

## 2 CHAPTER

# *India and China Relations*

*After reading the chapter, the reader will be able to develop an analytical understanding on the following:*

- Diplomatic history
- Tibet Issue
- Border problem
- Pakistan factor in Sino-Indian relations
- Commercial diplomacy and Nuclear diplomacy
- Analysis of bilateral visits and recent standoffs

### **DIPLOMATIC HISTORY OF INDIA–CHINA RELATIONS**

When India became independent, three broad events influenced the formation of India's China policy. In 1949, there was a revolution in China and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was formed, establishing the People's Republic of China (PRC). The newly established PRC accepted the Leninist–Stalinist style of state administration. The CCP immediately removed the buffer of Tibet which acted as a barrier between India and China by forcefully annexing Tibet to China. As we also know, the early 1950s was a period of decolonisation. As new countries were born in the region, the question that emerged was what role would India and China play in this newly emerging postcolonial world order. The anxiety was about how India and China would behave in the era of bipolarity.

India propounded its NAM ideology as an ideology of the decolonised world and used this to position itself as a third force in the era of bipolarity. However, India realized that success or failure of its position in a new international order will depend upon the support or opposition to its efforts by China. India observed China unfolding very cautiously. In the early 1950s, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was aggressively moving in the Tibetan region and trying to expand infrastructure there to incorporate it in the PRC. The British had always maintained Tibet as a buffer, and its annexation heightening Indian concerns. This acted as an important factor in our Chinese policy formulation. Nehru wanted to win the support of China to ensure that this gave us the leverage for implementing our world view as envisaged. Nehru believed that an East led by India and China could guide the world morally at a time when the Western thought process was being guided by polarized ideological underpinnings. This view also brought Nehru close to the idea of establishing proximity to China.

### **Patel Factor in China Policy**

Nehru's idea was based on cooperation than containment. Vallabhbhai Patel, in contrast, had been a keen advocate of a more cautious approach. He sensed that China's moves need to be carefully dealt with. Patel advocated for a military build-up for India and creation of roads near the China border, along with other vital infrastructure. He even favoured US cooperation to balance China if needed. But his death in 1950 gave Nehru the steering wheel of India's China policy and Nehru could not be challenged by anyone thereafter.

During the initial period, India advised China not to undertake aggressive occupation of Tibet and insisted that it would continue to follow the British policy to engage diplomatically with Tibet, continuing with small missions in Lhasa and Shigatse. Nehru was not in favour of any US cooperation to contain China as he found it to be a Cold War tactic. In 1954, India and China came out with an agreement on Tibet. In the agreement, India agreed to recognise Tibet as a part of China and decided not to continue any special rights as inherited from the British in Tibet. The agreement contained the famous Panchsheel.



However, the bonhomie over the Panchsheel began to fade away when the border issue began to erupt and subsequently, by 1959, the relations began to collapse. The Nehruvian dream of cooperation with PRC to write new rules for the Asian continent was now crumbling. All the support India extended for rapprochement with China came crushing down. The warmth post-1954 agreement that manifested as Hindi–Chini in early 1950s was based on two pillars. Firstly, it was believed that supporting China would restrain from militarising Tibet; and that, secondly China would cooperate with India to ensure that they rewrite the rules of a newly decolonised Asia.

Why did the partnership dwindle away? To understand this, we need to look at some international events. In 1953, Stalin died and was succeeded by Nikita Khrushchev, who attempted to steer the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) to undertake peace with West. This created a strain between Khrushchev and Mao in China. Mao started insinuating that Khrushchev was misleading the revolutionary movements and it was the responsibility of CCP and CPSU to provide true leadership to the Soviet Union. This view of Mao also manifested in Afro–Asian rivalry with India. India had considerable influence in Africa, with Nehru constantly pitching for aggressive non-violent and non-revolutionary policies. According to Mao, this created a misleading effect on African leaders, who were being influenced to fight for freedom in a non-violent way and he advocated that revolution was the only way ahead. The 1962 Indo–China conflict gave Mao the needed push to sustain his African campaign of revolution and he succeeded in tilting many African nations towards the revolutionary ideal. This resulted in tensions in India, as India began to perceive that China had already embarked upon a divergent and different path of violence and revolution which precluded any possibility of cooperation and ideological convergence.

## **KPS Menon on China and Tibet**

KPS Menon was India's first Ambassador to China. In his autobiography, he states that Nehru wanted to support the independence of Tibet. Menon explained that the Nehruvian policy to support the independence of Tibet was a British policy he continued. However, it needs to be said that the British never exactly supported the independence of Tibet from China. The British favoured Tibetan autonomy and British influence in Tibet. Thus, in this autobiography, Menon used the independence of Tibet as a term which here signified the same as autonomy and not actual independence.

During the period of the 1950s, when China began to consolidate its position in Tibet, the US, through its CIA, covertly supported Tibetans. This largely synchronised with the US policy to contain a communist China and the disgruntled Tibetans gave the US enough reasons to send in the CIA to undertake covert activities. The CIA's support of arms and equipment convinced Mao that India-US-USSR trio was collectively conspiring against China. The policy stance of India preferring that China not build up military infrastructure in Tibet aggravated Mao's fears. In March, 1959, there was a massive Tibetan uprising as a result of which, Nehru extended support to the Dalai Lama and also adopted a sympathetic attitude towards Tibet's cause. The Dalai Lama and his followers were given refuge in Dharamshala. This convinced Mao that India was responsible for the 1959 uprising. In 1950, the PRC and the USSR had signed an alliance treaty where in it was agreed that both would always support each other. However, in 1959, the USSR declared neutrality. This affirmed Mao's belief of a possible India-US-USSR axis to contain China in Tibet.

## **Tibet, India, China and Border Issues**

Tibet was independent even in the era of the Qing dynasty in China. It remained independent after the White Lotus Rebellion from 1796 to 1806. When Qing dynasty collapsed in 1911–12, Tibet proclaimed its independence. The China-India border is actually a Tibet-India border. In 1913–14, the British and Tibet signed the Simla Agreement, where Henry McMahon proposed the drawing of borders according to a proposed plan. After the treaty was signed, the McMahon Line was drawn to demarcate borders. However, all Chinese governments subsequently till date have refused to accept the Simla Agreement, and in extension, the validity of the McMahon Line, insisting that Tibet had always been a part of China, with no authority to sign treaties independently with foreign powers. The McMahon Line demarcated the Eastern Indo-Tibet border but there was no such frontier in the West in 1947. India continued to claim Aksai Chin as apart of India in the western sector despite having no administrative or military presence in Aksai Chin. China used the Aksai Chin territory, which was a part of Dogra kingdom in Kashmir, in 1950 to invade Tibet. Further, in 1953 India consolidated its position in the Eastern Sector by controlling Tawang which was a territory south of the McMahon Line. After the

Panchsheel agreement in 1954, the MEA was informed of the need to have a new map with Aksai Chin in western sector declared as a part of India and in the eastern sector along McMahon Line. However, the new maps were not to have references to any line and ensure that India left no undemarcated territory. China did not object to Indian cartographic stance and Nehru took it for granted that no opposition from China essentially signalled their acquiescence to the border arrangement.

In 1957, China established a road in Aksai Chin. This road was vital to take infrastructural equipment and logistics from PLA to Tibet. As this road was established, it created a storm. In 1960, Zhou told Nehru that China would give up its claims on Arunachal if India gives up claim on the Western sector. Nehru rejected the proposal, aggravating Zhou's fear that India wants to undermine China's control of Tibet.

Zhou subsequently also refused to recognise the McMahon Line as the boundary between China and India despite his initial willingness to do so if India was willing to give up claim of Aksai Chin. Subsequently, from November 1961, Nehru began to encourage Indian troops to go upto high altitude regions to assert their claim. Unfortunately, the military build up lacked high altitude training, and was short of adequate logistics to sustain presence in the terrain. Nehru rejected a compromise settlement and began a hard-line forward policy based on weak military support. The Chinese finally retaliated aggressively in October 1962 in the eastern sector. This led to a Chinese move deep inside the Indian side almost up to Brahmaputra plain. After one month of aggression, the Chinese declared a ceasefire and maintained status quo. The ambassador level relations broke in 1962 and was finally only revived in 1976.

After the defeat of India came a sea change in our domestic politics. In India, the public opinion saw the 1962 war as a betrayal by China over all support and friendship extending by India. The Indian leadership, in the post war period, assumed a realistic stance over an idealistic one to deal with China. India began to build up its military aggressively.

Up until Indira Gandhi, India's China policy was based on the premise that the resolution of the border issue was the only thing that could take the Indo-China relation forward. Post-1962 saw growth in the proximity between India and the USSR, and on the other hand, in the proximity between China and Pakistan. During 1960s, the Russia-China hostility, which owed its roots to the Khrushchev-Mao conflict, further increased and the resultant tilt of the USSR to India culminated in the 1971 USSR-India Treaty. In 1971, as India and USSR came closer, the US decided to cooperate with China to contain the USSR and punish India. In 1971, the Indo-Pakistan war saw a mega shift. The US began to undertake rapprochement with China while the India-USSR nexus strengthened and automatically brought Pakistan and China closer to keep an eye on India.

Things did improve in 1976 when ambassador level relations were restarted and the Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua visited India and agreed to restart talks on the border issues. In 1986-87, Rajiv Gandhi introduced a new change in the Sino-India policy. He firstly dropped the precondition that the border issue was a pre-requisite for bilateral talks. He favoured improvement in other dimensions of relations on an assumption that cooperation in other areas would create a positive and conducive environment for border talks. In 1988, he visited China and decided to launch a Joint

Working Group (JWG) on the border issue. The Deng Xiaoping era too had dropped the revolutionary spirit of Mao and favoured a market oriented economy. This too played an important role in the new Sino–Indian rapprochement. Many events at the end of the Cold War fostered Indo–China cooperation. In 1989, when USSR began to disintegrate, there were protests in China that challenged the CCP rule in China. The CCP resorted to military strength crush them, resulting in the suppression and massacre of the mobs at the Tiananmen Square. This dented the Sino–America relations. Moreover, the fall of communism, Berlin Wall and the independence of the satellite states of the Soviet Union made the survival of CCP uncertain. The CCP, out of its need for survival, initiated a good neighbourhood policy to build up relations with India. The Russian Federation succeeded the USSR and refused to play a dominant role in South Asian affairs. As the Cold War ended, India lost the power backup of the USSR and as the Gulf War–1 progressed, it created financial crisis in India as it choked its remittances from the region. India and China began to develop proximity mutual understanding for their own survival. China wanted India not to internationalise the Beijing massacre while India conveyed to China that it would support the Chinese ideology of opposing any western interference in internal affairs.



### **Border Issues at End of the Cold War**

India did not participate with the West to isolate China after the Tiananmen Square massacre, where troops with assault rifles and tanks killed at least several hundred demonstrators trying to block the military's advance towards Tiananmen Square. The number of civilian deaths has been estimated at anywhere from hundreds to thousands. India used the opportunity to patch up with China. As the JWG established by Rajiv Gandhi on border issue moved ahead, in 1993 and 1996, India concluded separate confidence building measures (CBM) to reduce confrontation and tensions. In 2005, arrangements on political parameters and guiding principles for the settlement of the Indo–China boundary question were signed. In 2013, another positive step that was taken up was the border defence cooperation agreement (BDCA). However, in the recent times, China has resorted to increased investment in border infrastructure and has collaborated with Pakistan over the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor. The simultaneous Border infrastructure built up by both in recent times has become a source of tension due to rising transgression and incursions.

Coming of Vajpayee marked another shift in India's China policy. The Vajpayee government was based on promise of realism. The Indian administration wrote to the US to clarify India's need to undertake the nuclear test, clearly pointing out to the threat to India's sovereignty being the reasons. The Indian communication was leaked in the US and as the contents pointed to the threat from China's proximity being an important reason for Pokhran–II, it led to a fall in Sino–India relations. In 1998, after Pokhran–II, the US and China came out with a Joint Statement that declared that India should abandon nuclear weapon acquisition and the sign NPT and become a non-nuclear weapon state. The subsequent Talbot and Jaswant Singh talks brought to force the threat India genuinely faced from China and convinced the US of the threat India genuinely witnessed from



China. The US agreed not to align with China against India and help India become a global player. The India diaspora in the US and the Indian economy's wealth generating potential also acted as factors in the Indo-US rapprochement. The subsequent strategic posturing of the US and nuclear deal with India alarmed China. As Chinese realised the potential of the growing US-India proximity, it dropped the 'punish India' rhetoric over India's 'Chinese threat' theory and began to create its own space in Indo-China relations. In 2005, China and India signed a Strategic Partnership agreement. China accommodated Sikkim as a part of India but welcomed India at regional level by including it in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), whose member India became in August, 2016. The basic reason for this new found conciliatory approach of China was to ensure India does not become a hedge against the alliance between China and the US.

## **NUCLEAR DIPLOMACY BETWEEN INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS**

After the Sino-India war, at the global level, to defuse the Cuban missile crisis, came the partial test ban treaty (PTBT) in 1963. India signed the PTBT thinking it would help the diplomatic posturing of India in the context of a long-term disarmament policy but China refused its ratification. In 1964, China tested nuclear weapons and opened the nuclear dimension in security confrontation. India subsequently tested its nuclear weapon in 1974 but still shied away from developing further nuclear weapons. In 1998, India finally conducted nuclear tests and became a nuclear weapon state. The rationale forwarded by Vajpayee was Chinese threat and its clandestine support to nuclearise Pakistan. India effectively stated that the Chinese threat was the reason for India to go nuclear even when China, in contrast, had not resorted to citing the India threat as a reason for its own nuclear weapons programme.

To understand the issue better, we need to revisit the Cold War. During the Cold War, what compelled China to go nuclear was the US and the Soviet Union having weapons. At any point of time even during that period, China never hinted it would use nuclear weapons against India. India, in contrast, believed that China could use the threat of nuclear weapons to coerce India and it is the nuclear weapon that had given China an international status that it may use to undermine India's attempt to increase its prestige amongst Asia and elsewhere. China further clarified that its nuclear weapon status is based on minimum credible deterrence and also announced its 'No First Use' policy, thus nullifying the threat that Indian had envisaged. The nuclear threat to India, however, got aggravated when in 1971, the USS Enterprise reached the Bay of Bengal. Thus, keeping these threats in mind, India resorted to increasing its own power which led to Pokhran-I in 1974. But even after 1974, India discontinued the urge to go fully nuclear as it felt that the demonstration of capabilities was more important than using them.

China went nuclear in 1964 but joined the IAEA in 1985. In this two-decade period, the media did prop up the issue of China proliferating to Pakistan. After China joined the IAEA in 1985 and the CTBT in 1996, it became an advocate and supporter of non-proliferation. However, the world is suspicious about China's claims due to its activities from 1964 to 1985 with respect to Pakistan, Iran and North Korea. Though China has accepted military ties with Pakistan, it has maintained that it has not given any ballistic missile capabilities carrying nuclear weapon to Pakistan. Despite Chinese refusal to accept that Pakistan had received nuclear weapon assistance from China, the international society

continues to hold China responsible for proliferation to Pakistan. India has perceived all Chinese support to Pakistan at the military level, especially at the nuclear weapon level, as part of a strategy particularly designed to contain India. All these factors compelled the Indian strategic community to move in favour of Pokhran–II.

It is noteworthy, however, that China was merely one of the many important factors, not least of which was India's ambition to position itself as a great power and its domestic political compulsions. However, China took the Pokhran–II as part of an anti-China rhetoric. In fact, Vajpayee's letter to Clinton accentuated the Chinese threat theory as Vajpayee had clearly mentioned that what compelled India to conduct a nuclear test was the fact that it shared its borders with a nuclear weapon state that had indulged in aggression against India in 1962. Though China was not directly mentioned, it was a fairly unambiguous insinuation.

Many in China had believed that India had a right to conduct a nuclear weapon test and there could have otherwise been no reason for China to oppose it until India's 'China threat' theory came to light. Consequently, officially China strongly condemned India's Pokhran–II and declared that India had resorted to immaturely blaming China for its urge to go nuclear. China said that it was never a threat to India as it had stated that it would never use nuclear weapon against non-nuclear weapon states. China also stated that India wanted to establish dominance over South Asia and its nuclear weapon test was a gesture to that effect. Thus, the Chinese threat theory became a major irritant in the relations as China clarified that a pre-requisite for a healthy relationship was an absence of fear from each other.

However, after Pokhran–II, India did take steps to revive talks with China. India committed that dialogue was the only way out and even invited China to revive dialogues. In 1999, an Indian mission reached China and subsequently Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan agreed to take note of things. In June, 1999, Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh went to China to resume talks. That was the time India succeeded in patching up with the US, France, Russia, with China realising it was being isolated and hence, gradually softening its position. In September, 2000, India sent two naval ships on a goodwill visit to China. Thus, both realised the need to increase goodwill visits to foster mutual understanding. An Indo–China Eminent Persons Group was established. Considering the fact that India too has announced a 'no first use' policy, there is a high possibility that there will never be a nuclear conflict between India and China. However, China continues to be reluctant to accept India as a nuclear weapons state as it does not want India to emerge as a great power in its own neighbourhood. China observes that granting the status of a nuclear weapon state to India would jeopardise the international community's efforts for non-proliferation as it would be tantamount to admitting India's entry in the global nuclear order despite it being a non-signatory to the NPT and the CTBT. Even today, China is confident of its nuclear superiority over India and is concerned with a rise of Indo–US cooperation because of the possibility of the US using India as a hedge against China.

## **BASICS OF TIBET ISSUE IN INDIA–CHINA RELATIONS**

Despite the fact that India recognised Tibet as a part of China, it continues even today as an issue that has precipitated a culture of distrust. China insists that Tibet is an internal

matter and India should clarify its own intentions with regard to the Tibetan policy since it continues to support and shelter the Dalai Lama. China feels that this move breached the Panchsheel agreement. India continues to officially support that Tibet is a part of China as recognised in 1954 but, ironically, still supports the Tibetan government in exile in India as Tibet can give India the required leverage against China.

In 1951, Tibet and China signed a 17 Point Agreement and China agreed to grant autonomy to Tibet. But after the 1959 uprising, the degree of autonomy dwindled, with India subsequently allowing the Dalai Lama to establish a Tibetan government in exile in 1960 became an irritant. The primary aim of China policy is to reduce the influence of the Dalai Lama in Tibet. The Dalai Lama is the religious head of Tibetan people and China did initially have a dialogue with Dalai Lama. Since 1993, however, China suspended dialogue on the pretext that the Dalai Lama had been adamant on splitting Tibet from China. China continues to insist that Tibet has been a part of China since the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) and has branded the military operation to invade Tibet in 1950 as an exercise of peaceful liberation. Tibetans, on the other hand, hold that before the 1950 Chinese operation, Tibet was independent, and that, in Yuan Dynasty period, China and Tibet had established a priest–patron relation which in no way implies that Tibet became a vassal of China. The Dalai Lama has adopted the process of challenging China on three grounds.



## **BORDER ISSUE IN INDIA–CHINA RELATIONS**

Till the end of the 19th century, the Tibetans preferred to stay in isolation. The Tibetans, in their beliefs and customs, are different from the Han Chinese, with the Dalai Lama acting as the spiritual head of the Tibetans. The Dalai Lama, both the spiritual and political head of the Tibetans, never owed any allegiance to the Chinese emperor like the rulers of Korea and Vietnam did. In 1717, there was an invasion launched by Dzungar tribesmen on Tibet and the Chinese armies entered Tibet to drive out the invaders. The Chinese emperor stationed a military governor in Lhasa after the defeat of the invaders. The Chinese emperor also began to post commissioners, known as 'Ambans', in Tibet during the 18th century. The Tibetans were instructed to respect the position of the Ambans. Though the Chinese did not attempt any annexation of Tibet, neither did they assure Tibet of its complete independence. Till the end of the 19th century, neither did the Tibetans attempt any engagement with the outside world nor was it encouraged by the Chinese.

The study of Tibetan history can be said to have originated in the year 1895. It was in 1895 that the 13th Dalai Lama Thubten Gyatso attained maturity and took up the title of the head of Tibet. For mysterious reasons, the earlier Dalai Lamas, for nearly a century prior to 1895, failed to attain maturity and used to pass away. Due to this, the Tibetan rule was under the control of Regents. The Tibetans were immensely dissatisfied with the rule of Regents because of widespread corruption during their rule. In 1890, the British and the



Chinese concluded a treaty for trade via the Sikkim–Tibet border. The treaty signed did not include the Tibetans. This increased the anger of the Tibetans, who destroyed border markers planted by the British in protest. The Tibetans asserted that Chinese and British could not conclude a trade treaty that involved the borders of Tibet without negotiating with the Tibetans. In 1893, a convention was signed by the British and the Chinese to enable duty free movement of goods to Tibet via Yating in Chumbi Valley. This increased the Tibetans' ire even further. At this juncture, Thubten Gyantso realised that Tibet would need support of a third power to enjoy true autonomy, which would be restricted till Tibet remains sandwiched between China and Britain.

Thubten looked to Russia to support. Thubten had his own teacher, Agvan Dorzhiev, a Khori-Buryat Mongol from Siberia, to play the role of his mediator with Russia. The period from 1898 to 1901 saw regular visits by the team of Thubten to the court of Tsar Nicholas II in Russia. These regular interactions between the Tibetans and Russians generated tremendous suspicion in the minds of the British and the Chinese. In 1899, in Indian Viceroy, Lord Elgin was replaced with Lord Curzon as the next Viceroy. Curzon was a person who harboured an enormous hatred for the Russians and was extremely alarmed when apprised about the visits between Tibetans and Russians. Initially Curzon sent letters to Dalai Lama to establish contact with the Tibetans but his letters were sent back to India without having been opened. Curzon decided to send a mission led by Francis Young husband to Lhasa. The mission was sent to inform Lhasa to implement the 1893 trade convention properly. The idea was that the mission will proceed upto Khamba Jong and meet the Tibetans but the mission did not reach Khamba Jong. The British, instead, forcibly moved to Gyantse and from there to Lhasa by 1904.

By the time the British reached Lhasa, Thubten and Dorzhiev fled the city. Young husband's mission concluded with a new treaty with the Tibetan Regent which got the British access to all the trading marts. As per the treaty, a British Regent would be stationed in South Tibet to continue the enforcement of the earlier treaty of 1890. The most important point of the treaty signed by Young husband was that the Tibetans were no longer authorised to conclude third party treaties, including with China, without approval from the British. The British signed the treaty with the Tibetan Regent but neither designated Tibet as a new British protectorate nor established its presence in Tibet. The British promoted a unique concept where they asserted their influence on Tibet while allowing China to maintain a low level of administrative presence. The British ensured that Tibet enjoyed some amount of autonomy as well. China took the opportunity of the 1904 Lhasa convention and decided to conclude an Anglo–Chinese convention in 1906. In the 1906 convention, China asserted that it would not allow Tibet to enter into treaties with any third state and that the British would have to accept the conditions as well as agree that they would not annex or interfere in Tibet. The British agreed and concluded the convention. In 1907 there was an Anglo–Russian convention signed where Britain and Russia agreed not to negotiate with Tibet alone without the presence of Chinese intermediaries.

Since the Dalai Lama and Dorzhiev had already fled Tibet, the entire Tibetan population came under the control of the Chinese Ambans. This also led to an increase in Chinese presence in Tibet. The perception of the Chinese of the 1906 and 1907 conventions was that both Britain and Russia agreed to allowing Chinese supremacy in

Tibetan region. The Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa in 1909, but by then, the Chinese had aggressively taken over the control of Tibet, forcing the Dalai Lama to again leave Lhasa for India.

The period from 1824 to 1826 saw the Anglo–Burmese wars, which concluded in Assam becoming part of the British Indian Empire. The British extended their presence in Assam by undertaking tea plantations on the hill slopes of Assam. As the number of tea plantations in the area increased, the British had a direct conflict with tribes of Assam. In order to end the conflict between the British and the tribals, the British concluded not only various agreements with the tribal groups but also created an inner line system and outer line system. Through these inner and outer line systems, the British ensured that their trade convoys to Tibet were protected. However, the British soon became quite alarmed by the rise of Chinese presence in Tibet and also feared a possible Russian annexation. The Chinese were even planning to establish a road link from Tibet to Assam and were also present in the Lohit Valley region. The British not only feared Chinese advances, but were also uncomfortable with the idea of extending their presence in the frontier areas till Tibet as that might have brought them into conflict with the tribals.

The British tried to resolve their dilemma after the events of March 1911. As per the previous inner line and outer line agreements, the British were to have their presence restricted to the inner line areas only. The British were not allowed to undertake expeditions in the outer line areas which were reserved for the tribes. In 1911, a British officer Noel Williamson crossed the banks of Dihing and entered into the outer line areas occupied by Abor tribe. This led to massive retribution from the Abors, leading them to massacre Williamson's entire team. The British decided in favour of a prompt retaliation but decided to take this as an opportunity to carry out survey into the area as well. The British plan was to survey and carry out explorations to forestall Chinese designs and conclude the finalisation of the Sino–Indian boundary. Another event that strengthened the British policy was the fall of the Qing dynasty rule in Peking. The fall of the Qing Dynasty led to the rise of a Republican government. As the Qing dynasty collapsed, there was also a mutiny in Tibet, leading to the collapse of Ambans in Tibet and the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa in 1912.

Taking the advantage of a weak central government in Peking, the British now acted on the goal of keeping the Chinese and Russians out of Tibet while ensuring that Tibet remains autonomous as a state and acts as a buffer between India and China. The British began to play their cards through the British minister in Peking, Sir John Newell Jordan. Sir John Jordan shot off a memorandum to Peking in 1912 that asserted that Chinese officials were interfering in the administration of Tibet in a violation of the Sino–British convention signed in 1906. Jordan further asserted that British did recognise the suzerainty of China in the Tibetan region but China had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Tibetan administration. Through the memorandum, the British told the Chinese to remove their troops from Tibet and conclude a fresh agreement on Tibet. In 1913, China accepted the offer for fresh negotiations. On 23rd May, 1913, the British invited China to conclude a tripartite agreement to settle the Tibetan question. By extending the invitation, the British shrewdly granted Tibet equal status to British and China. The Chinese did protest on this but without success.

The British appointed the Foreign Secretary Sir Arthur Henry McMahon as the chairman of the conference of the three parties. The conference began in Simla on 13th October, 1913, with Ivan Chen as the Chinese representative and Lonchen Shatra as the Tibetan representative. At the outset of the conference, McMahon unveiled his plan. As per the plan, the British favoured the division of Tibet into Outer Tibet and Inner Tibet. The region of Outer Tibet as envisaged was the region bordering India and the British proposed that the Chinese will have no influence in the region as Outer Tibet will act as a buffer state dependent upon the British for reasons of autonomy. As the negotiations began, the Chinese objected to such a division of Tibet. On the other hand, the British had gained the confidence of Lonchen Shatra and were adamant to go ahead with their proposal by concluding a bilateral agreement with the Tibetans. On 3rd July, 1914, McMahon and Lonchen Shatra concluded a bilateral agreement while Ivan Chen insisted that the Chinese would not accept any bilaterally concluded agreement between Tibet and Britain.



By drawing a red line as per the Simla agreement, the British added another 50, 000 sq. km. territory to the British Empire. The Sela pass and Tawang region (in present day Arunachal), along with the trade routes Lhasa via Assam, were added to the British territory. A major part of the territory added by the British to the British Empire in India was controlled by Tibet. Tibetans agreed to demarcate the new boundary via a red line provided the British would maintain the private estates of the Tibetans in the new boundary. The Tibetans insisted that they would have problem in accepting the new border if Tso Karpo and Tsari Sarpa (the two sacred places for Tibetans) did not fall under the Tibetan territory. McMahon agreed to the two conditions and sent the copies of the new maps with red lines from Isu Razi Pass to Bhutan to Lonchen Shatra. The British, through the agreement, achieved their strategic objectives regarding the Tibetan frontier. The subsequent period saw Tibet enjoying autonomy without any interference from Russia, Britain or China.

After the first Anglo-Sikh war in 1845-46, the British won the possession of Kashmir. The British did not directly administer Kashmir but handed over its administration to Gulab Singh. Gulab Singh was a Dogra chieftain and he established the Dogra rule in Kashmir that continued till 1947. The British, while handing over Kashmir to Gulab Singh, made certain provisions under the Treaty of Amritsar. The British noted that the eastern boundary of hills and region east of Indus were being transferred to Gulab Singh but the purpose of the transfer would be defined separately, after a separate survey by the British commissioners. By this provision in the Treaty of Amritsar, the British

accepted the fact that the eastern boundary of the kingdom of Kashmir was not defined. The British, not to upset the Chinese, maintained the ambiguous boundary in the east and did the same in north and west of Kashmir. The reason for the British attempts to establish any boundary in the eastern side of the territory held by Gulab Singh proved futile was because the British, earlier through two boundary commissions, had failed to establish a boundary. The Chinese asserted that the frontiers had existed since ancient times and needed no demarcation. The British considered an ancient boundary passing through the Karakorum ranges.

For the British, the Karakoram acted as a natural border. In 1865, Johnson carried out a survey of the region and prepared a map. In the map, Johnson showed the areas from Shahidulla, Aksai Chin to Kunlun ranges as a part of the Kashmir region. This map depicting the above regions was published in 1868. Only after the publication of the map by Johnson did the world get to know about the Aksai Chin region. In fact, it is important at this juncture to understand the reasons that could have motivated Johnson to incorporate the frontier upto Kunlun as part of Kashmir. In 1864, Yakub Beg of Kashgar had rebelled the Chinese and established the Kashgaria Kingdom. During his rebellion, the forces of Gulab Singh had assisted Yakub Beg and even built a fort in the Kashgar region. While undertaking the survey Johnson gained an impression that the frontier of Kashmir till the Kunlun ranges belonged to Gulab Singh, compelling him to redraw the map. After the publication of the maps of Johnson, the surveyor general of India, Colonel Walker, disowned them by asserting that Gulab Singh had no rights over the areas depicted in a map by Johnson.

In 1877, the Chinese army defeated Yakub Beg and captured the region of Kashgaria and renamed it Sinkiang. The British now feared that the Russians could move down further and control the entire Central Asia. The British feared that such a move would bring the Russians very close to the British frontier. To keep the Russians out of North Kashmir, the British established a military post in the Gilgit region. In 1892, British took over the control of Hunza and Nagar region in North Kashmir and the states remained under the British till 1947. However, the attitude of the chief of Hunza was of a veiled nature as the chief yielded Hunza's allegiance to Kashmir as well as to China. In 1899, the British minister in Peking, Sir Claude MacDonald urged the British minister in Kashgar, Charles Macartney, to propose a solution to the ambiguous boundary of Kashmir with China. The Macartney–MacDonald Line was proposed as a line for demarcating the boundary in which a recommendation was made to surrender the British rights over Hunza and offer China possessions of Tangambush, Raskam, Shaidulla and Aksai Chin. This proposal was sent to China and instead of responding, Peking decided to remain silent on the Macartney–McDonald line. The line had the potential to settle the dispute once and for all but China did not respond to the same.

In 1911, the Chinese revolution occurred and the Chinese central government collapsed. The British feared that Russia might revive its territorial aggression again. Thus, Lord Hardinge proposed that Kunlun range be made a watershed to the frontier of Tibet to prevent any Russian designs. But in 1917, the regime of the Tsar in Russia also collapsed. The absence of a strong regime in Russia and China gave the British the needed relief. Our discussion helps us to understand that the British used their policy to fix and re-fix the frontiers to suit their best strategic interests. The British resorted to cartographic

aggression as per their own changing needs.

While India became independent in 1947, China, during this time, was facing a violent civil war. Tibet saw the Chinese civil war as an opportunity to assert its autonomy. The Indian government, through a correspondence, informed the authorities in Tibet that all treaties signed by the British are now to be managed by its successor, the Government of India. Tibet, instead of merely acknowledging the correspondence, wrote back to Nehru that Tibet would like India to return the Tibetan territories in Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and Ladakh. India replied to Tibet about the fact that no change on the ground was possible till a new treaty was concluded. Zhou Enlai used this correspondence between Tibet and India to prove that the Tibetans had conveyed their displeasure with the McMahon Line.

The Chinese civil war finally came to an end in 1949, when the communists defeated the armies of Chiang Kai-shek and the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established by Mao Tse Tung. The Mao government in 1950 announced that People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China should work to ensure the 'liberation of Tibet'. In 1950, the PLA entered Tibet through Szechuan, Chamdo and Sinkinagh or Aksai Chin. It is at this juncture that India sent a diplomatic note to China asserting that it should respect Tibetan autonomy under the framework centred around Chinese suzerainty. China wrote back a strongly worded response to India asserting that the Tibetan issue, being a domestic issue of China, would be resolved by China as per the Chinese laws based on Chinese sovereignty.

The Chinese brought about an end to the Tibetan issue in 1951, when a seventeen point Sino-Tibet Agreement was concluded which asserted that Tibetans are one of the nationalities living in China since historical times. India too, after the Sino-Tibet agreement, relinquished the dream of working for Tibetan autonomy. But Nehru continued to take steps to improve India's ties with China. India even supported China for a seat to the UN Security Council. In 1952, China informed India that it was willing to discuss all inherited rights and issues, including the Tibetan case, through negotiations. This was a great opportunity for India to negotiate with China so that the McMahon Line be accepted as the border. However, Nehru thought that if India were to bring up the issue of McMahon line, there is a high possibility of China rejecting the line as, since 1914, none of the Chinese governments has ratified the Simla agreement. Nehru apprehended that if China rejected the McMahon line, they would insist on fresh negotiations, which may not be favourable to India. Thus, Nehru decided that India would not raise the border issue at the talks. In 1954, India and China concluded the Panchsheel agreement and there was a note exchanged by the two along with the agreement where India agreed to withdraw its military presence from Yating and Gyantse and ended all the privileges it had inherited from the British under the erstwhile Simla agreement of 1914.

In the Panchsheel Agreement, India accepted Tibet as a region of China. To understand why India did not raise up the border issue with China in these talks, we need to take a look at some facts here. In 1954, when China invited India to discuss issues, it said that the convention would be "to discuss specific problems relating to inherited rights." India, since 1951, had been administering the territories up to the McMahon line. China had raised no objection to the same. Thus, the McMahon line certainly did not fit



the criteria of 'specific problems'. More so, as it was China that had invited India for the talks, if it had objections to the McMahon line, it could have raised the issue too. As China did not raise the issue at the talks, it proves the fact that the Chinese accepted the defacto border. In fact, by the clause, 'mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,' China signalled an acceptance of Indian presence till the McMahon line. On the other hand, China was shrewd in not raising the border issue deliberately as it was constructing a road through the Aksai Chin and if the border issue is opened up, India would get wind of the road that China needed at any cost to reach Tibet.

Nehru was satisfied with the agreements and the Panchsheel led to his emergence as a great statesman. His dream of a proximate relationship with China was now materialising. Little did Nehru know that his actions would lead to a crisis in future. In 1950, the Survey of India published a map of India. In this map of India, the boundary with China in the Eastern sector was aligned as per the McMahon line but this boundary was marked as 'undemarcated'. Similarly, the Indo-China boundary in the Western and Middle Sectors was called 'undefined' and a colour wash was used. After the visit of Zhou Enlai in June 1954 to India, Nehru, in July 1954, communicated through a memorandum that the old maps were to be withdrawn. He asserted that India should now publish new maps with no reference to be made to any 'line' in the north and north-east frontiers and the frontiers with China should be firmly set. He further observed that India should also establish check posts along the entire frontier, even in disputed areas, as the check posts act as symbols of the Indian frontier along the border. Thus, through the memorandum, Nehru asserted the Indian stand clearly—India's borders were non-negotiable as they were fixed.

In 1954, when the Survey of India came out with the new maps, the words 'undemarcated' and 'undefined' used in the maps of 1950 had been dropped. The boundary in the East was firmly established as per the McMahon Line while the Western and Central boundaries saw a firm line and the removal of the colour wash. The map also showed the boundary of Kashmir based on the Johnson Line of 1865 and showed Aksai Chin region within Indian territory. Even though the Johnson Line in 1865 had shown Aksai Chin as part of Kashmir, the British had never claimed the territory. The Macartney-MacDonald Line of 1899 also had the Aksai Chin region within the Chinese territory. The pre-partition map of India too defined the region with an undefined boundary. The British, till 1947, maintained that the Sino-Indian border in the Eastern sector is based on the McMahon line, but left the Western and the Middle sector boundary undefined. This was a unilateral attempt by India to claim Aksai Chin on the basis of the Johnson Line.

Unfortunately showing the Aksai Chin region unilaterally sowed the seeds of a future conflict. India published new maps in 1954 on strategic reasons to remove all ambiguity and maintain India's territorial integrity. After India published these maps, China did not respond, but eventually did publish their own maps showing Aksai Chi and North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in the Chinese territory. In October 1954, when Nehru visited China, he took up the issue of Chinese maps showing Aksai Chin and NEFA as part of China with Zhou Enlai. The Chinese responded that the Chinese maps were old maps and belong to the Kuomintang Regime and the PRC had not revised those old maps yet. As India had established new check posts as symbols of Indian frontier, China issued a formal complaint to India. China complained that Indians have carried out transgressions deep inside the Chinese territory by establishing checkpoints inside China. India replied

asserting that the Indian check posts were well within the Indian Territory and not inside China. India and China accused each side of violating the Panchsheel agreement. In the middle sector, India insisted that the boundary line was centred through the Himalayan passes while China asserted that the passes were located in their territory.

The border issue finally opened up after reports of China constructing a road from Sinkiang to Tibet via Aksai Chin surfaced. In fact, in 1952 itself, an Indian trade agent, Lakshman Singh Jangpangi, stationed in Western Tibet, had informed New Delhi about the road construction. It was only in 1957 when China announced the completion of the road that it sent alarm bells ringing in Delhi. In 1958, an Indian army patrol was sent to determine the exact coordinates of the road. The army patrol was captured by the Chinese and released later after enquiry by the MEA. In 1956, the Dalai Lama had visited India and desired to put up a stay in India. Nehru insisted the Dalai Lama to put up his stay in Tibet itself. In 1958, Nehru accepted the invitation of the Dalai Lama for a visit to Tibet but on Chinese insistence, the visit was postponed and Nehru went to Bhutan instead. Nehru went to Bhutan via Tibet but was not allowed to visit Lhasa due to an uprising by Khampha tribesmen. The gradual discontentment of the Tibetans against the Communist Party of China's rule in Tibet was rising. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the USA had been assisting the Tibetan insurgents. China began to believe that the CIA had taken India into confidence to create trouble in Tibet and India was supporting Tibetan insurgents in their quest for autonomy. All this deepened the mistrust between India and China and sowed the seeds of discontent in the bilateral ties.

In 1958, China protested with the Indian mission that Kalimpong was being used by India and CIA for subversive activities in Tibet. India replied to China asserting that Chinese observations were based on a complete misunderstanding as India had not allowed the CIA to infiltrate and destabilise Tibet as alleged by China. In 1958, the Chinese magazine named *China Pictorial* printed a Chinese map on pages 20 and 21 showing NEFA, areas of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, large portions of Ladakh and the Tashigang area of East Bhutan as Chinese territory. Immediately, Indian MEA sent a note to China informing them of Zhou Enlai's earlier assurance that these were old maps from the KMT regime. India insisted that China make the necessary corrections in the maps and clearly demarcate frontiers. Two months later in 1958, the Chinese responded asserting that the maps shown mention old border and a survey was needed and only after a survey of the Chinese boundary could changes be made on the map. Till then, the old maps would continue to demarcate the borders. This reply was a big blow to Nehru who had asserted that Indian frontiers were fixed and were not open for negotiations.

juNehru decided to take up the matter directly with Zhou Enlai. In December 1958, he wrote letter to Zhou and reiterated the concerns mentioned above. He took up the issue of the Chinese magazine showing a Chinese map with NEFA as part of China. At this ncture, Nehru's priority was to get the Chinese accept the McMahon line as the boundary. In response to the letter of Nehru, in January 1959, Zhou Enlai replied asserting their views on the border issue, and observing that the Sino-Indian border had never been demarcated formally and expressing tremendous dissatisfaction in the way India had unilaterally demarcated borders, showing Aksai Chin as part of India despite China asserting that they needed time to revisit old maps. China also asserted that the McMahon line was a British creation and the Chinese did not accept the line as legal, which

forwarded doubts on the demarcations. China, therefore, indirectly conveyed that they were willing to take positive view on McMahon line on the condition that India was willing to show an accommodating attitude in the western sector.

Meanwhile in March 1959, the Tibetan uprising had reached its peak and this forced the Dalai Lama to leave Lhasa for India. The Indian government's policy, prior to coming of the Dalai Lama, was to provide medical assistance to sick refugees at the border of India without permitting them to cross over. In case of the Dalai Lama, the government decided that an exception can be made if a request for political asylum arises. In 1959, the Dalai Lama left Lhasa and entered India via Tawang. He was allowed to rest at Bomdila and from there was moved to Mussoorie. The Chinese were, by then, of the firm opinion that India had stage managed the entire escape plan of the Dalai Lama to India.

Another incident in 1959, aggravated the conflict. This time the issue arose in a place called Longju in the NEFA region. In 1959, Captain Adhikari of Assam Rifles was instructed to establish a military post at Longju, which was a territory claimed by both India and China. In order to establish a symbol of authority, Captain Adhikari was conferred a red coat and was appointed as the village headman. Captain Adhikari then sent a patrol team out in the vicinity. Observing this, the Chinese side also increased their patrolling. India too intensified its patrol in the region. This angered the Chinese and they attacked the Indian post at Longju. With limited resources, Captain Mitra was sent to recapture the post of Longju and he succeeded in capturing a post six miles south of Longju at Moja. On 8th September, 1959, Nehru received a letter from Zhou Enlai making the Chinese positions on the border question clear. In the letter, the Chinese stated that they were not a party to this 1842 treaty concluded by Tibet and Kashmir, nor had they ratified such a treaty. Therefore, they would not agree to any demarcation there. China also stated that they had not agreed to the Macartney–MacDonald Line of 1899 either. They maintained that boundaries in the western and central sector were never demarcated and never delimited formally. The Chinese also clarified that the McMahon Line was illegal because the Chinese did not recognise the Simla Agreement and the McMahon Line was nothing more than an imperialist design of the British. In fact, China not only declared the McMahon line as illegal but also condemned Indian troop advancements upto the frontiers and pointed out that India had illegally occupied Longju, Khinzemane and Tamaden. In the letter, China insisted that India should withdraw its troops from the frontiers immediately.

The letter of Zhou Enlai in September, 1959 clearly denotes a shift from the Chinese approach outlined by them in the letter to Nehru in January, 1959. China had now hardened its stand and had made no mention this time of acting with prudence on McMahon Line as mentioned earlier. Nehru made a reply through a letter to Zhou Enlai in September, 1959 itself. In his response, he asserted that India had not illegally occupied Longju and Khinzemane but clarified that when India found Tamden located in the north of the McMahon Line, the Indian agencies withdrew from the post. Nehru asserted that to remove the troops from Longju, both sides should respect the historical frontiers till future surveys. Domestically, Nehru tried to delink the Aksai Chin question from other border issues and favoured that the Aksai Chin issue not be brought up when other border issues were discussed. He preferred to maintain status quo on Aksai Chin region. He asserted that if Chinese transgressed into the Indian territory, the Chinese should be told to retreat

and India side should not fire unless fired upon.

After the Sinkiang–Tibet road was discovered, in 1959, a proposal was made by the Intelligence Bureau to setup more posts in the forward areas of Ladakh region. During deliberations in January 1959, the Army Chief and the Foreign Secretary rejected such a proposal as it may have antagonised the Chinese even further. In February, 1959, Mallick, the IB chief, persuaded Nehru to open the posts, to which Nehru agreed. The posts were finally setup by October. This provoked the Chinese and on 21st October, 1959 an Indian army patrol led by Havaladar Karan Singh suffered massive losses and were ambushed in Kongka La by the Chinese. There was a huge public uproar in the Parliament after the news of ambush of Indian soldiers came to light. In November, 1959, Zhou Enlai wrote a letter to Nehru urging him to maintain status quo till a future settlement. He urged that the two sides should try to withdraw their troops 20 kilometres each from the actual control position along the McMahon Line. Nehru wrote back a letter to Zhou Enlai asserting that in the Eastern and Middle sectors, no side should send border patrols to forward areas but also insisted that the Chinese retreat from Longju, assuring China that post Chinese retreat, the Indian side would not occupy Longju.

On 7th December, Nehru received the response from Zhou Enlai. Zhou firstly rejected the Nehruvian logic of treating the Western sector separately as he observed that the Western sector region is of great significance to them as the Sinkiang–Tibet road passes through it. Zhou also sent an invitation to Nehru to meet at Rangoon on 26th December, 1959 for talks. Nehru rejected the invitation due to his prior commitments. This was followed by visits of President Eisenhower and later, Nikita Khrushchev, to India. In February 1960, Nehru invited Zhou Enlai for talks to which Zhou Enlai responded by accepting the request and stated that starting 19th April, he would visit India for a seven-day duration.

As Zhou arrived in India, a series of one-on-one negotiations began, where he declared that China was willing to take a realistic attitude on the McMahon Line despite it not ratifying the Simla convention. China said that they would adopt a policy on McMahon Line with India as they did for Burma provided India showed accommodative behaviour over Aksai Chin in the Western Sector. India insisted on Chinese withdrawal from NEFA and Aksai Chin and asserted that China recognise Aksai Chin as Indian territory. India further declared that it would not accept the offer of the barter of the acceptance of the McMahon Line in exchange for Aksai Chin. As the negotiations were reaching a deadlock, Zhou offered that the two sides accept that there was a dispute on the line of actual control held by the forces of both countries and till a permanent settlement evolves, neither should make territorial claims and hold up to the line of actual control. To maintain tranquillity at the border, Zhou stated that both sides should discontinue border patrolling. India rejected Zhou's proposals as it stated that they would not accept placing all the three sectors on an equal footing, because India wanted the three sectors be discussed separately. The talks broke down with no agreement by either side.

Zhou was disappointed because Chinese were willing to demonstrate a practical attitude to the McMahon Line. They had accepted the boundary with Myanmar almost on the same alignment as the McMahon Line itself. They expected India to be similarly pragmatic in their approach to the Western sector. Zhou expressed great shock over India's

insistence on Aksai Chin which historically it had never occupied, nor was of any strategic importance to India. The Chinese always felt that the Indian claim on Aksai Chin was to undermine the Chinese influence in Tibet.

In early 1961, the Intelligence Bureau began to inform the government that the Chinese were building up check posts in the Western sector. The IB reports suggested that the check posts were being built up by the Chinese in areas also claimed by India in the Western sector. This aggression by the Chinese was based on the new maps they had published in 1960. In These new maps, the Chinese claimed Sirijap and Spanggur lake. Such claims were not made by the Chinese in the maps they had issued in 1956. By staking such claims in the 1960 maps, the Chinese brought an additional 5000 sq. km. of Indian Territory within their ambit. In February, 1961, Nehru asserted in the India Parliament that India would not resort to any form of adventurism but would prepare itself for action if the situation warrants.

Some scholars observe that what China was doing in the Western sector in the period 1960–61, especially in Aksai Chin, was similar to what India did in the NEFA region in early 1950s. This point may not be right because India first declared in the Parliament that the border in the Eastern sector is the McMahon Line. After this declaration, India went on to establish the civil administration in NEFA. In both cases—that of declaration of McMahon Line and establishment of civil administration—China did not object. Thus, the act the Chinese were committing in the western sector in 1960–61 completely disregarded Indian sensitivities and was completely unilateral act. Witnessing the Chinese policy on the border unfold, on 2nd November, 1961, a meeting happening in the Prime Minister's Office in Delhi, where it was decided that India would establish forward posts in the areas claimed by them. This job would be entrusted to the Indian army. It was designed to irritate China by ensuring that if the Chinese created one post in one area, India would go onto do the same at other places. The idea was that China would not undertake any physical contest if India demonstrated the counter capabilities of establishing posts.

India, however, was well aware that logistically it would not be able to sustain these posts owing to the superior military strength of the Chinese. After the 2nd November meeting, the government issued new direction to the effect that firstly, in the Ladakh region, Indian forces would undertake a forward policy and go to far areas and establish posts. The idea was to ensure that the Chinese should not be allowed to establish posts in the region but all this is to be done without involving any physical clash with the Chinese. The government ordered, secondly, that in the Central Sector, a similar forward policy was to be executed and gaps at the frontier were to be covered by posts. It was decided to concentrate military presence close to the forwards posts which would be activated if there be a need at a short notice. Thus, the Indian strategy was to deploy troops in forward posts in the Western sectors primarily to forestall Chinese advancements while in the rest of the area, the forces were to occupy border positions. However, the Indian army did begin the establishment of the forward posts but did not establish adequate supply lines and logistics for assisting the forward posts in case of any eventuality.

The basic promise of India's forward policy was that if India established its post in areas where China had no posts then Chinese would not establish their posts or destroy the Indian posts. The directives issues in November 1961 had notified that India would first



establish logistical stations that could provide all the needed support and then the army would establish smaller forward posts. However, as we noted earlier, the army began the establishment of forward posts without establishing logistical stations as envisaged in the directives. On 5th December 1961, the Army headquarters communicated to the commanders of the Western and Eastern command to establish forward posts in Ladakh and dominate any Chinese posts in the region claimed by India. Ironically, this directive issued by the Army HQ was never a part of the directives agreed upon in the 2nd November meeting. What was all the more ironical was that the Army HQ did not inform the commanders to establish logistical stations to assist the forward posts despite they being categorically asserted in the meeting on 2nd November. Further, the Army HQ began to issue directions limiting forward posts in NEFA region despite the 2nd November directives limiting forward posts establishment to Western and Middle or Central sectors only.

All this had a disastrous impact. It is widely believed that if all the directives of 2nd November meeting were implemented without any alterations, then probably the 1962 conflict would have never happened. In early 1962, the Western Command began to execute the forward policy. But the posts were nothing more than 'penny posts' as hardly any logistical supplies could be provided to them. Since October 1959, the Chinese had not undertaken any further patrols. But on witnessing the Indian posts coming up, they informed the higher authorities, taking no other action. Non-action from China led India to increase the pace of setting up of Indian posts. In April 1962, alarmed with rise in the pace of India establishing its posts, China decided to resume patrolling from Karakorum to Kongka Pass. Mao ordered that PLA resort to armed co-existence strategy. In this strategy, the PLA was asked to counter-encircle the posts established by India. This was a step to out-manoeuvre India.

In May, 1962, in the north of Daulet Beg Oldi, an incident took place. India had established a post near the Chip Chap River. China encircled the India post, forcing the army to seek permission for withdrawal from the post from Army HQ. The Army HQ directed that India should retreat. After encircling the post, the Chinese retreated. India thought that the retreat from the Chip Chap River post means that China will not attack India as it did not attack the post. In July 1962, the Indian Army not only established a post in Galwan Valley in the Western sector but also dominated the Chinese post in Samzungling. The Chinese began to aggressively encircle this post. The post was manned by Gorkhas from the Indian side. The Chinese tactics were menacing and intimidating. India communicated to the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi that if China does not stop its aggression, Indian troops may open fire. The Chinese retreated but cut off land supply routes to the post. The Galwan Valley episode nullified the entire premise of India's forward policy as the aggressive tactics used by China negated the long-held logic that China would not attack the Indian posts.

Unfortunately, the China's retreat from Galwan Valley was perceived by Nehru differently. It reaffirmed his belief that China would not attack Indian posts. After all these episodes in the Western sector, the Western Command pleaded to the Army HQ to suspend the forward policy and work on strengthening logistics stations to maintain the already established forward posts. The Army HQ did not agree and were of the view that the Chinese would not attack Indian posts.

Things were not smooth at the diplomatic level either. The Panchsheel agreement signed in 1954 was valid only for eight years. It was about to lapse on 2nd June, 1962. There was a clause within Panchsheel where either of the side could seek extension of the agreement. China, on 3rd December, 1961, informed India that it wished to negotiate a fresh agreement. Instead of India using this opportunity to douse the rising tensions at the border, it instead communicated that an essential criterion to start negotiations would be to reverse the aggressive policies manifesting at the border. As India insisted that border issue be a pre-condition to start fresh negotiations for a new agreement, nothing concrete worked out and the agreement lapsed on 3rd June, 1962. After the agreement lapsed, China closed their trading marts in Calcutta and Kalimpong while India closed its marts in Gyantse, Tarung and Gartok. Calcutta and Kalimpong provided important routes for China to supply necessities to Tibet. The refusal of India to extend the agreement in 1962 was perceived by China as an attempt by India to squeeze their Tibetan supply lines. Since 1959, the Eastern sector was tranquil as the Chinese had stopped patrolling in the forward areas. But the decision of the Army HQ to launch the forward policy in the NEFA flared up the tranquil border.

In June 1962, the Indian army established a forward post on the south bank of Namka Chu River and the post was named as Dhola despite the fact that the post was located in Che Jong and Dhola was a mountain near the post. This post led to Chinese protests. Though the Chinese had not objected to Indian presence in the areas south of McMahon line despite China not accepting McMahon Line, China insisted that particular Indian post was in the north of the McMahon Line and was thus in the Chinese territory. India insisted that its post was in the south of McMahon line and not the north as alleged by China and was in proper Dhola region. The GOC of the 4th division in the Eastern sector suggested that this post be relocated to Thagla Ridge. By the time the Army HQ granted permission, the Chinese established their presence at the Thagla Ridge. The Chinese were offended by Indian post and patrolling in the region where, through correspondences, Nehru had assured that India would never build posts.

As India set up post on south of Namka Chu River, on 8th September, 1962, the Chinese troops crossed the river and began encircling the post. The post in-charge on the Indian side, in a panic, sent a message to the Battalion HQ's that 600 Chinese soldiers had encircled the Indian post. It was later determined that the number of soldiers was only 60. However, to seek support immediately, the officer in-charge had sent frantic messages, unwittingly inflating the situation. India too immediately stationed additional troops and decided to hold the Dhola post. The army began to move towards Lumpu Choksen as it was designated as the first line of defence. The priority was to hold ground in Tawang and ensure that there was no vacuum in Tawang. The movement to Lumpu proved disastrous. The T-Brigade of the army was to establish a fresh Brigade HQs at Lumpu Choksen. Ironically, the location chosen was extremely unfavourable to India as it lacked even road connectivity. It was believed that the T-Brigade would evict the Chinese from the presence they established in Thagla Ridge and would put a stay at Dhola.

The spark came on 13th September, 1962. In Namka Chu, 9 Punjab had taken up positions. The Chinese made a loudspeaker announcement in Hindi to the effect that Indians had entered the Chinese territory and not only should they retreat but a civilian official was to be sent for exact boundary location identification. The advice was ignored

by India and the two sides sat eyeball-to-eyeball for several days. On 20th September 1962, a Chinese soldier attacked an Indian post using a grenade, leading to injuries on the Indian side. The government made the decision to evict the Chinese from Namka Chu. The 4-Corps was given the responsibility to execute the task. On 9th October, India dispatched a strong patrol to Tseng Jong, which was in the north of Namka Chu, and was a territory claimed by China. The Chinese were a battalion strong in Tseng Jong and attacked the Indian patrol vehemently. The entire premise of the forward policy was shattered.

The head of the 4-Corps left for Delhi from Namka Chu and convinced the leaders in Delhi that with existing logistics, evicting the Chinese from Namka Chu would be impossible and pleaded for the Indian withdrawal from Namka Chu. However, a decision was taken not to leave Namka Chu. Nehru, on way to Colombo, informed the press that India had ordered the army to evict the Chinese from Indian territory. This statement of Nehru was published domestically and globally and was perceived as an ultimatum to China. China used this statement to brand India as an aggressor. The Chinese knew about the Indian decision to evict them from Namka Chu and Dhola posts. They were disappointed to witness India's violation of the 1959 assurances of no patrolling on the borders of the Eastern sector. All these compelled Mao to a conclusion that a fierce and painful military lesson had to be taught to India. The Chinese ordered the PLA to plan a detailed operation in the Eastern sector. This theatre was used for the conflict as the Chinese supply lines were well established.

The Chinese launched an attack on 20th October, 1962 in the Eastern sector at Namka Chu from Tsangdhar side, west of Namka Chu and across the river. The Chinese troops acted swiftly and launched high thrusts at Namka Chu. By 22nd October, the Chinese converged at Tawang though Bumla, Khinzamane and Namka Chu. By 24th October, the Indian troops retreated from Tawang to Sela Pass. The Chinese successfully converged at Tawang. On 20th October, the Chinese began an offensive in the Western sector through heavy mortar firing. They even attacked the Galwan post. On 24th October, Zhou wrote a letter to Nehru urging for a peaceful settlement on the border issue. He urged that till both parties agree to a peaceful settlement, both should ensure that neither of the sides undertakes patrolling upto 20 kms of the Line of Actual Control (LAC, as LAC acted as the traditional line customarily dividing the two sides. India immediately responded to China, replying it was always in favour of peaceful settlement but was surprised by Chinese use of the term 'LAC'. India further stated that if China was indeed serious about peace, then it should halt the hostilities and retreat to the positions held by the Chinese prior to 8th September, 1962. Zhou wrote back to Nehru on 4th November, and clarified that LAC was the line as existed between India and China on 7th November, 1959, defined by the McMahon line in the East and the traditional customary line in the Western and Middle sectors. Zhou refused to accept the Nehruvian proposal of reverting back to position held prior to 8th September.

Nehru rejected all proposals of Zhou and remained stuck to his demand. Diplomatically China was supported by the entire communist bloc and as far as India is concerned, not even the non-aligned states supported it. By November 1962, the Chinese had captured Sela, Dirang, BomdiLa and were at the foothills not far from Tezpur. Nehru realised the gravity of the situation and understood that if something extraordinary was not

done, then Kashmir and Assam would both fall into the hands of the Chinese. Nehru frantically requested help from the USA. President Kennedy, in response to India, had a USA aircraft carrier sail for the Bay of Bengal, while a squadron of USA air force aircrafts also reached India. China declared a unilateral cease fire on 21st November, 1962 and decided to retreat to positions 20 km behind the LAC.

The unique aspect of this cease fire declared by China was that it did not demand the same by India. China, however, maintained that its forces may strike back if Indian troops continued to fire and did not retreat post cease fire. Nehru decided not to impede the implementation of the cease fire agreement but questioned the concept of the LAC. The western aid to India came along with the string that India would resume a dialogue with Pakistan on Kashmir. India accepted condition. As the USA and the UK got involved in the region, China took the lead to conclude negotiations with Pakistan on the Sinkiang–Kashmir border dispute. On 2nd March, 1963, Pakistan and China concluded an agreement for the Sinkiang–Kashmir border. With the declaration of the Chinese cease fire, the conflict at the border finally came to end in November.

## ANALYSIS

The problem with the demarcation of borders had begun since the British times. The British, in order to safeguard the British Indian Empire, resorted to the establishment of buffer states. The buffer states established functioned as economical tools to manage the imperial security. The concept of buffer states originated from the time when in 1880s, the rising Russian empire acted as a threat to the British presence in South Asia. The British ensured that the buffer remained a protectorate. The British made sure that the buffer not only remained free from any extraneous influence, but also continued to be guided by British policy. Ironically, neither Tibet nor Afghanistan ever became buffer states for the British.

The British annexed Kashmir in 1846. The Treaty of Amritsar that governed the annexation ensured maintenance of balance of power in the region. The Afghans and Russians were subsequently kept under check. After the First Anglo–Sikh War and the Treaty of Lahore, the British acquired sovereignty of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh and handed them over to Gulab Singh for control provided that British supremacy was acknowledged. Gulab Singh got the territories but was not allowed to alter the limits of his territories, which only the British reserved the right to do. The British, as we have noted earlier, did make attempts to resolve the boundary disputes by making attempts to fix the boundary but the insecurity of the Chinese prevented any fruitful agreement. The Johnson line showed Aksai Chin plateau in the Kashmir territory, and was used by India after independence to claim Aksai Chin.

In 1899, the Macartney–MacDonald Line proposed a solution to the Western sector. The British urged the Chinese to renounce their claims over Hunza and in lieu, receive the Chinese part of Ladakh called Aksai Chin. The region of Aksai Chin was shown as a part of Ladakh by many Chinese maps. Since the British feared that the occupation of Kashgar by Russia would be a threat to imperial security, they somehow wanted China to relinquish its sovereign rights over Hunza. In fact, today, the LAC, the claim line by the Chinese and the Macartney–MacDonald line all coincide with each other. In 1896, John Ardagh also proposed a line based on a strategic adoption of the already proposed Johnson

line. The Ardagh Line drew the boundary in the crest of Kunlun and ended up incorporating Karakash River and territories up to Yarkand River. The British were unable to establish a firm boundary in the Western sector as China remained evasive. The Huztagh–Karakoram acted as a natural frontier. The boundaries in the Western sector thus remained undefined.

For the British, the Eastern sector was a forgotten frontier and yet the British had interests in the region. In 1769, Nepal saw an internal conflict between Newars and Gurkhas. The British, in the conflict, supported the Newars. The Gurkhas succeeded in replacing the Newars and established a Hindu Kingdom. The Gurkhas closed down trade routes between Nepal and Tibet, which were used by India to reach Tibet. This led the British to search alternative routes to Tibet bypassing Nepal via Bhutan and Assam. The defeat of the Newars opened up subsequent conflicts between Gurkhas and the British. The Gurkhas were not happy with the British for their support to the Newars. The year of 1814 saw the Anglo–Nepal War which culminated in a British victory. The British concluded the Treaty of Segauli with Gurkhas and gained access to Tibet via Kumaon and Garhwal region. Since 1775, the Gurkhas were constantly attacking Sikkim. In 1817, as per the Treaty of Titalia, the British and Sikkim agreed to a system where Sikkim would get British protection and allow trade till Lhasa. The Treaty of Titalia also gave the British a platform in Sikkim to keep an eye on the Gurkhas from the east. In 1861, the Treaty of Titalia was replaced with a new treaty, giving the British a bigger say on using Sikkim to govern Tibetan trade and policy.

In the 1920s, the Ahom Kingdom in Assam became weak. Perceiving this as a golden opportunity, the Burmese expanded to garner influence in the region. The British moved swiftly and Anglo–Burmese War broke out in 1824, leading to the British defeating the Burmese. In 1826, a peace treaty was concluded between the Burmese and the British at Yandabo where by British gained Assam. The presence of the British in Assam saw its expansion till Lohit Valley. Presence of coal and petroleum, along with tea plantation potential and a strategic route to Tibet, made the British realise the potential of the area. The British did not interfere with the tribes in the region but did consolidate the presence over the entire North-East.

In 1901, the British again developed a fear that Russia could reach up to Lhasa and create trouble for the British. However, as noted earlier, the Chinese refused to ratify the Simla convention as they were angry not only due to arbitrary demarcations by McMahon but also due to the fact that Tibet acquired the status of an equal power. The British, surprisingly, did not publish the texts of the Simla convention of 1914 till the year 1937. In 1907, the British and the Russians had agreed that neither of the parties will negotiate with Tibet on their own without the presence of a Chinese intermediary because the British always accepted Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. The signing of the Simla convention could have angered the Russians. The British thereby decided to keep the Simla convention text under wraps.

In 1937, the British published the Simla convention and used the McMahon Line to show the boundary. As per the Simla convention, India had acquired the Tawang region in 1914 but the Indian flag was hoisted in Tawang only in 1951. India moved into Tawang in 1951 exactly at a time when the Chinese had moved into Tibet. The British had never

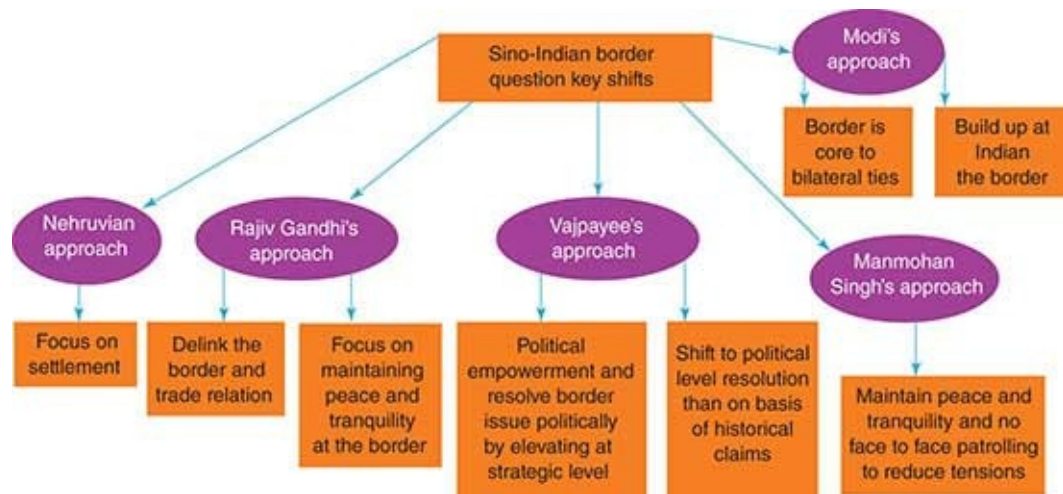


established their control in Tawang up till 1951 and adhered to the fact that the British frontiers existed till south of the McMahon Line. In 1943, the Governor of Assam had felt that establishing control in Tawang may be tantamount to a forward policy which may not be appreciated by the Tibetans. In 1947, Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama, had written to the Indian government claiming that Tawang was a part of Tibet. The Dalai Lama later on gave up the claim but the Chinese, since then, have been claiming Tawang by referring to the comments of Dalai Lama.

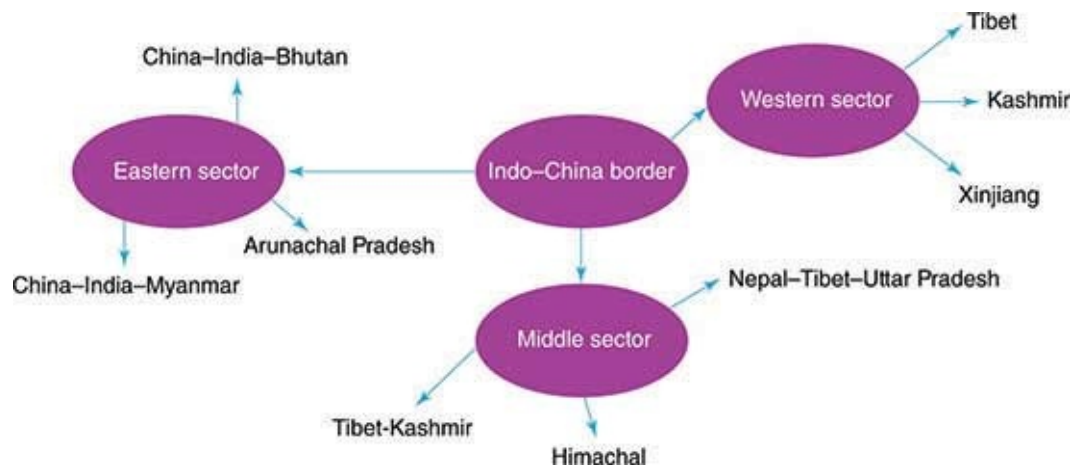
It must be clarified that a boundary is a line demarcating sovereign states on a map. However, a frontier is a tract or a zone that separate two states that are sovereign. The Sino-Indian conflict at the border is defined by the Himalayas that has always acted as a frontier. The core of the dispute is about the exact places through which the boundary should pass in the frontier zone, that is, the Himalayas.

It is noteworthy that India has no historical claims to Arunachal as Indian presence in Arunachal is merely a British legacy. Nor do Chinese claims hold true for Arunachal. The Monpas of Tawang are ethnically different from Tibetans, and are in fact, non-Tibetans. In fact, it would also be important for us to clarify at this juncture that Tibet, historically, was neither independent nor an integral part of China. The rulers of China always considered Tibet as an area in the periphery that had potential to act as a springboard for possible invasions in the mainland. It was in mid-seventh century that Chinese influence found presence in Tibet when there was a matrimonial alliance between a Tibetan ruler and a Princess of Tang dynasty. The political status of Tibet remained non-existent till Ding Dynasty (1614) came to power.

The initial period of Ding Dynasty saw a priest-and-patron relationship between China and Tibet. In 1728, the Chinese introduced the concept of Ambans and the period subsequent to 1792 saw a tight control by China over Tibet. The Ambans were given powers equivalent to the Dalai Lama as per the 29-point decree issued by the Chinese emperor in 1792. The Chinese still believe that the 1792 decree gives them the power to exercise influence in choosing the Dalai Lama. In the recent times, the Chinese have adopted as aggressive strategy to integrate Tibet with the mainland. This includes a plethora of infrastructure projects in Tibet and increasing the number of Han Chinese in the region to change the demography of the Tibetan area. Soon, the Han Chinese will become majority while Tibetans would be a minority in Tibet, which will then dilute the overall cause of Tibetan autonomy. Despite China-Dalai Lama negotiations since 2002, nothing concrete has evolved till date.



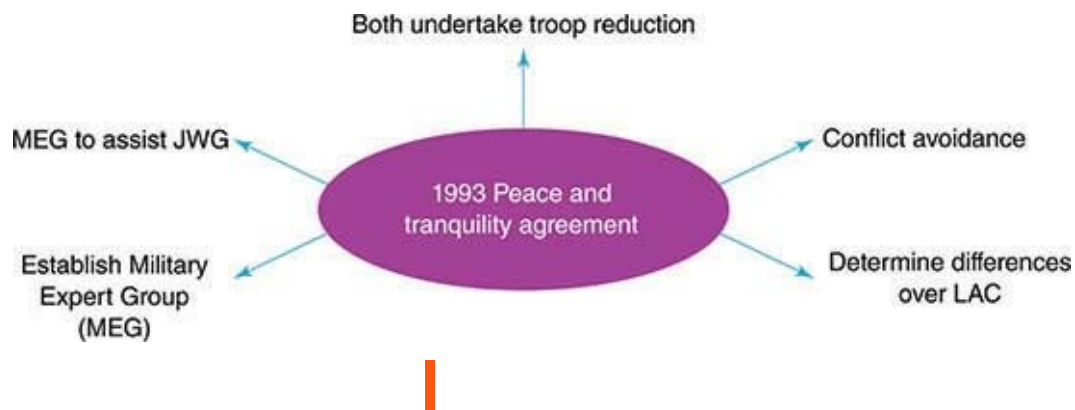
India–China border is divided into various sectors. The Middle sector is relatively peaceful, unlike the Western and Eastern sectors. In Western sector, India alleges that China has occupied part of the Kashmir region and also an area given in 1963 by Pakistan to China, along with the Aksai Chin area of Ladakh occupied as Xinjiang. In the Eastern sector, China insists that the 90, 000 square kilometre Arunachal Pradesh is part of China and refuses to accept the McMahon Line.



The border dispute, as explained, led to China launching a counter-forward policy and attacking India in 1962, inflicting a humiliating defeat on India. The Indian diplomat, Vasant Vasudeo Paranjpe, aptly described Chinese advances when he remarked that the PLA went through Indian army in 1962 like knife through butter. In November, 1962, China declared a ceasefire and went 20 km behind their 1959 position. The tensions got further aggravated with Chinese nuclear tests in 1964, with continuing border skirmishes observed upto 1967.

Breakthrough was achieved in 1979 when Vajpayee visited China to resume talks. However, the talks were not fruitful. Deng Xiaoping advocated a package deal under which India was to maintain status quo in Western sectors while China would accept the McMahon Line in the east. India rejected the deal and advocated a sector-by-sector approach. Indian policy post-1962 gradually transformed and the solution of border dispute became a precondition to talks. From 1981 to 1987, despite dialogues, nothing except maintenance of tranquillity was achieved. When Rajiv Gandhi assumed power in 1988, he established a joint working group on the boundary question and dropped resolution of border dispute as a precondition. In 1993, an agreement on maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the line of actual control was signed and it became an

important confidence building measure (CBM).



## One-for-one Cutback vs. Adjusted Ratio Formula

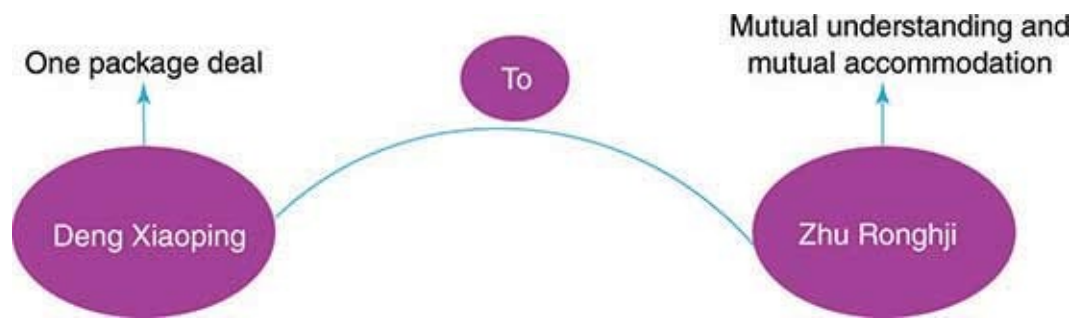
The CBM agreement of 1993 talked about undertaking troop reduction. Till 1993, the understanding was that China has more troops in Tibet than India has on the entire border. China had two personnel for each one from India. China said in 1993 that as a CBM it would go for a one-for-one cutback but India said that geography of Tibet favours China and in any eventuality, China can send troops far more quickly than the Indian side. So, the Indian side advocated for an adjusted ratio approach. India said geographically steep terrain and logistically constraints on Indian side need to be taken into consideration. Therefore, both finally agreed to mutual and equal security and decided to cut troops' numbers mutually.

In 1996 came the agreement on confidence building measures in the military field along the LAC in India–China border areas. This was called the 1996 CBM agreement.

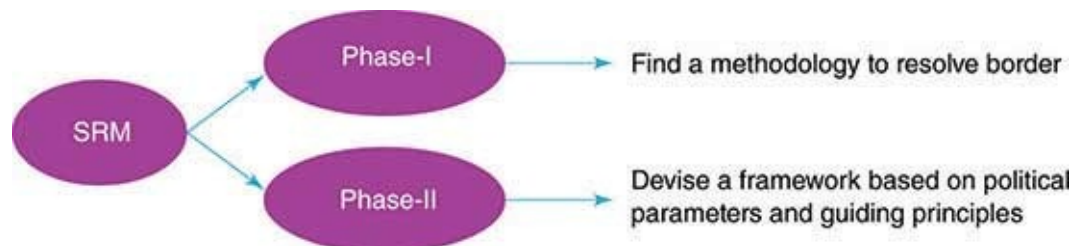


Conflicts were certainly avoided by the 1993 and 1996 agreements, but a solution on the border issue did not emerge. The border CBMs were badly affected in 1998 due to Pokhran–II and its attribution to the China threat theory. The JWG was also suspended and was resumed only in April 1999 as the 11th JWG meet took place in Beijing. The focus again shifted to clarify the locations through which the LAC passes and in 2000, at the 12th JWG, both sides decided to exchange maps with each other to identify the LAC. India and China exchanged 595 km maps of the Middle sector to this effect. The optimism shown by India Post Exchange became so high that Indian leaders began to advocate that by 2003, both sides would also exchange maps on the Western sector. The Chinese side saw this as an attempt by India to go beyond consensus and cancelled the subsequent map exchange. China understood that India was trying to gain advantage in the border talks through map exchange and advocated the Indian side to exercise patience with regard to there solution of border disputes.

Since 2002, China began to advocate mutual understanding and mutual accommodation. Mutual accommodation meant gives and takes to resolve border.



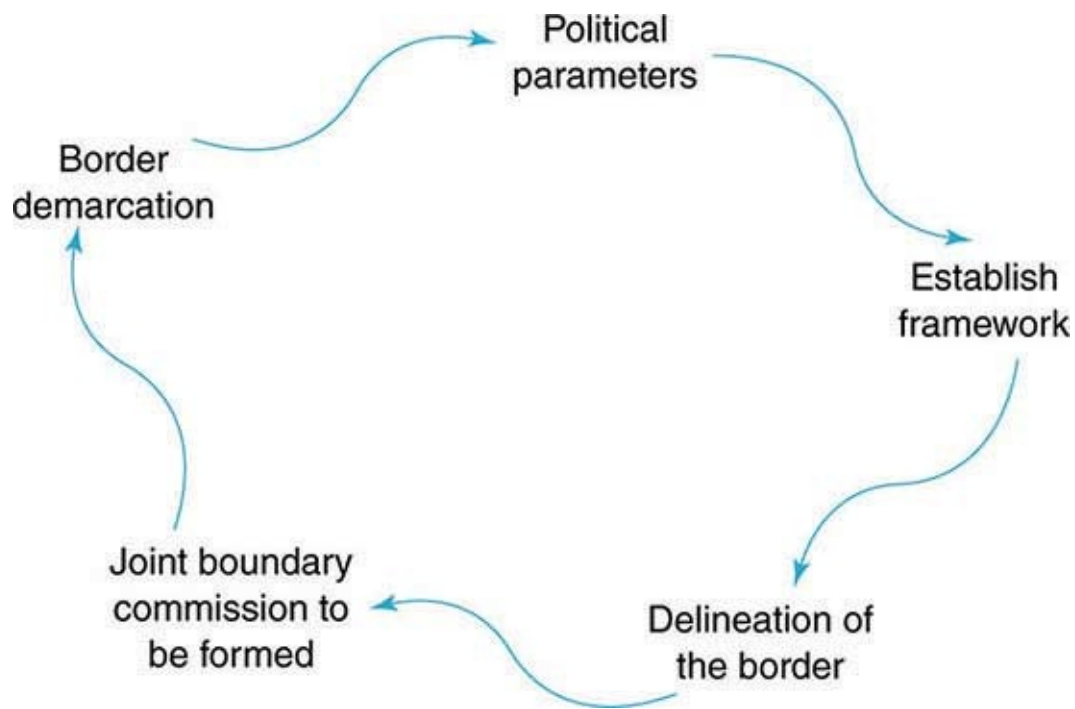
Recently, many studies have been undertaken on Chinese negotiational behaviour. The studies say that China can negotiate fast if it has a favourable solution in sight, but delays and advises patience in case it senses an unfavourable solution for itself. In case of Central Asia and Russia, China solved borders quickly, while with India it knows that the border dispute has little or no possibility to be resolved in terms favourable to itself. Consequently, there is a kind of freeze and the conspicuous lack of any sense of urgency. In 2003, Vajpayee, to give further push to border negotiations, launched a Special Representative talks Mechanism (SRM). In SRM, the negotiations were to be conducted by a higher political representative who would explore a framework solution. The focus had shifted to identify common principles for resolving the border issues.



The aim was to negotiate on a sector-by-sector basis and announce an agreement when all sectoral difference were resolved. Sikkim, as an issue, persisted till 2005. China had always questioned the status of Sikkim and its merger with India. China maintained Sikkim could be resolved only as a part of package deal but soon realised that if it continues to hold the Sikkim rhetoric, India would open up the Tibetan issue. In 2005, during Wen Jiabao’s visit to India, the Chinese presented a new map showing India with Sikkim as a part of India. In 2006, they opened Nathu La pass but incursions continued to be an issue. China claims Tawang saying it was a part of Mongul district and sixth Dalai Lama was born in Tawang. China has courted trouble in the Eastern sector by refusing IAS officers of Arunachal visa, saying residents of Arunachal need no visa to visit their own country. Even today China maintains the same policy. On 23rd October, 2013, during Manmohan Singh’s visit to China, he concluded the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA). Due to regular tailing and patrolling of the LAC, the forces do come face-to-face and at times, this has been found to raise tensions. The BDCA specifically avoids the tailing, and is a strategic investment at the cost of a tactical sacrifice.



Thus, today, even under the Modi government, the border negotiations go on, and are carried out on the same framework.



## PAKISTAN FACTOR IN SINO-INDIA RELATIONS

China and Pakistan's friendship has proved an all-weather friendship over time. In fact, despite the distinctive ideologies of both states during the Cold War, China followed Kautilya's Mandala theory with Pakistan. During the Cold War, both helped each other but relations have evolved into a deeper understanding since the era of Deng Xiaoping. As Chinese economy grew, it began to realise the need to have proximity with all the neighbouring nations for resources. Since the end of the Cold War, China does not use Pakistan against India and is largely interested in a stable South Asia. China today favours peaceful resolution of disputes between India and Pakistan and prefers hands-off approach in any conflict. China accepts its deep relation with Pakistan but maintains that the Sino-Pak relation is not particularly an axis against India. China has clarified that the Sino-India relations have nothing to do with Sino-Pak relations. However, India remains deeply concerned about Chinese supply of arms to Pakistan.

China says its arms sale to Pakistan is based on an economic logic to make profit and is not meant to act against India and has reiterated that it is even willing to sell military equipments to India if needed. The military balance is still in Indian favour as the US and Russia provide better arms to India. India, on the other hand, feels that China is arming nations around India to bring Pakistan on a strategic parity with India and maintains that Chinese weapons are used by Pakistan against India. India continues to feel that the Sino-Pakistan arms trade would impact the regional balance but China insists it would not. Chinese relations with Pakistan also give China the chance to make easy inroads into the Islamic world and can help keep China's Xinjiang extremism under check. China has resorted to persuading both India and Pakistan to exercise restraint. However, India expects China to advise Pakistan to stop its adventurism. During the Cold War, on Kashmir, China supported the position of Pakistan to hold a plebiscite but in the post-Cold War era, it refused to intervene on behalf of Pakistan and advocated bilateral negotiations. China fears if Kashmir gains independence, it may inspire Xinjiang extremists to seek the same. China says Kashmir is a colonial legacy and is an important Indo-Pak issue and since its sovereignty has been undefined by British, dialogue is the only way out.



## INDIA AND CHINA—COMMERCIAL DIPLOMACY

In order to promote trade, there is various institutional mechanisms available.



The initiation of financial dialogue owes its origin to 2003. It was in 2005 when an MoU was concluded and the financial dialogue was launched. The 7th financial dialogues were conducted in 2014 in New Delhi. In the 8th financial dialogue envisaged in 2016, it was decided to upgrade the talks to finance minister level. However, owing to recent events related to India's membership at the NSG and its opposition by China, the 8th financial dialogue, that had been planned in June 2016, finally happened in August, 2016.

India exports cotton yarn, copper, petro products and iron ore while importing telecom equipment, hardware, and industrial machines. Various Indian banks have presence in China while Indian firms like Tata, Binani cements, Bharat Forge, TCS and NIIT, and so on, are present in China. Indian firms are primarily in IT, pharmacy, refractors and laminated tubes industry. The strategic and economic dialogue is a mechanism for macroeconomic and strategic issues of cooperation, with infrastructure, energy, environment, high technology, railways and power generation being core areas of interest.

India is an importer of Chinese goods but there is a trade imbalance as our imports from China are more than the exports. India has an edge in pharmacy, agro-bovine meat industry and textiles industry. India is seeking better market access to rework the trade imbalance. Chinese FDI to India is very less, and is surprisingly lower than the FDI India receives from Poland and Canada. It's not that the Chinese are not interested to invest in FDI in India. However, the Chinese investments are more in resource rich areas of Africa and Central Asia, in oil and gas sectors, to fuel Chinese domestic growth. As India too is an energy importer, there is less possibility that Chinese FDI will rise in India in the near future. China does complain about red tape and delays in security clearances in India for Chinese projects while India complains that China gives preferences to its state undertakings, restricting Indian corporates' market access. We should not be overtly fixated with trade imbalance with China as India has a trade deficit with 16 out of top 25 trade partners. Due to a weak manufacturing sector, India is unable to produce goods to meet domestic demand and ends up importing heavily. Though India has a trade deficit with China roughly ranging from 54% to 56% its deficit is 90–91% with Iraq and 82–82% with Switzerland.



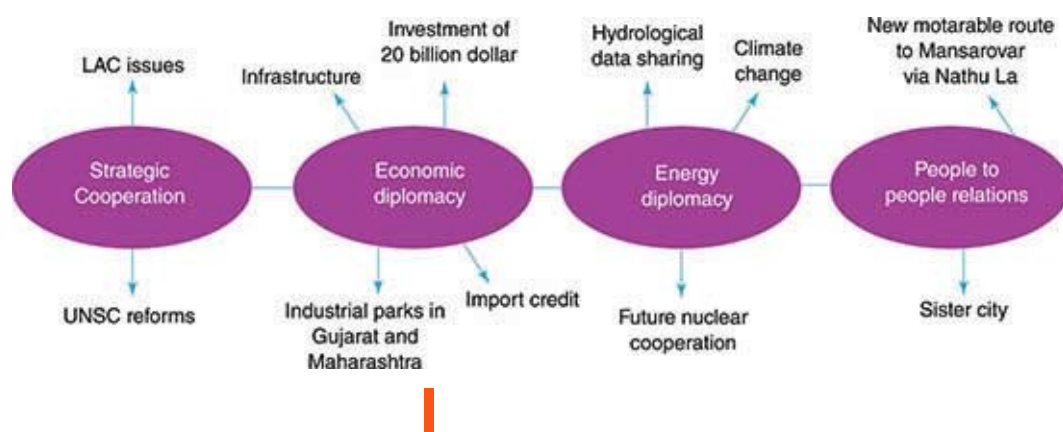
### Sumdorong Chu, Operation Falcon and Exercise Chequerboard

Sumdorong Chu (S-C) is called Sangduoluo in China. In 1985, India established a

post in S-C, which, in turn, upset China. China perceived it as an attempt towards the adoption of a forward policy by India in neutral areas. In June 1986, there was a Chinese intrusion and India lodged a protest against it. India stated Chinese undertook an incursion in Thandrang pasture near Zimithang circle of Tawang, which China refused to accept. In June 1986, the 12th Assam Regiment noted intrusions and structure creation, including a helipad built by China. As the pressure mounted in India to seek redressal, India offered a solution to China by advocating that if China withdraws from S-C by winter of 1986, then India in next summer would not reoccupy S-C and maintain pre-1986 position. China refused the offer and stayed in S-C throughout the harsh winter. India, subsequently, under Operation Falcon, airlifted the 5th Mountain Division of the army to Zimithang. The tensions increased further in December, 1986, when Arunachal was endowed with a full statehood in India. In the spring of 1987, India and China went face-to-face in the S-C region. In May, 1987, the Indian Foreign Minister went to China and from August 1987, troops moved back, finally leading to a joint working group on border.

## Analysis of Visit of Xi Jinping to India, 2014

Xi visited India in 2014 and displayed an exceptional comfort in diplomatic outreach. He took a stroll with the PM on the Sabarmati river bank in Ahmadabad and also sat on the floor to try the *charkha*. China decided to contribute 20 billion dollars in investments in India and agreed to cooperate in infrastructure, energy, rail cooperation. A new five-year economic and trade development plan was established and discussions on border and visa issues were taken up. Ahmadabad and Guangzhou were declared sister cities. China has agreed to work on the Bangalore–Chennai–Mysore train corridor and assist in establishing a rail university in India.



## China and India on India's NSG membership: Policy Post Mortem, Seoul, 2016

The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) was formed after Pokhran–I as a group to contribute to non-proliferation guidelines established for nuclear exports and nuclear related exports. India wants to be a member of NSG to ensure access to export markets. In 2008, the NSG gave a waiver to India, but as a member, India gets a better legal status and also ends up instilling confidence in suppliers. In the June, 2016 Seoul plenary session, India applied for membership.



China, at the Plenary, objected to India's entry to the NSG and raised procedural concerns; such as the fact that India is neither a signatory of CTBT nor of NPT. However, China is also not a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), of which India is a member, the whole issue of membership came down to a quid pro quo bid. China objected stating the NSG is based on the NPT, of which India is not a part, and thus, pushed back the Indian case. The Indian membership now depends upon diplomacy and cooperation with China.

## ANALYSIS OF INDIAN PM'S VISIT TO CHINA—2015

The Indian PM, Narendra Modi, visited China in October, 2015. He set aside the regular protocol and paid a visit to the ancient Xian city. China took care of the arrangements in Xian city. During his stay in China, PM remarked that China itself is holding back improvements in the bilateral process. The PM has taken steps to connect to Chinese citizens through Weibo, which is a platform to connect to China. He was present at the Temple of Heaven for a yoga ceremony in a display of soft power. PM interacted with the Chinese business community and has assured the Chinese corporate class of a personal touch to expedite processes on their investments into India. Due to the global economic meltdown and its impact on labour markets, the Chinese corporates have begun to look towards Indian markets. The PM assured China that Indo-China partnership can be successful if China gains access to Indian institutions and proposed that border issue be resolved as a strategic issue. To reduce mutual suspicion and enhance cooperation, a sustained campaign of communication through frequent exchanges at top leadership level has been envisaged. Both sides have decided to bring states and provinces on a diplomatic exchange platform by establishing a State Leaders Forum which first met in 2015 to promote people-to-people ties. A consulate will be opened by China in Chennai and India in Chengdu. There have been naval exercises planned, namely PASSEX and SAR. The two sides have identified sectors like pharmacy, IT, textiles, and agriculture to facilitate trade and use strategic and economic dialogue as a mechanism to boost trade. As per the India-China Cultural Exchange Initiative, 200 youth are to be exchanged for cultural activities. A new India-China think tanks forum and a high level media forum has been established. Future cooperation is planned in nuclear cooperation, public health, traditional medicine and smart cities.



## The Dalai Lama's Visit to Arunachal Pradesh (2017) and Implications

## on Bilateral Ties

In April 2017, the Dalai Lama visited Arunachal Pradesh. The visit drew sharp reaction from the Chinese side. China stated that India has been using the Dalai Lama deliberately to upset Beijing. Officially, the Chinese government conveyed to India that such visits by Dalai Lama to disputed territories in Arunachal Pradesh will affect the bilateral ties. China asserted that the implications of the Dalai Lama's visit to Tawang could unleash a new low in the bilateral relations. China considers Tawang as a part of 'South Tibet'. It feels that visit of the Dalai Lama to 'South Tibet' or Tawang could incite the Tibetans. This is because the Tawang region is an important centre for Buddhist activity and the Dalai Lama's visit to the region could complicate the balance. China has an uncomfortable relationship with the Dalai Lama and feels that he is a separatist whose prime intention is to create unrest in Tibet to seek an autonomous state. China has always harboured a feeling that India has been supporting the Dalai Lama to create unrest in Tibet. The year 2016 had not gone very well for India and China. The two nations remained locked over China's repeated attempts to block the Masood Azhar issue and India's entry to the NSG. Towards the end of 2016, China upset India further by signalling its go-ahead to the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor, which passes through disputed territory. The central government led by Modi had not bent to Chinese pressure. It allowed the Dalai Lama's religious visit to Arunachal Pradesh. The Indian government's policy clearly signals the diplomatic cards India can play against China. Ironically, the Dalai Lama has visited Arunachal earlier in 1983, 1997, 2003 and 2009 as well. China has been creating a diplomatic ruckus over such visits. What has irritated China in 2017 was that during the Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, India's Minister of State for Home Affairs also accompanied him to Tawang. India has insisted that the visit of the Dalai Lama is purely religious and no political meaning should be attached to the same. China, on the other hand, enquired why, if the Dalai Lama's visit was purely religious, would an Indian Minister accompany him. The Indian foreign ministry too has states that the Dalai Lama is a religious figure and the Indian government has nothing to do with visits related to revered religious personalities. A deeper analysis of the visit clearly signifies that the visit of the Dalai Lama is used by India to keep China in check. If China continues to press for the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor and block India's membership to the NSG, then India would have the option to exercise the following diplomatic measures.



What motivates China to assert itself in Arunachal Pradesh is based in the

region's history. In Tawang, there is a monastery called the Galden Namgey Lhatse. It was founded in 1680 by Lama Lodre Gyatso on the wishes of Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, who was the Fifth Dalai Lama. The Tawang monastery is the seat of Karma-Kargyu sect and China knows that the Chinese legitimacy on Tibet will remain incomplete till it controls the Tawang monastery. This is the reason that China considers Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh as a part of Southern Tibet.

## **INDIA AND CHINA-DOLAM STANDOFF (2017)**

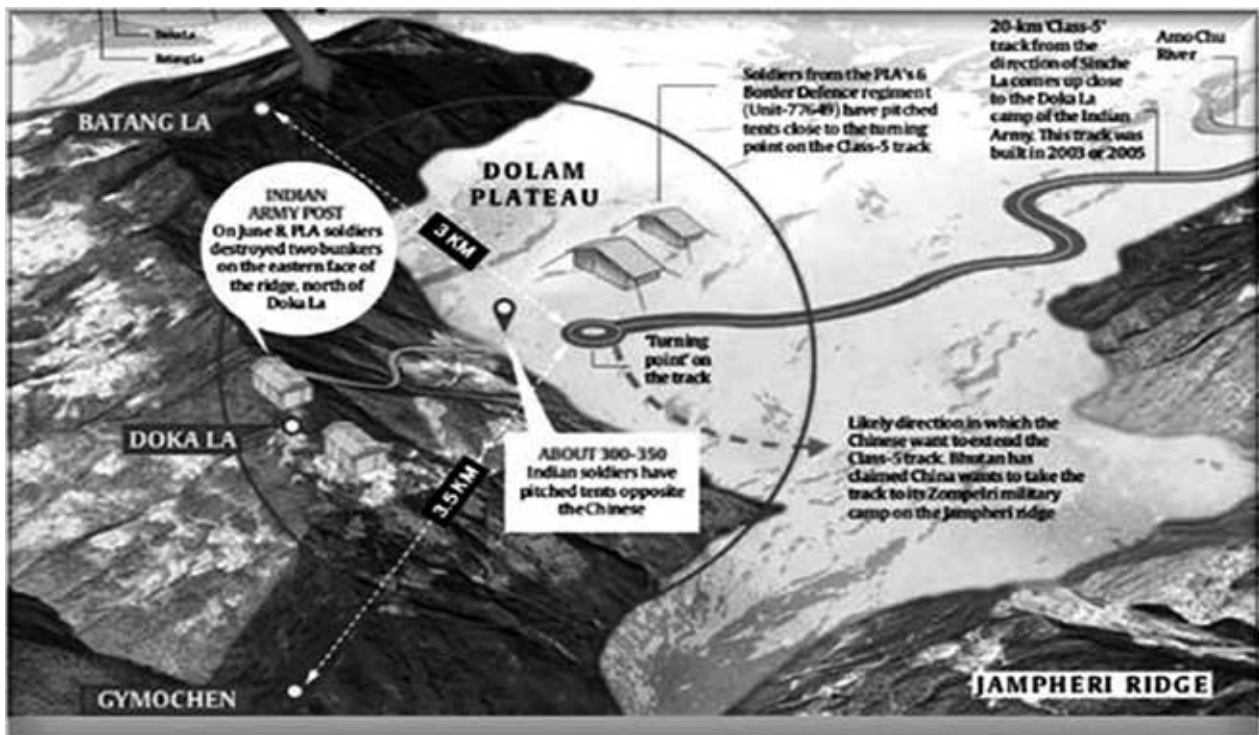
In order to understand the standoff, a brief idea about the geography of the region is crucial. The diagram below needs to be kept in mind.

### **Geography and Geopolitics**

- The issue between India and China happened in the Dolam plateau (which is in Doklam area), which is different from the Doklam plateau (which is located 30 Kilometers to the North East of the Dolam Plateau and is called Donglang by China).
- The Sino-Indian standoff happened in a tri-junction where borders of Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet meet, which itself is disputed.
- The Sino-Indian boundary in Sikkim (not a part of India-China Line of Actual Control), though settled, is not demarcated on a map.
- The disputed claims on the tri-junction are based on the individual interpretation of China and India on the basis of 1890 Calcutta Convention.
- The disputed tri-junction is claimed by India at a place called Batang La while China claims the tri-junction at 6.5 kilometers to the South of Batang La at a place called Gymochen.
- In 2012, under the Special Representative Talks (SRT) mechanism, India and China decided to maintain status-quo in this disputed area to their competing claims and resolve the dispute in consultation with Bhutan.
- A ridge line runs from the Batang La in the North to Gymochen in the South where there is a pass known as the Doka La. One ridge line, 500 meters high, runs eastward from Batang La till Amo Chu river while the other runs eastwards from Gymochen to Amo Chu river and is called the Jampheri ridge.
- In the center of the two ridges is 89 square kilometers bowl called Dolam plateau. Indian Army has a post in Doka la. The Batang La is the de-jure border while Doka La is the de-facto border.
- China has a motor able road called state highway S-204 which comes from Shigatse in Tibet to the north-east of the Nathu-La at a point called Yatung.
- From Yatung to Asam are unmettled roads that come to Doka-La which is a 20 kilometer long Class-5 Track (capable of carrying a load vehicles like a jeep, etc.).
- At the end of 20 kilometers point of the Class-5 Track in the Dolam plateau, near Doka La, is a turning point (barely few hundred meters away from an Indian Army post in Doka La) from where vehicles can reverse and traverse back.

Now see the diagram and analyze the geography carefully.





## Heart of the Issue

On 16th June 2017, a Chinese road construction party, consisting of some 100 men with earth moving equipments, came to the turning point and started surveys to extend the road towards Jampheri ridge. Seeing this, the Indian Army troops at the camp from Doka La came down in the Dolam Plateau near the turning point (in the territory of Bhutan) and formed a human chain, preventing the Chinese to make the road and the standoff began. Subsequently, the Indian and Chinese troops (PLA's 6 Border Defence Regiment Unit-77649) established tents in the area. India asserted that the creation of the road alters the status-quo of 2012 (as established by the SRT) and if China created a road to Jampheri ridge, it would reduce the distance of China to access India's chicken's neck by 50 kilometers. Doing so would not bring China in India's artillery range but it will affect India's offensive deployments in the area.

## Three Warfare Strategy

As the standoff continued, China insisted that Indian troops withdraw from Dolam plateau (as it belonged to Bhutan and was not a territory in dispute with India) and go back to Doka La while India insisted on pre 16th June 2017 position (and decided to stay in the area to assist Bhutan as per Article 2 of India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty). As the two sides got embroiled in an eyeball to eyeball confrontation, India began to build up troops along the Line of Actual Control fearing that China could open up a new front elsewhere. At the same time China unleashed a psychological warfare with a strong verbal barrage driven with a motive to back off Indian troops unilaterally. This Chinese approach was very much in sync with Chinese Three Warfare Strategy (comprising of media war, psychological war and legal war) developed by Chinese Central Military Commission in 2003 and reinforced in 2010. For India, the idea was not to back off (despite the fact that India for the first time was in the territory of a third nation-Bhutan, making this standoff different from the standoffs in Depsang in 2013 and Chumar in 2014, both of which happened on Indian territory) as doing so would have affected India's credibility in the neighborhood and

ASEAN region where it is trying to position itself as a Net Security Provider.

## **Quiet Diplomacy Trumps Shrill Nationalism—Throwing All Aces**

After a gap of 72 days, both sides diplomatically defused the crises by an agreement where both mutually decided to disengage the troops from the region and re-establish the status quo ante. Indian troops have retreated to Doka La but continue to occupy the vantage points on the top areas of the ridge while China has decided to halt the road construction activity but will continue to patrol the region. Both sides have moved out 'under verification' and China has agreed to 'make adjustments with the situation on the ground'. Xi Jinping demonstrated maturity while defusing the issue and succeeded in saving the BRICS Summit in Xiamen (where Indian PM eventually met the Xi) while also succeeded in safeguarding his reputation for the 19th Congress of the Communist Party.

## **Salami Slicing**

An analysis of the Dolam standoff proves that China again resorted to Salami Slicing (a term coined by Hungarian Communist Matyaas Rakosi in 1940's and in military terminology known as cabbage strategy) to make territorial grabs in the Himalayas (similar to its previous grabs of Aksai Chin, Tibet and Paracel Islands). Salami Slicing means a strategy of carrying out small actions in a clandestine manner that eventually accumulate into a larger action. China, to execute Salami Slicing, initiates territorial claims by staking claims to a territory. Then, carries out an intensive propaganda of all three types (in sync with Chinese Three Warfare Strategy) at all platforms (domestic and international) to claim the territory. The propaganda by China is so intense that it positions the territory in concern as a 'dispute'. Then China uses all its diplomatic and military might to resolve the dispute by avoiding a forceful intervention.

## **Rationale (do-and-be Damned, don't-do-and-be Damned)**

Xi Jinping masterminded the standoff to punish India for its OBOR Lèse-majesté by weaning Bhutan away from India but eventually ended up in a situation of 'do-and-be damned, don't-do-and-be damned' quandary. Though the Sino-Indian standoff is resolved, positioning India as a mature and responsible status-quo power, India created a template for other countries to check China. India needs to strengthen its critical border infrastructure, demarcate maps on settled sectors of the border and resolve pending border disputes with China to avoid future standoffs of this nature ahead.

## **CONCLUSION AND FINAL ANALYSIS**

Even though the two sides have tried to infuse new diplomatic blood to resolve various issues, the amount of distrust between the two remain alarming. The two sides remain locked in a security dilemma with each other. Any move by either in the neighbourhood at the security level is perceived by the other as a threat. The recent irritants between India and China over issues related to India's membership to the NSG and Masood Azhar are a testimony to the strain. China, too, has continued to assert its territorial claims and has used strong words to criticise the Dalai Lama's visit to Arunachal Pradesh in 2017. This is coupled with its rising incursions and transgressions into the Indian territory at the Western, Eastern and Central sectors. Though, for a long time, China never perceived India as a threat, the recent proximity between India and the USA after the civilian nuclear



deal (2005) and the signing of the LEMOA (2016) has set alarm bells ringing in China. China has responded by encircling India through the Belt and Road initiative and the erstwhile String of Pearls strategy. India has responded to all this through its reinvigorated Act East Policy and Project Mausam and Project Spice Route.

Since India's defeat in the border conflict, the foreign policy diplomats and political class in India has developed an immense amount of negativity towards China. India has to understand that China has its own national interests and that, at the international level, is not interested in demolishing India. It is merely pursuing its own strategic interests to achieve the status of a great power.

However, not everything seems absolutely hopeless. The Joint Working Group on border issues, talks of special representatives, elevation of border talks to the level of a strategic dialogue and a hot line between the two heads of the states clearly signify convergence. It is, in fact, at the international level where India and China converge more. The unipolarity of the USA and terrorism are two concerns that both nations share equally. The forums of WTO and Climate Change have seen proximity evolve between China and India. At the energy level too, both, being energy-hungry states, have decided to cooperate rather than compete with each other. The growing convergence at the international level is constrained by the nuclear dimension. China does not discuss nuclear diplomacy with India as it feels doing so may be a defacto acceptance of India's status as a nuclear power. The Chinese harbour the feeling that the 1998 nuclear tests by India were allowed by the USA as it would alter the balance of power in Asia by helping India to go nuclear. The Indo-USA nuclear deal was also perceived negatively by the Chinese, who believe that the US is attempting to use India as a balance to China.

To tackle a powerful China, India needs to evolve more sophisticated tools of diplomacy. India needs to clarify its national interests and aggressively pace up its economic and military might. India should evolve a coherent national strategy and identify the diplomatic tools needed to execute the same, and should engage successfully with its neighbours in a way so as to prevent a firm Chinese foothold in India's backyard.

## ***End of Section Questions***

1. Examine the possible alternative foreign policy approaches for India with respect to Pakistan.
2. To what extent did 'Confidence Building Measures' have reduced unpredictability in India-Pakistan relations.
3. "Pakistan uses Jihad as a Grand Strategy." Examine this statement with respect to Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan.
4. How far is India's forward policy responsible of Sino-Indian conflict of 1962?
5. Discuss briefly the approaches of different Indian Prime Ministers on Sino-Indian border issue?
6. "India's quiet diplomacy trumped shrill nationalism of China". Examine this statement in the light of Sino-Indian Doklam Standoff (2017)?