In January 1950, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to the Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, seeking a joint declaration of a No War Pact. The two undertook a lengthy correspondence on this subject, spanning across a year that saw rising levels of resentment and hostility between the two countries. Yet, as the Inter Dominion correspondence on the No War Declaration during this period shows, neither government was actually predisposed to a belligerent position, and critically engaged with the possibility of signing a declaration that would renounce the use of war.

Although much of the existing literature on India-Pakistan relations characterises this as locked in acrimony and conflict, which arose from the bitterness of partition, and the continuing conflict in Kashmir, a closer scrutiny reveals a more complicated picture. As I hope to show through my discussion of the correspondence on the No War Pact, conflict was not inevitable in the India-Pakistan relationship, and both governments also repeatedly engaged with each other to find spaces of agreement and compromise. Such engagements – and the rationale for undertaking them – complicate our understanding of a relationship confined to an instinctive hostility, and help in creating a more rounded picture of engagements between India and Pakistan.

**Abstract**

In January 1950, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to the Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, seeking a joint declaration of a No War Pact. The two undertook a lengthy correspondence on this subject, spanning across a year that saw rising levels of resentment and hostility between the two countries. Yet, as the Inter Dominion correspondence on the No War Declaration during this period shows, neither government was actually predisposed to a belligerent position, and critically engaged with the possibility of signing a declaration that would renounce the use of war.

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**Event Details**

Wednesday, 20 February 2013
3.00pm to 4.30pm

Malay Studies Seminar Room
AS7 #04-13
Kent Ridge Campus
National University of Singapore

**About the Speaker**

Pallavi Raghavan has recently completed a PhD in History from the University of Cambridge, and obtained a Masters in Modern Indian History from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her doctoral dissertation examined the attempts at dialogue, agreement and compromise between the governments of India and Pakistan during the first decade of their independence. She is currently based in Singapore.