’s Importance for India and Pakistan

India and Pakistan’s preoccupation with Kashmir is extraordinary and hard for outsiders to comprehend. What is the reason for this strong preoccupation with Kashmir?

While the Kashmir dispute is certainly a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, it also has aspects of a domestic political issue for both countries. The fact which is important above all is that the two countries are multiethnic nations, and that the Kashmir dispute has directly influenced the respective countries’ ethnic issues and national unity. This precisely forms the crux of the Kashmir dispute, a dispute that is more than a traditional bilateral conflict over territories and borders.

First, in the case of Pakistan, what is important is that the two-nation theory provided the basis of the founding of Pakistan, and Islam became the principle of national unity. The two-nation theory maintained that as long as two ethnic groups existed in British India under British rule, namely, Hindus and Muslims, then it was logical that two nations be created. A multiethnic nation like Pakistan needed a principle to unify the people. Otherwise, there was a risk of the new nation splitting up.

According to this theory, it follows that the predominantly Muslim region became Pakistan and the predominantly Muslim region of Kashmir, including the part of Kashmir (state of Jammu and Kashmir [JK state]) that was in India, belonged to Pakistan. From the point of view of fostering national unity, it is not in Pakistan's interests to abandon the two-nation theory—which emphasizes Muslim ethnicity—as a relic of the past. It can be said that Pakistan's strong call for settling the Kashmir dispute itself has suppressed the domestic factors that would lead to Pakistan's split.

Meanwhile, the Indian National Congress group that led the Indian independence movement upheld the idea of “ethnic homogeneity,” making secularism (separation of religion and state) the principle of national unity. Secularism could be promoted, because it would not be abnormal for the predominantly Muslim region of the JK state to belong to India, where approximately 80% of the population is Hindu, if secularism was the premise. If India acknowledged the right of self-determination of Muslims in Kashmir, this would be the equivalent of recognizing the two-nation theory. This in turn posed the risks of denying secularism, and might even bring about the splitting up of the states. The Kashmir dispute therefore had symbolic significance for India also in enhancing its national unity, since it has had to deal with various big and small partition and independence movements at home since independence.

The Kashmir dispute is the greatest issue in the India-Pakistan relationship, and has hindered the development of normal relations between the two countries. The Kashmir dispute was the direct or indirect cause of the three wars that were fought between the two in the past. Furthermore, largely because the relationship between these two major powers in South Asia is not normal, international relations among nations in South Asia have tended to be marked by instability.

3. The Termination of the Three Wars

First Indo-Pakistani War

The first Indo-Pakistani War is the war between India and Pakistan fought from October 1947 to December 1948 (with a ceasefire declared on January 1, 1949). This war was terminated by a ceasefire resolution of the United Nations (UN) Security Council. The ceasefire established the “ceasefire line” in order to divide Kashmir into areas controlled by India and Pakistan, respectively.

More specifically, the Commission for India and Pakistan established by the UN achieved the ceasefire, and succeeded in terminating the first Indo-Pakistani War for the time being. Nevertheless, the ceasefire failed to realize either an armistice that would fundamentally settle the Kashmir dispute, or a national referendum that would follow such an armistice. The reason

was that the two countries could not reach agreement on their most hotly contested issues, including the specific method for withdrawing both countries' forces, which was a prerequisite for a national referendum, and the handling of Azad Kashmir on the Pakistani side.

Second Indo-Pakistani War

The second Indo-Pakistani War was fought from April 8 to September 23, 1965, and was terminated by the Tashkent Declaration, which was brought about through Soviet intervention. The primary battlefield was Kashmir.

Although the UN's strong calls (in the form of resolutions) for a ceasefire put an end to the military clashes between India and Pakistan, no measures were taken for a lasting ceasefire. It was then that the Soviet Union served as an intermediary. Since the initial stage of the war, the Soviet Union sought to fulfill the role of an active mediator. On September 7, 13, and 17, the Soviet Union asked India and Pakistan to agree to a ceasefire, and offered to mediate. On September 20, Premier Aleksei Kosygin urged the leaders of India and Pakistan to hold a summit meeting on Soviet territory.

After further complications, an India-Pakistan summit meeting was held in Tashkent (the present capital of Uzbekistan) in the southern part of the Soviet Union from January 4, 1966. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and President Ayub Khan attended from India and Pakistan, respectively, and Premier Kosygin acted as the mediator. The meeting concluded on January 10, and the Tashkent Declaration was adopted on January 11. In the Declaration, the leaders agreed to, among other things: (1) settle the disputes between the two countries peacefully without recourse to force in accordance with the UN Charter; (2) withdraw the military forces of the two countries no later than February 25, 1966 to the positions they held at the outbreak of war on August 5, 1965; and (3) hold discussions between the two countries for the settlement of the disputes.

One of the features of the Tashkent Declaration is that it makes no reference to the Kashmir dispute, the cause of the second Indo-Pakistani War. That is to say, the Tashkent Declaration was an equivocal compromise to save the face of both India and Pakistan. Measures to realize a permanent peace were not taken under the Declaration. For this reason, it is said that the Declaration dealt with the outcome rather than the cause.² The fact that the Declaration was no more than a temporary compromise is clearly proven by the fact that the third Indo-Pakistani War broke out just five years later.

The Soviet Union was the true winner in the 1965 war. The United States was completely occupied by the Vietnam War, and, furthermore, faced with worsening relations with Pakistan. Pakistan therefore would not have accepted the United States as a mediator. In addition, Britain no longer had the capabilities to exercise influence in South Asia. In the end, it was only the Soviet Union that could fulfill the role of an intermediary. Through the adoption of the Tashkent Declaration, the Soviet Union not only succeeded in expanding its influence in South Asia, but also simultaneously weakened the influence on Pakistan of China, which the Soviet

² Khurshid Hyder, "Recent Trends in the Foreign Policy of Pakistan," *The World Today*, Vol. 22, No. 11 (November 1966).

Union was severely clashing with at the time. The Tashkent Declaration indeed represented the Soviet Union's first significant victory in the diplomatic battles over Asian issues.

Third Indo-Pakistani War

The third Indo-Pakistani War was fought from December 3 to 16, 1971. At the time, Pakistan consisted of East and West Pakistan, with India in between them. The war concluded with East Pakistan's declaration of independence from West Pakistan. The third Indo-Pakistani War is thus also referred to as the Bangladesh Independence War. East Pakistan, which received support from India, had an advantage in carrying out the war, and this shaped the course of events related to the situation in East Pakistan.

The biggest issue was whether or not India would move all of its forces to its western front and invade West Pakistan, especially the Pakistani part of Kashmir (or "Azad Kashmir," which means independent Kashmir). According to the memoir of former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, it was felt that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was considering the ejection of the Pakistani Army and Air Force from southern Azad Kashmir and liberating it. The United States therefore deployed the Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal in an attempt to prevent India's attack against West Pakistan.

In India at the time, prior to the conclusion of the war, there was certainly a mood for further attacking Pakistan and have this serve as a warning. Nevertheless, as of December 16, when Pakistani forces in East Pakistan surrendered unconditionally, Prime Minister Gandhi herself is alleged to have decided on a ceasefire in the western front as well, out of considerations for global public opinion. Gandhi's friend, Raj Thapar, in his memoir expresses the view that, "Indira had the immediate savvy to call for a ceasefire the minute the eastern front has surrendered."³ This view, however, seems to be somewhat excessively sympathetic.

Meanwhile, China, which had repeatedly condemned India since April 1971, strongly condemned India's "act of aggression" against Pakistan on December 6, and showed support for Pakistan by stating, for example, that Bangladesh is "a replication of Manchukuo." At the time, the Indian government no doubt recalled the experience of the second Indo-Pakistani War, when China acted to keep India in check on the India-China border. Even then, Prime Minister Gandhi is said to have told her Cabinet members that the Soviet Union had pledged to take appropriate retaliatory measures if China "rattles the sword."⁴

The third Indo-Pakistani War terminated on December 17. On December 16, the Indian government announced that it would unilaterally implement a ceasefire in West Pakistan from 8 a.m. the next day, following the unconditional surrender of the Pakistani forces in East Pakistan. In response, President Yahya Khan of Pakistan, at 3 p.m. on December 17, ordered the suspension of combat on the western front from 7:30 a.m. over Pakistan's national radio. The two-week "14-day war" drew to a close.

³ Raj Thapar, *All These Years*, Seminar Publications, New Delhi, 1991, p. 336.

⁴ Interview with a journalist in foreign affairs on February 1, 1991 in New Delhi. In fact, "The Blood Telegram: 1971 War" in *Simply Decoded* of September 19, 2013 stated, "According to the CIA's mole in Delhi, Indira Gandhi claimed that the Soviet Union had promised to counterbalance any Chinese military actions against India." <http://www.simplydecoded.com/2013/09/19/the-blood-telegram-1971-war/>

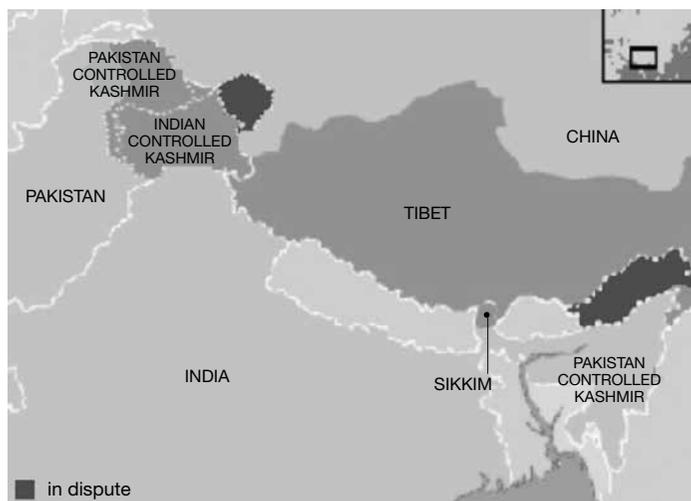
Indo-Pakistani Wars

The Indo-Pakistani Wars have been wars fought over Kashmir. While the third Indo-Pakistani War is also called the “Bangladesh Independence War,” the Kashmir dispute was the greatest issue of the Simla Accord that terminated the war. In 1999, a mini Indo-Pakistani War as well as a conflict also known as the fourth Indo-Pakistani War broke out between India and Pakistan. Kargil is on the India-Pakistan Line of Control. Indo-Pakistani Wars will continue to break out over Kashmir, and the handling of the Kashmir dispute will continue to be a major issue in the termination of those wars.

II. Sino-Indian War

1. Background of the India-China War

India also fought the Sino-Indian Border Conflict (in this paper, “the India-China War”). The conflict was caused by a dispute over Arunachal Pradesh state (located in northeast India; hereafter “AP State”), and fought from October 20 to November 21, 1962. AP State is the region outlined by the dotted line on the right side of the map below. The war ended with the unilateral withdrawal of the victorious Chinese.



The India-China territorial dispute traces back to the drawing of the “McMahon Line.”⁵ This border was demarcated by Britain and Tibet at the Simla Convention held from 1913 to 1914 between Britain (represented by Sir Henry McMahon), China, and Tibet in Simla, a summer resort in northern India. Though the People’s Republic of China has not acknowledged the McMahon Line on the grounds that the Chinese Kuomintang government, which was China’s government at the time, did not sign the treaty, among other reasons, India has claimed the line to be the border. As a consequence, AP State (which is administered by India and has an area of 83,743 km²) has become a disputed area between India and China. The other major

⁵ For more information, see: Marie Izuyama, “India-China Boundary Question: Old Issues and New Development,” *NIDS Commentary*, No. 49 (August 12, 2015).

disputed area is Aksai Chin (administered by China; 37,555 km²) in northwestern Kashmir.

First, I begin with AP State. China has maintained its position that AP State is “South Tibet,” a part of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Just a week before President Hu Jintao’s visit to India from November 20, 2006, the Chinese Ambassador to India, Sun Yuxi, in an interview on Indian TV, stated that, “Our position is that the whole of the state of Arunachal Pradesh is Chinese territory.” The Indian Minister of External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee, immediately refuted the claim, stating that AP State is wholly a part of India.

Why does China care so much about AP State? The McMahon Line is said to have expanded the part of British India in this area (the current area of AP State) northward and pushed its frontier out 60 miles (some 100 km) towards Tibet.⁶ As a result of this expansion, Tawang was incorporated into British India. Although the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) invaded AP State during the India-China War in 1962, the PLA stopped after advancing roughly 60 miles, and later returned back to the existing Line of Control. In addition to territorial claims, it is believed that China wishes to have control of Tawang in particular, in western AP State, close to Bhutan. Tawang, home to spectacular temples, is the next most holy site for Tibet Buddhism after Lhasa, and is the birthplace of the 6th Dalai Lama. When the 1959 Tibet Uprising forced the current (14th) Dalai Lama to flee Lhasa, Tibet, he transited Tawang en route to exile in India. China is unlikely to relinquish its hold on Tawang because of its political implications in connection with the issue of the next Dalai Lama, among others.

Meanwhile, China has de facto control of Aksai Chin in the western part of the Indian subcontinent. Furthermore, the adjacent Trans-Karakoram Tract (5,800 km²) in northern Kashmir is a disputed area between India and China. In other words, under the Sino-Pakistan Agreement signed on March 2, 1963, Pakistan transferred control over this area to China, with the condition that the transfer would be effective only until the settlement of the Kashmir dispute. India lodged protests with both countries on the same day, and still claims the area as Indian territory.

2. The breakout and termination of the India-China War

The India-China War is closely interrelated with the “Cuban Missile Crisis” (October 14-28, 1962). At the risk of oversimplification, it could even be suggested that the India-China War would not have occurred had the Cuban Missile Crisis not taken place. It can also be said that the termination of the Cuban Missile Crisis led to the termination of the war.

The Breakout of the India-China War

China instigated the India-China War because the Soviet Union notified China in the second half of 1962 that it would build missile sites in Cuba.⁷ The individual who made the shrewdest use of the process leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis was the Chinese President, Mao Zedong.

⁶ Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, Natraj Publishers, 2013 (first edition 1970), p. 42.

⁷ Inder Malhotra, “Ghosts of black November,” *The Indian Express*, December 5, 2008. Brahma Chellaney, “The 1962 Chinese Invasion,” *Hindustan Times*, April 2, 2007.

In the first half of the 1950s, shortly after their founding, India-China relations were referred to in India as “Indians and Chinese are brothers” (Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai). In 1954, India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Premier Zhou Enlai confirmed the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in a bilateral agreement,⁸ including mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. Prime Minister Nehru felt that the agreement recognized China’s sovereignty over Tibet. In return, China would grant considerable autonomy to Tibet.

India took pride in the fact that it was one of the earliest to endorse China’s return to the international community, being the first country outside of the Communist bloc to recognize China (December 1949) and having invited China to the Bandung Conference (1955). Nonetheless, the India-China border dispute began to surface from around this time, and the bilateral relationship started to deteriorate following the 1959 Tibet Uprising and the 14th Dalai Lama’s exile to India.

When Premier Zhou Enlai visited India in 1960, he informally proposed a barter deal to India in which India would possess AP State in return for China’s possession of Aksai Chin. The barter deal fell through, however, because India claimed sovereignty over both regions.⁹ Additionally, from November 1961, India began to carry out its “forwarding policy,” a policy of establishing forward military posts across the McMahon Line on the Chinese side.

In light of these developments, China waged the India-China War, anticipating that the world’s attention would be fixed on Cuba as a result of the worsening of U.S.-Soviet relations due to the Soviet Union’s construction of missile sites in Cuba. China registered a strong protest against India because the latter recognized the Dalai Lama’s domestic exile in India after the Tibet Uprising. Further still, with Prime Minister Nehru’s Non-Alignment Movement garnering worldwide praise, it is possible that China attempted to seize this opportunity to deal a blow against this development.

The Soviet Union notified China about its missile site construction, partly to secure Chinese support before the United States and the Soviet Union clashed and possibly even went to war over the Cuban dispute. While there were signs that the China-Soviet relationship was deteriorating around this time, the Soviet Union attached importance to gaining China’s endorsement. Pravda, the newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, referred to China at the time as a “brother” and a “friend,” in stark contrast to its descriptions of the United States.

In India, on the other hand, Prime Minister Nehru and other government leaders had absolute faith in friendly India-China relations, despite their awareness that the bilateral relationship was gradually worsening following the Tibet Uprising. Not even in their wildest dreams did they think that China would invade India. Neither did India ever envision that the

⁸ “Agreement between the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of India on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet Region of China and India” concluded between India (Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru) and China (Premier Zhou Enlai) in April 1954.

⁹ Sumit Ganguly, “Chapter 4 India and China: Border Issues, Domestic Integration, and International Security” in Francine R. Frankel & Harry Harding ed., *The India-China Relationship: What the United States Needs to Know*, Columbia University Press, 2004, p. 112.

“forwarding policy” it was undertaking on this basis would invite Chinese retaliation. While Prime Minister Nehru acknowledged Chinese sovereignty over Tibet,¹⁰ he expected a Chinese policy that would grant a degree of autonomy to Tibet.

The difference in views between India and China over their border cannot be overlooked. China regarded its border with India as an issue involving Tibet, and viewed AP State and Aksai Chin through the prism of Tibet.¹¹ In contrast, while India discerned that the Tibet issue was intertwined with the bilateral border conflict, all India wished for was for Tibet to serve as a buffer area between the two countries, similar to the period when the British ruled India.

The fact that China staged the India-China War based on Mao Zedong’s concept can also be inferred from the fact that China asked India for a ceasefire in late October, just as the Cuban Missile Crisis was approaching its termination. In turn, fighting between India and China began to subside gradually. The India-China War ultimately came to an end on November 21, with China unilaterally declaring a ceasefire. In terms of the commencement of wars, the question of which side started the war has important implications. In the case of the India-China War, there is no mistake that China started the war.

At any event, the India-China Border Conflict left a negative impression on India, namely, the perception that China betrayed Prime Minister Nehru who believed in the India-China friendship (and Prime Minister Nehru’s death two years later), and the fact of India’s major defeat. In short, the conflict induced a deep-seated distrust towards China that has not been easy to dispel.^{12,13}

III. The Breakout and Termination of Wars in which India May be Involved

This paper has presented an overview of India’s four wars to date. The question now is how India’s future wars might be terminated.

A distinguishing feature of India’s wars with Pakistan and China is that they broke out during the Cold War period. It may be said that in all of these wars, the various motives and aims harbored by the major powers at the time, including the United States and the Soviet Union, ultimately led to the termination of the wars. In other words, the termination had much

¹⁰ India acknowledges this in the “Agreement between the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of India on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet Region of China and India” concluded between India (Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru) and China (Premier Zhou Enlai) in April 1954.

¹¹ John W. Garver, “China’s Decision for War with India in 1962,” in Robert S. Ross and Alastair Iain Johnston, *New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy*, Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 61.

¹² For more information, see: Takenori Horimoto, “Dai 2 Sho: Anbibarento na Inchu Kankei: Kyocho to Keikai” [Chapter 2 Ambivalent Relations of India and China: Cooperation and Caution], in *Indo Dai San no Okoku e* [India’s Path to Becoming a Third Great Power], Iwanami Shoten, 2015 and “Ambivalent Relations of India and China: Cooperation and Caution,” *The Journal of Contemporary China Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (October 2014), pp. 61-92

¹³ The details of the India-China War are still covered by a veil. The Indian government ordered Henderson Brooks (lieutenant general) and P. S. Bhagat (brigadier) of the Indian Army to submit a report regarding the India-China War, which is said to be strongly critical of the civil-military composition at the time. However, the report is still classified even now, half a century since its publication, making it difficult to evaluate and ascertain the civil-military history of India as it pertains to the India-China War. The Indian magazine *India Today* (March 18, 2014) introduces a part of the report which Neville Maxwell has made available on the Internet.

to do with global-level developments, rather than a mere display of autonomy by India. This is evident in the fact that the India-China War was interrelated with the “Cuban Missile Crisis” that broke out at the same time, as well as the examples of the three Indo-Pakistani Wars.

As regards the termination of any future war in which India may be involved, two new factors need to be considered.

The first of these is the development of India into a major power. Since the Cold War, especially since the 2000s (2000-2009), Indian foreign policy has been implemented at three levels, i.e., global, regional (Asia), and sub-regional (South Asia), with a view to becoming a major world power. During the Cold War period, India was at most a major power in South Asia.¹⁴ Today, it is a major power in Asia, and has its sights set on becoming a major world power in the future. India is now a de facto nuclear state, and is strengthening its economic and military powers.

India today perceives itself completely differently from the way it did in the Cold War period, and is beginning to seek a different positioning by other countries. As a result, the start and termination of a future war will likely take a different form than during the Cold War period. In other words, it is very much possible that, as India develops into a major power, the termination of any war in which India may be involved will have aspects considerably different from those of the Cold War period.

Second, China or Pakistan will likely be the potential adversary in any future war involving India. If India were to engage in a war with China or Pakistan, either of the two countries will likely take moves that will be disadvantageous to India. Since the 1960s, China and Pakistan have rapidly deepened their relationship, which has come to be called an “all-weather relationship.” In any war against either China or Pakistan, it is expected that India will have to constantly calculate the moves of both countries, both in the early and the last stages of the war.

¹⁴ For more information, see: Horimoto, “Joshi: Gendai Indo no Taigai Senryaku: Sekai no Okoku wo Shiko” [Preface: External Strategy of Modern India: Becoming a Great World Power], in *Indo Dai San no Okoku e*.