Introduction

When the U.S. dropped the first atomic bomb in 1945, signaling the birth of the Atomic Age, it transformed global politics. Once again, it changed in 1953 when the USSR tested its first thermonuclear weapon, motivating the experts behind the 'Doomsday Clock,' a symbolic measure of how close humanity was to global catastrophe, to move it a minute closer to midnight. The U.S. was no longer the only nation with nuclear weapons, meaning global leaders now had to navigate the politics of deterrence via "mutually assured destruction," and the security dilemma, or the downward spiral of nuclear armament. This emerged a new challenge for superpowers and non-superpowers alike—how do we shape global politics without contributing to the end of the world? How can we continue to wage a war of ideologies between capitalism and communism (and occasionally, the divisions within them) without resorting to nuclear war?

"I SAID — WE SURE SETTLED THAT DISPUTE, DIDN'T WE!"

Source: Frank Miller (Des Moines Register), 1962[1]

For non-superpowers, this generally meant one of two strategies: (1) bandwagoning onto a side or (2) joining India and Yugoslavia in a non-aligned movement. This also meant investing in new tactics to propel national agendas and foreign policy for superpowers and non-superpowers alike. For the U.S. in 1961, this looked like committing billions towards Latin America via the anti-communist Alliance for Progress, founding the Peace Corps program, and continuing multilateral trade negotiations in the Dillon Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), among other strategies.

Delegates of this body will be challenged to adapt to the volatility of political brinkmanship, among other global transformations, in order to advocate for the interests, values, and priorities

---

[1] https://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Atestingmiller2_93

of their country. They will be occupied by a set of general objectives to (1) promote peaceful coexistence or, at a minimum, help prevent the end of the world as we know it, (2) advocate for certain values and ideologies on the world stage (whether that be capitalist or communist, or something else), and (3) practicing new tactics of Cold War politics to accomplish these two items.

State of the World: October 15th, 1962

Each passing year recently has brought with it a list of newly independent countries, the majority based in Africa and former colonies, such as Algeria which became independent from France back in March. There is a growing number of seats represented at the table of global discussions—echoing additional voices and accounting for more interests—but this movement has not come without new issues. Civil conflict may erupt from power vacuums created in transitions of decolonization, and newly independent nations may be volatile sites of conflict, as has been seen with the crisis in Congo. Divisions in developing countries have become an opportune breeding ground for intensifying factionalism, weaponized in the battle of influences between communism and capitalism, escalated by proxy warfare, external intervention, and foreign aid. For this reason, Southeast Asia in particular has become an international battleground for—as well as against—communism.

Indeed, conflicts between communist and anti-communist groups have broken out across Indochina. In South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem's anti-communist regime struggles to keep the ever-increasing numbers of Viet Cong at bay. Tensions remain high in the highly fragmented and impoverished state of Laos where the communist Pathet Lao competes for power with the US-backed Royal Lao Army, even following the state's commitment to neutrality earlier this year. Korea has remained divided and has actually seen a recent escalation of tensions following the seizure of power by military dictator Park Chung Hee in South Korea last year, soon responded to by increased militarization from North Korea. The battle for or against communism is also being waged in other regions of the world, for instance, in the German city of Berlin where a wall was constructed last year—quite literally dividing the city by political lines—or in Cuba where communist leader Fidel Castro has remained in power for several years, despite attempts to overthrow his regime.

The U.S. is increasingly uneasy about Soviet ties to Cuba and the possibility of its nuclear armament, especially since a Cuban nuclear base would be within reach of attacking American soil. On the other hand, in light of the Sino-Soviet split, the USSR is all the more pressured to create and maintain allies such as Cuba. Meanwhile, India continues to spearhead a movement of non-alignment, trying to avoid escalating tensions between superpowers as well as avoid alienating potential allies. Skirmishes at the border of China and India threaten to bloom into a

full-blown war, currently stalemated with the "armed coexistence" of outposts across the disputed territory. These issues, the solutions delegates develop, and the decisions they make in these defining moments—minutes to the brink of disaster according to the Doomsday Clock—will shape how the rest of 1962 will unfold and will pave the future of the Atomic Age.

Country Brief

As a newly independent nation—still with its very first Prime Minister and with a constitution just two years old—India is in a period of transition and new beginnings. Domestically, the state has successfully developed a multiparty system in which the Indian National Congress (INC) party maintains its comfortable lead. It is early in its third five-year plan prioritizing modernization and boosting self-sufficiency, although it has been partially distracted from this due to military developments.

India successfully annexed Goa the previous year and although mostly ignored by the international community, it ruffled some feathers with countries such as the U.S. India faces threats at its border with Pakistan at the Radcliffe Line and, in particular, China at the McMahon Line where skirmishes have increasingly broken out. Some of India's leadership is skeptical that these conflicts will escalate militarily, given the buffering nature of the Himalayan mountains. So far, the country has maintained a "Forward Policy" of manning armed outposts in this territory and standing India's ground. In light of these political contexts, the Union Council is challenged to (1) help pivot domestic industry for greater growth, (2) reconsider military complacency and strategy, and (3) build diplomatic relationships while maintaining non-alignment (in efforts, for example, to illicit military aid).

Figures 1-3. Jawaharlal Nehru on *TIME* Magazine Covers

Source: TIME Magazine, 1949;[2] 1951;[3] 1959[4]

Topic A - Balancing Militaristic and Economic Priorities

By October 1962, land and border control had become a central focus of the Indian government. Goa, which is the historically independent region in the far south of the Indian subcontinent, had recently been incorporated via the passing of the 12th Amendment to the Indian Constitution on December 20th, 1961. The incorporation of the regions of Daman and Diu, both located on India's western coast, were also included in this amendment, but they were not yet under the full control of the Indian government. The most pressing areas, however, were the China-India border regions of Aksai Chin in the west and Arunachal Pradesh (North-East Frontier Agency) in the east. China saw Indian occupation in the areas as a sign of military advancement, as well as attempts to undermine Chinese control of the recently conquered Tibet.

The past months have also witnessed numerous skirmishes, with the most notable being centered on the Thagla Ridge in the western Tawang region. Just last month on September 20th, the People's Liberation Army fired on Indian troops in the region, and more recently on October 10th, the PLA again fired on unprepared Indian forces. Considering Prime Minister Nehru's unwavering support of Indian territorial claims, it is highly unlikely that this will dissuade his "Forward Policy."

If war is to break out with China, India will likely have to open channels with either the United States or the Soviet Union, as the costliness of these military endeavors is beginning to be a great drain on Indian resources; however, to align with either side for military aid would of course breach a larger strategy of neutrality. This is all the more relevant considering India's role as a leader in the Non-Alignment Movement sparked from the 1955 Bandung Conference, discouraging African and Asian countries from picking sides between superpowers and instead promoting multilateral cooperation, avoiding the bipolar tensions of the Cold War.[5]

> Prime Minister Nehru During his Speech at the Bandung Conference (1955):[6]
> "We do not agree with the communist teachings, we do not agree with the anti-communist teachings, because they are both based on wrong principles. I never challenged the right of my country to defend itself; it has to. We will defend ourselves with whatever arms and strength we have, and if we have no

---

[2]https://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19491017,00.html
[3]https://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19510507,00.html
[4]https://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19591214,00.html
[5]https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/bandung-conf
[6]https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1955nehru-bandung2.asp

> arms we will defend ourselves without arms. I am dead certain that no country can conquer India. Even the two great power blocs together cannot conquer India; not even the atom or the hydrogen bomb."

As mentioned, the economic state of India at the moment is very delicate. This comes down to the aforementioned military costs, but moreover reflects contemporary concerns about Prime Minister Nehru's policies concerning business licensing. All businesses require a government license per Indian policy, yet these licenses can be extremely difficult to obtain and often favor large businesses. Some have titled these practices the "License Raj," as while they were intended to help stabilize the Indian economy, it has created a stranglehold for most Indian business owners. Many are calling for the abolishment of this practice, as it would allow for economic growth within India without state interference or limitation.

Furthermore, as we enter into the third Five Year Plan, passed last year in 1961, we are just beginning to see the enactment of new economic policies that have yet to fully take root in Indian society. These are oriented towards increasing the income of Indian citizens, mainly through the restructuring of agriculture. This is partly why the border regions with China are of such interest, as they are major centers of agriculture. Banking is also of great concern, as the failure of the Laxmi and Palai Central banks in 1960 resulted in the liquidation and merger of numerous banks starting in 1961 to consolidate the banking sector in India. The economic and structural ramifications of this large shift in banking practice are still being felt and realized. All this has combined to create a virulent economic situation in India, which would only deteriorate if a war with China was to erupt.

Topic B - Winning the Battle of Influences between Communism and Capitalism.

Since Fidel Castro came to power in the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the island, a mere ninety miles from the United States, has been at the center of geopolitical tension. Cuba has declared itself a socialist state and has looked to the Soviet Union for aid both economically, and in terms of defending itself against American intervention. Attempts at retaking Cuba, which was long considered an extension of the United States by American leaders, have been unsuccessful.

Most notably, in 1961, the Bay of Pigs Invasion saw U.S.-supported guerillas land on the island, and fail completely in their mission to overthrow Castro's government. Though the invasion was unsuccessful, it has re-emphasized the need for Cuba to defend itself and also re-emphasized the question of how the Soviet Union (or perhaps even China), might be able to help the island remain independent. From the communists' side, Cuba is an ally geographically near to the U.S.

that should be no more of an issue than American allies such as Turkey that are close to the USSR.

Figure 5. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev embraces Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro in the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 20, 1960[7]

Source: Marty Lederhandler (AP), 1960

The last few years have seen several direct incidents between the Soviet Union and the United States. In 1960, an American U-2 Spy Plane was shot down while flying over the Soviet Union, and its pilot was arrested. The fallout of this incident led to a major summit between the superpowers being canceled, a summit at which they would have discussed the problem of divided Germany and Berlin. This problem would be brought to the forefront in 1961, when Nikita Khrushchev ordered the construction of a wall around the Western-controlled section of Berlin, physically separating the city to match its political division between East and West.[8]

The true danger of these conflicts is not just conventional warfare, but the nuclear arms that are aimed between the superpowers. While the United States maintains missile bases in Europe and Turkey, the Soviet Union has no such nuclear capabilities that are as close to the United States. In part, this is what has made Cuba such an attractive geostrategic ally. Regardless, the two

---

[7]https://www.deseret.com/2014/2/26/20536196/this-week-in-history-khrushchev-denounces-stalin-in-secret-speech
[8]https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/berlin-crises

superpowers have nearly 30,000 warheads combined,[9] and the principle of Mutually Assured Destruction is sometimes seen as the only thing keeping the two superpowers from annihilating each other, and perhaps the world as a whole.

> President John F. Kennedy in an Address Before the General Assembly (1961):[10] "For in the development of this organization [the United Nations] rests the only true alternative to war—and war appeals no longer as a rational alternative. Unconditional war can no longer lead to unconditional victory. It can no longer serve to settle disputes. It can no longer concern the great powers alone. For a nuclear disaster, spread by wind and water and fear, could well engulf the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the committed and the uncommitted alike. Mankind must put an end to war—or war will put an end to mankind."

> Premier Nikita Khrushchev in an Interview Given to I. McDonald (1958):[11] "Doctors at first treat a man emaciated by a grave illness gradually and prescribe food for him in small doses. If more were given to the patient, it might kill him. And so we want to begin disarmament not with a full dose, although we are prepared even for a full dose. I have said already that the Western Powers have shown great distrust of us and we, too, do not trust them in everything. And so, in order not to wreck something of great and vital importance to mankind—disarmament—we suggest beginning not with a cardinal but with a gradual solution of disarmament problems, beginning with what offers hope, inspires confidence. Thus, step by step, gradually, it would be possible to reach the main goal, that is, the full solution of the disarmament problem."

The conflict between the superpowers has been more than a contest in armament but also one in advancement and innovation. The Soviet Union began the Space Race in 1957 when Sputnik became the first manmade object to orbit the Earth. Since then, the Soviet Union has remained dominant, achieving the first animal in orbit, the first images of the moon's far side, and in 1961, the first man in space and to orbit the Earth, Yuri Gagarin. While the Soviet Union has many impressive firsts, the United States has embarked on its own space program, and whatever lead the Soviets might possess, the Americans have stayed close on their heels. Regardless of what the future of space exploration might be, it has clearly become yet another realm in which the world's superpowers seek to show their might.

---

[9]https://www.statista.com/chart/16305/stockpiled-nuclear-warhead-count/
[10]https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/united-nations-19610925
[11]https://www.marxists.org/archive/khrushchev/1959/for-victory-in-peaceful-competition-with-capitalism.pdf

While the Soviet Union and the United States each dominate a sphere of influence and compete on the world stage, not every country neatly aligns with one of the superpowers. Within the socialist camp, the People's Republic of China has broken with the Soviet Union, and Mao Zedong is leading the country towards its own brand of socialism. Meanwhile, to the Southwest of China, India also seeks to chart its own path. India is one of the foremost members of the Non-Aligned Movement and explicitly seeks to create its own path between the superpowers. India and China represent two sides of the same coin: India is a mixed economy, while China is staunchly communist. Each currently remains aloof from the influence the superpowers wish to exert on them. These two powers, which are themselves rivals, represent the fact that the superpowers' control over the international community is not absolute, and there are some very large parts of the world that remain wholly or partially outside of their conflict.

Aside from the powerful nations of the world, there are also the ongoing and unprecedented events of decolonization. For the first time in world history, each year sees new nations joining the international community. While postwar plans by the imperial powers of Europe often involved a period of nation-building before full independence, the reality of decolonization has been messy, unplanned, and largely driven not by European statesmen, but by the nationalist aspirations of colonized peoples. However, just as these countries are breaking free of the shackles of colonialism, many are being drawn into the conflict of the Cold War.

The non-aligned movement represents the aspirations of some nations to avoid joining the Eastern or Western blocs. Despite these aspirations, civil wars have divided several recently decolonized nations into communist and capitalist factions, and the superpowers each seek to draw newly independent nations into their orbits. Finally, there is the influence of the People's Republic of China. Though the PRC has voiced support for decolonial movements, and specifically for communist-aligned movements, the Sino-Soviet split has created a third power that also seeks to spread its ideology on the world stage. Even once a nation falls into the communist sphere, it is important to know whether its leaders will look to Moscow or Beijing for guidance.

Topic C - Managing Tensions at the Sino-Indian Border.

Tensions between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India have been simmering and could boil over soon over their shared border along the Himalayas. The recent escalation in violence is rooted in the deep history of the land border these two states share. India and China recognize two different borders which date all the way back to the early 1900s when India was still under British rule. The desire of both nations to maintain territorial lines, avoiding

increased scale of conflict, and, if possible, still promote a pan-Asian alliance on the global stage has meant an uncertain future.

The McMahon Line is the border between India and Tibet that was decided in 1914 at the Shimla Conference. While Chinese delegates were present for the conference, they did not sign the final agreement based on their objection to Tibet's ability to sign any agreement on their own. At the time Tibet was functioning as an autonomous region of China and despite Chinese protest, was declaring itself independent.[12] China continues to maintain its position on the border to this day and goes further in claiming that Chinese territory extends beyond the McMahon Line, protruding into territory that India recognizes as its own.[13] While the McMahon Line is more or less a division of the Himalayas across geographical boundaries, it was drawn in 1914 when the area was more difficult to explore than it is now. The Indian government has claimed some area on the Chinese side of the McMahon Line as their own, citing insufficient mapping of the area at the time it was drawn (see Fig. 1), adding yet another layer to the complexity inherent in the border dispute.[14] This border is understandably a source of tension, but it was not always a conflict zone.

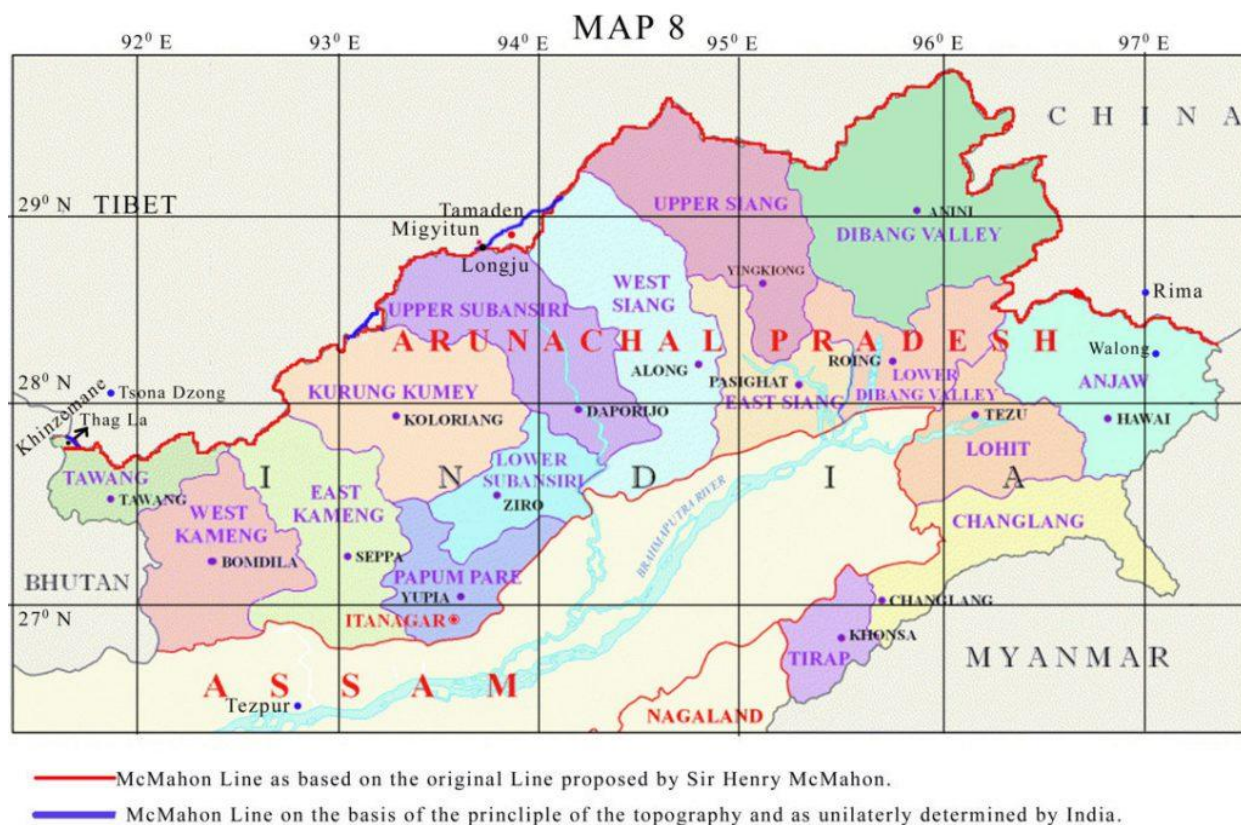**Figure 6. The McMahon Line and Additional Indian Claims[15]**

[12]https://freetibet.org/freedom-for-tibet/history-of-tibet/tibets-history-timelines/
[13]https://www.britannica.com/event/McMahon-Line
[14]https://theprint.in/defence/how-brutal-chinese-assault-across-namka-chu-drove-indian-forces-back-as-1962-war-broke-out/1176634/#
[15]https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/this-day-in-history-sept08/

Source: BYJU, 2023

In 1954, India and the People's Republic of China signed the Panchsheel Agreement, an attempt from both sides to define what terms for a mutually beneficial future would be. Both delegations were hoping it could be a framework for a third way, with Indian Prime Minister Nehru going as far as to say he was hoping it could be a foundation for peace and security throughout the world.[16] Unfortunately, the Panchsheel Agreement failed to bring about lasting friendly relations between India and China, and bilateral talks continued over the border until the most recent incident this year. The Panchsheel Agreement did lower the temperature on the border briefly though, with the end of that era punctuated by the Kongka Pass incident.[17]

The Kongka Pass incident on October 21st, 1959 heightened the tensions along the Sino-Indian border significantly. During this incident, an Indian patrol near the McMahon Line went missing, captured by Chinese soldiers who claimed they had crossed the border at Kongka Pass. Both states claim their forces were only patrolling their own territory.[18] Indian policemen formed a search party to find the missing patrol which encountered Chinese forces and engaged them in a

---

[16]https://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/191_panchsheel.pdf
[17]https://www.usiofindia.org/publication-journal/1962-the-battle-of-namka-chu-and-fall-of-tawang-a-view-from-other-side-of-the-hill.html
[18]http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/chinese-shadow-darkens/

firefight which led to the death of ten Indian policemen and one Chinese soldier.[19] This outbreak of violence helped establish what would become the status quo in the region, with both sides establishing outposts along the border.

In 1961 the Indian government outlined its so-called "Forward Policy" concerning the Sino-Indian border. The Forward Policy called for the establishment of military outposts along the border in contested but uncontrolled territory to cement India's presence in the region and push China to relinquish its claims on the disputed territory. The Chinese responded in kind, dotting the map with outposts and causing military buildup on both sides. By September 1962, an operation from India to remove Chinese from the Kameng division of North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) was coined Operation LEGHORN.[20]

Small skirmishes between sides were relatively common, but casualties were in the dozens at most—although tensions appear at an all-time high this month. An attack on Indian-occupied Tseng-jong on October 10th, for instance, forced Indian troops to withdraw and resulted in 77 Chinese dead and a hundred injured.[21] Critical shortages in materials and enforcement have illustrated a half-baked commitment to militarization in the region, to some extent strategic in the purposes of minimizing the scale of conflicts.[22] Nehru has had strong doubts that China will willingly escalate further, especially considering how it may impact other ongoing geopolitical tensions.[23]

The future of the Sino-Indian border and Sino-Indian relations more broadly is up in the air. Both sides seem to believe they are only defending their rightful claims to the land. Further, the Chinese leadership is skeptical of Indian relations with Tibet while Indian leadership notes their close cultural and historical ties as their reason for interest rather than eyeing Tibet as an avenue for territorial expansion. Bilateral talks have failed to produce any meaningful progress and prior to this confrontation neither the United States nor the Soviet Union expressed serious concerns about this potential flashpoint, instead focusing on their own tensions and conflicts.[24] While this escalation may prompt their interest, if India and China want to forge their own way forward and form the 'Asian Axis' that Nehru desired, they will have to find a way through this on their own.[25]

---

[19]https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/hot-springs-the-chinese-and-police-commemoration-day-7582748/
[20]https://archive.claws.in/images/journals_doc/18-Confrontation%20At%20Thag%20La%20-%20Indo%20China%20War%201962.pdf
[21]https://idsa.in/system/files/jds_6_4_JohanSkogJesen.pdf
[22]https://archive.claws.in/images/journals_doc/18-Confrontation%20At%20Thag%20La%20-%20Indo%20China%20War%201962.pdf
[23]https://www.usiofindia.org/publication-journal/indias-wars-since-independence-a-concise-history.html
[24]https://www.usiofindia.org/publication-journal/1962-the-battle-of-namka-chu-and-fall-of-tawang-a-view-from-other-side-of-the-hill.html
[25]https://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/china%20decision%20for%201962%20war%202003.pdf

Additional Resources:
- India's Third Five Year Plan
  https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/024/1962/003/article-A005-en.xml#
- The Financial System in India (1962)
  https://www.ide.go.jp/library/English/Publish/Periodicals/De/pdf/62_02_07.pdf
- Sino-Indian Cultural Relations (1961)
  https://www.jstor.org/stable/763322
- U-2 Overflights and the Capture of Francis Gary Powers, 1960
  https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/u2-incident
- The Bay of Pigs Invasion and its Aftermath, April 1961–October 1962
  https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/bay-of-pigs
- Bandung Conference (Asian-African Conference), 1955
  https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/bandung-conf
- Non-Aligned Movement
  https://www.britannica.com/topic/Non-Aligned-Movement
- Report from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, 'The Soviet Union's Stance on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question and Soviet-Indian Relations'
  https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/report-chinese-foreign-ministry-soviet-unions-stance-sino-indian-boundary-question-and
- The Sino-Indian Border Dispute (1961-62)
  https://web.archive.org/web/20070701042636/http://www.foia.cia.gov/CPE/POLO/polo-09.pdf