

# **Border Disputes, War and the Changing Dynamics of India's China Policy**

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## **Abstract**

*Relations between India and China, two of the oldest living civilizations had been warm, friendly and cooperative for centuries. Both nations had established greater linkages through cultural exchanges and trade throughout history. Ancient trade and religious pilgrimages had been flourishing through the ancient silk route for centuries. After independence, the civilizational relationship gains new momentum and the spirit of 'Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai' guided a new era of the Asian century. However, the brotherhood spirit started deteriorating after the Tibetan Uprising of 1959, leading to a trust deficit and subsequent border disputes. In 1962, both the neighbours engage a brief war and stand to juxtapose in many regional and global issues. Over the years, Chinese has emerged as a major international player and India's China policy has undergone a dynamic change to balance the Chinese threat. In this background, the current paper is intended to highlight the dynamics of India's China policy and analyse the changing relationship between India and China over the years.*

## **Keywords**

*India-China relations, Border disputes, War, Tibet uprising.*

## **Introduction**

India and China have been sharing a friendly and cooperative relationship since ancient times. This relationship has developed further after the independence of both countries during the late 1940s. The period between post-independence to 1957, known as the "Period of Panchsheel" is perhaps the golden age of India China relationship. India's full support to China's freedom movement and its reorganization, its unconditional support to China's admission into UN, support to China's stand on Korean crisis, annexation of Tibet and India's policies towards Formosa crisis are some of the events on which India and China shared similar thoughts. But, the year of 1989 was the important turning point of age-old relationship and the event that reshuffled the whole game was the Tibetan uprising of 1959.

## **Understanding the India-China Border Issues**

India and China share 3,488 kilometers long border and has been long-standing border issues throughout the stretches at different regions, namely eastern, middle and western sector (Ministry of Home Affairs). While in the Eastern Sector, China claims the large portions of the state of Arunachal Pradesh, which is now under Indian control, at the Chin, which it believe is a part of its Ladakh region. At the middle sector, both the states claim their sovereignty on various unmarked spots throughout the borders and have been

the spotlight of repeated border violation by both the forces. While both the parties up the ante and engage a series of military stand-ups in the recent past, the border disputes remain the guiding principle of the bilateral relationship.

#### The Issues of the Western Sector

While the issue got larger public attention in the recent past due to the repeated military stand-ups, the origin of these disputes dates back to the colonial era. The Ladakh region, which was once the part of Tibet was annexed by the Sikh army in 1841 and the subsequent signing of the Treaty of Chushul in September 1842 stipulated no transgressions principle between the Sikhs and Qing empires. Following the defeat of the Sikh Army in the Anglo-Sikh War, the British officials have taken over the state of Jammu and Kashmir, including the Ladakh region. Here for the first time, the British Empire shares a common border with China and both the parties respected the natural boundaries and taken no effort to demark the border on the map or ground till 1865. In 1865, British officials appointed a survey officer, William Johnson, to carry out a survey and draw a boundary line between British India and the Chinese Empire. After a rigorous survey, he presented the "Johnson Line" as the border, placing the entire Aksai China as a part of Kashmir. However, the proposed line was severely criticized for gross inaccuracies and reprimanded by British officials. (Raghavan 2010, p. 228) The issue had been put in cold storage till the threat of expanding of Russian empire extended till Indian borders. To draw a militarily defendable line to prevent any future Russian advancement into India, a new line was proposed by the British military officer, Sir John Ardagh along the crest of the Kun Lun Mountains. Considering various threat perception the Ardagh line was effectively a modified and a new line was drawn in 1897 merging the Johnson's survey and Ardagh recommendation. Called as the 'Johnson–Ardagh Line' or the 'Karakoram Line', the British proposed a military defendable line between India and China. (Hoffmann 1990, p. 15)

While both the lines were drawn unilaterally by British officials, that failed to impress the Chinese authority for agreement, a revised line was proposed by British India government placing the Lingzi Tang plains in India, and Aksai Chin proper in China. The boundary was prepared by the George Macartney, the British consul general at Kashgar after considering the Chinese map handed over by the Hung Ta-chen, a senior Chinese official at St. Petersburg in 1893. Making the Karakoram Mountains a natural boundary, the British government presented the Macartney-MacDonald Line to the Chinese in 1899 in 1899 with a diplomatic note by Sir Claude MacDonald (Hoffmann 1990, pp. 15-16). The Qing government did not respond to the note, speculating the British of Chinese acquiescence. Although no official boundary had ever been negotiated, China believed that this had been the accepted boundary and redrawn the China-Pakistan border based on this line in 1962 (Noorani 2010). On both occasions British authorities never demarked Western Sector, India demanding the withdrawal of the Chinese presence from Aksai the border on the ground, hence, they left the issues for further complication. Moreover, British officials had been using both the Johnson-Ardagh and the Macartney-MacDonald

lines in their maps, leaving the scope for further discord.

However, with the collapse of the central power in Chinese following the Xinhai Revolution and alarming Russian threat, the British resorted to the earlier stand and started using the Johnson Line officially. Though the claim strengthened further after the Second World War, no efforts were taken to set up border outposts and demarcation of the boundary on ground, leaving the border unmarked. In 1927, the line was adjusted again as the government of British India abandoned the Johnson line in favor of a line along with the Karakoram range further south. However, the maps were not updated and still showed the Johnson Line (Bradnock 2015, pp. 174-75). However, following the establishment of Pro-Russian leadership in Xinjiang 1933, Russia carried out several mining surveys in China. The increasing Russian footprints in neighboring China and its territorial surveys prompted the Britishers, to reopen the strategic gate game in the region. As a result, the British government has abandoned the Macartney-MacDonald and shifted their stand to Johnson Line by claiming the sovereignty on the whole of Aksai Chin. However, like other occasions, no measures have taken to establish border outposts and physical demarcation of the border with China. This policy was continued until the independence of India, making the Indians believe the Johnson Line as the border between India and China since 1947.

### **The disputes of the Middle Sector**

In the middle sector, India-China shares 545 kilometers long border from Demchok to Western Nepal that runs through the borders of two Indian states, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. While three of the disputed border areas, namely Kaurik in Lahaul and Spiti valley comes under the state of Himachal Pradesh, the rest of the two, including the Bara Hoti and Nelang Valley falls under the state of Uttarakhand. Though both the countries have a different opinion and claim their sovereignty, all the disputed areas of the middle sector are now under the control of India. This sector also witnesses several Chinese invasions in the recent past. Bara Hoti, for instance, came under repeated Chinese invasion and as many as 37 border violations have been reported between 2007 and 2012 (Times of India, Apr 16, 2012). Despite the constant patrolling by India's ITBP personnel, repeated border violation Chinese force has been reported recently (Indian Express, July 28, 2016).

### **The Eastern Sector along McMahon Line**

Among the all disputed territories between India and China, the eastern sector comprising of Arunachal Pradesh is the biggest territorial claims by China. The border is well defined by the McMahon Line and approved by Tibet as a border between India and Tibet during the Shimla agreement in 1914. China, as a party to the Shimla agreement, didn't sign the agreement. Though Chinese protest against the Indian high-level visits to Arunachal Pradesh and its claim on the easternmost part of India have increased recently, the origin of the disputes dates back to the colonial era. British India and China shared no common border in the eastern sector before 1826. After the annexation of Assam from

Burma in the Treaty of Yandabo and conquering subsequent areas during the Anglo-Burmese Wars, India gained control over the Brahmaputra basin and extended its border up to China in the eastern sector for the first time.

To demark the border between the three neighbours, Britain, China, and Tibet, a conference was organized by British authority at Shimla in 1913. At the Convention, the British government proposed the McMahon Line as the boundary line marking the Himalayas as the natural border and placing Tawang inside India. After several rounds of discussion, Tibet agreed to sign the agreement. However, Chinese representatives raised some objections to the final map and return without signing the accord (Ray 2013. pp. 216-17). However, Britain showed no seriousness to demark the border on the ground and took no step to claim their sovereignty in the border regions as the line had no serious challenge following the collapse of Chinese power in Tibet. After two decades, the Shimla Convention was first published by British Government in 1938 as a bilateral agreement followed by a detailed map by the Survey of India showing Tawang as a part of in North-East Frontier Tract (NEFT) (Ray 2007, p.203). However, the British sovereignty was hardly visible on the ground and Tawang continued to govern by Tibetan authority. Following the arrest of British botanist F. Kingdon-Ward in the tribal regions of northern Assam on the charge of unauthorized expedition into Tibetan territory, prompted the British government to send a mission to Tawang for the proclamation of British sovereignty. In April 1938, a small British force led by Captain G. S. Lightfoot arrived in Tawang and proclaimed the British authority on the region. The Tibetan government protested against the British claim and subsequently ignored Lightfoot's declaration while collecting taxes in Tawang. However, Lhasa did not object to British activity in other sectors of the McMahon Line (Raghavan 2012 pp. 17-18). Heading to no progress, Lightfoot returns to New Delhi in recommending stronger measures for the establishment of British authority over Tawang. However, due to the outbreak of World War II, the British did not pay much attention in enforcing authority in the valley. But, with the increasing Japanese surge in Asia, forcing the British to maintain a strong frontier in the region to prevent possible Japanese attack. Moreover, Britain was also concerned about the subsequent Chinese map showing not only Assam Himalayas but also areas that are 100 miles south of the agreed borderline during the Shimla convention. (Raghavan 2012 pp. 17-18) Alarmed by the adverse situation, British Indian authorities sent British civil servants and anthropologist J.P Mills to bring the tribal into British control and assert British authority in the tribal areas. With his pioneering efforts, he consolidated British influence among the tribals and able to establish several border posts from Walong at the east to DirangDzong at the west all along the McMahon Line. These border posts were guarded by Assam Rifles to prevent any kind of Chinese and possible Japanese expeditions and nullify the Tibetan influence in the region. By 1947, when the British Empire collapsed in India, Britain able to establish the Indo-Tibetan frontier as per the McMahon Line and the British sovereignty within the frontier was transferred to Independent India after 1947. After independence, India merged the North-East Frontier

Tract into the state of Assam and retained the border posts as usual. However, for better administrative management, the Indian government reorganize the hill tracts and constituted the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in 1951 which was renamed as Arunachal Pradesh in 1972 and become a union territory. In 1987 Arunachal Pradesh given full statehood status and become the 24th State of Indian Union. Following the Chinese liberation in 1951 and subsequent annexation of Tibetan in 1954, the Indian sovereignty in the region was questioned by Beijing citing the Chinese rejection of the McMahon line at the Shimla Convention. For India, the Indo-Tibetan and now Indo-Chinese frontier is well demarked and the McMahon line remains the border between India and China. Both the countries failed to resolve the disputes through dialogue in 1960 and fought a war in claiming sovereignty in this area. Whoever, after a short occupation, Chinese solders decided to withdraw from this region and NEFA once again came under the Indian authority. China still claims its sovereignty over whole of Arunachal Pradesh and objects the visits of Indian Authorities into this area.

### **The Tibetan Uprising and the Emergence of Sino-Indian Border disputes**

India China relations have been seriously damaged by the incident of militant Tibetan uprising of 1959. The revolt once again brought the age-long issue of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet into living. The uniqueness of the revolution was that it was mostly driven by armed militants and carried out by the people against the Chinese authority, while previous revolutions were mostly unarmed and state-sponsored.

The Chinese government has successfully brought back Tibet into Chinese manifold by signing the "Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" with the Tibetan government on May 23, 1951 (Lal 2008, p. 145). It kept India at bay while signing the treaty, though Indian footprints were firmly visible in the Himalayan kingdom since the British era. Later, it successfully convinced the Indian government on its sovereignty over Tibet and got its stamp approval by signing the "Panchsheel Agreement" on 1954 which clearly states 'Tibet' as the "Tibet region of China". While signing the treaty China promised to maintain the status quo of the position of the Dalai Lama and the autonomy of Tibet which was gradually curbed by the Chinese authority and tried to impose the Chinese policies over Tibet. In protest, the anti-Chinese revolt erupted on March 10, 1959, on the capital of Tibet Lhasa (Jian 2006). The People's Liberation Army used subsequent forces to dismantle the revolution. Following the attack on Norbulingka, the summer residence of Dalai Lama, especially after March 17, 1959, when China ordered its army to crush the rebel and Tibetan authority Dalai Lama fled to India along with his mother, brother and other 80,000 fellow Tibetans and reached India on March 31, 1959 (BBC, March 31, 1959). There was a public pressure to grant political asylum to Dalai Lama and India granted the same to Dalai Lama subsequently (Smith2010, p. 240).

After the voluntary surrendering of all its traditional tights in Tibet and accepting Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, India hardly got interested to intervene in the so-called "internal matters" of China and restricted its stand just as a spectator. On the other hand,

Chinese authority was suspicious about India and was constantly alleging its involvement in the Tibetan uprising (Raghavan 2010, p.249). Chinese authority criticized India for extending its asylum to Dalai Lama and the other Tibetans and alleged Indian backing in the armed confrontation. However, India denied any involvement and made it clear that its asylum to Tibetan spiritual leader was based on humanitarian ground. Clarifying Chinese allegation on India's political interest and function of the government in exile of Tibet it stated that "Government of India..... did not recognize any separate government of Tibet and hence there is no question of Tibetan government under the Dalai Lama functioning in India" (Sali, 1998, p.78). However this assurance and clarifications did not satisfy the Chinese authority and premier Mao Zedong asked the People's Daily to criticize India. He drafted the article where he termed India as "expansionist" and alleged that India "wants ardently to grab Tibet" (Garver 2006, pp. 93-94).

The Chinese authority started criticizing India and accused of the violation of the 1951 Panchsheel agreement by granting asylum to Dalai Lama. They also accused India of pressurizing and motivating Dalai Lama to leave Tibet. Clarifying the doubt over his exile, Dalai Lama declared on April 18, 1959, that he had fled into India "of his own will and not under duress". He also made it clear that "there was a strong desire for independence on the part of the people of Tibet" and the seventeen point Agreement had been concluded under the pressure from the Chinese government". He also showed his gratitude towards the Indian government and the public for their generosity and support towards the people of Tibet and charged China for the violation of the 1951 'Seventeen Point Agreement' and gradual withdrawal of autonomous statues to Tibet (Deepak 2005, p. 207). However, as earlier China claimed that the recent statement also was full of lies and was prepared under duress (Deepak 2005, pp. 207-08). Defusing the charges, the spiritual leader issued another statement on April 22, 1959, where he clarified that "I wish to make it clear that the earlier statement issued by my authority and indicated my view and I stand by it" (Deepak 2005, p. 210).

### **China's Charges of Indian Involvement in Tibetan Conflict**

So far, the debate in India was merely a reaction to the Tibet conflict and the sufferings of the Tibetan people due to the conflict. India did not come under any Chinese criticism directly and China did not link India with the conflict. But, on March 28, 1959, the Chinese government in its official communiqué termed the Tibetan uprising as the conflict against imperialism and alleged its base at the Kalimpong, the Indian consulate. By doing so, China indirectly alleged Indian involvement in the conflict. The communiqué also criticized the conduct of debate on Tibetan uprising in the Indian Parliament and termed the debate as to the attempt to interfere in China's internal matters. (Jain 1060, p. 85) After three days on March 31, 1959, another similar propaganda article was published in the state-run People's Daily where the Indian consulate at Kalimpong was charged as the epicentre of Tibetan conflict.

Following the constant demand from various political parties to declare the government of India's policy towards Dalai Lama and Tibetan uprising as well as to

clarify Chinese spuriousness on India's interest, Nehru presented a detailed statement in Indian Parliament on April 28, 1959. "I need not tell the house that Dalai Lama entered India entirely of his own volition. At no time had we suggested that he should come to India. We had naturally given thought to the possibility of his seeking asylum in India and when such a request came, we readily granted it." He also asked the Panchan Lama and other Chinese authorities including the Chinese ambassador to meet Dalai Lama and find some solution for the Tibetan crisis. Following the article Communist Party of India on May 12, 1959, issued a resolution on Nehru's statement over Tibet and alleged Nehru for the violation of the principles of the Panchsheel Agreement.

### **The Emergence of Sino-Indian Border Disputes**

The "Hindi-Chini-Bhai-Bhai" spirit got a major setback during the late fifties of the twentieth century due to the increasing skepticism between India and China over Tibet. As a consequence of the Tibetan Crisis and India's political asylum to Dalai Lama, China in many times took a strong stand on various unsettled issues, including border disputes. While China had never raised the border issues during the 1954 agreement and perhaps, as Nehru said had accepted the McMahon line as the de facto border between India and China gradually denied to recognize the same after the Tibet crisis. First, it issued the map showing some eastern sectors of India as Chinese territory and subsequently raised its army's presence in these regions. India, on the other hand also increased its patrolling activities to protect its border, though both India and China had vowed for the peaceful settlement of the frontier line. At ground border forces of both, the countries tried to maintain the perceived borderline according to their assumptions. Hence, often they came front to front during the patrolling and accused each other as the violator of the borderline. Sometimes the military activities led to the small intensity armed clash between the forces like the incidents of Pangong, Migyitum, and Longju.

In an extension of its claim, Chinese forces intruded into the Indian Territory near to Pangong Lake on July 28, 1959, and arrested six Indian policemen including an officer. India soon reacted sharply to the border violation act and demanded the immediate release of its policemen. However, China denied the allegation and accused Indian forces of their incursion into Chinese territories. (White Paper I, 1959) A similar incident occurred near Migyitum on August 25, 1959, where the Chinese forces attacked an Indian army post and killed one Indian soldier and injured another three. On the very next day, what the government of India believed, the Chinese force-marched further into the Indian Territory and surround the small garrison of the Indian army at Longju on August 26, 1959. In defence the Indian forces opened firing but did not sustain longer against the large Chinese force. The Indian forces abandoned the barrack after heavy losses from the Chinese army. (White Paper II 1959) The Chinese version, however, blamed the Indian troops for its firing on Chinese troops after crossing the Chinese border. (Deepak 2005, pp. 216-18) These incidents started a series of public uproar across India and the centre of the Parliamentary debate.

Looking at the intensity of differences, Nehru wrote a series of letters to Chinese counterpart Zhou En-Lai citing various historical records, ancient maps, and provisions of agreements to reclaim the Indian stand. After a silence of about six months, Chinese premier En-Lai replied to Nehru's letter on September 8, 1959, where he raised several arguments in justifying Chinese claim over the border regions of India. En-Lai in his letter wrote that China was not a party to the treaty of 1842 and did not approve it later. Therefore there was no question of recognizing the frontier line. He made it clear that the Chinese government was not recognizing the McMahon and illegally occupied the LongjuYaxierShatze, Khinzemane and Tamaden regions of China. He also blamed the Indian forces for the Lonju incidents and argued that the deployment of a Chinese border guard at the Indian border was just to threaten India, but to prevent the Tibetan gorillas from inter into Tibet and make disturbances. (White Paper-II, 1959) The En-Lai letter to Nehru for the first time made a formal claim of 90,000 square Kilometer of the Indian Territory. Meanwhile similar border violation and subsequent clashes reported from the Kongka pass of the Aksai Chin area, where 10 Indian soldiers were killed and few were arrested by Chinese soldiers. However, the Chinese version claimed that it was the Indians who passed into the Chinese side and attacked the Chinese picket subsequently and the Chinese forces only retaliated to the attack.

### **Sino-Indian Dialogue on border issues**

Amidst growing tensions in the border regions, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai wrote a letter to Nehru proposing to maintain status quo on the border and to ensure tranquillity at the border by withdrawing forces twenty kilometres away from both the sides of the McMahon line in the east and Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the west. He also proposed not to send a patrol party into the evacuated region to avoid any conflict, while maintaining civil administrative personnel there. At last, he suggested a meeting between the two Prime Ministers at a convenient venue to discuss and resolve the border issues. (White Paper III, 1960, p. 46) Both the suggestions were accepted by Indian and a meeting was fixed after through negotiations of the two sides to resolve the border issues. After several diplomatic commutations, the meeting was fixed on April 19, 1960 in New Delhi. Despite steep domestic pressure, Nehru decided to hold a meeting with Chinese premier Zhou Enlai on April 19, 1960, in New Delhi. Prime Minister Zhou Enlai with a huge Chinese delegation that included Foreign Minister, Chen Yi, Vice-Foreign Minister, Zhang Hanfu and Assistant Foreign Minister Zhang Qiaogun visited New Delhi to discuss and resolve the outstanding border conflict. Apart from Nehru, the Chinese Premier discussed with various political leaders such as vice-President Radhakrishnan, Defense Minister Krishna Menon, Home Minister Pandit G.B. Pant separately. The talks went on up to six days between Indian and Chinese delegation to find some interim solution that was convenient to both the parties. After 20 hours of talks between Nehru and Zhou, no such significant result came out, except the joint communiqué. The communiqué read that, the officials of the two governments would meet from June to September

alternatively at two capitals and examine, check and study all historical documents, records, accounts, maps and other study materials relevant to the boundary question on which each side relied in support of its stand, and draw up a report for submission to the two governments". The two governments also agreed to take all possible and available mechanisms to avoid the ongoing border clashes between the two armies. (Ministry of External Affairs 1960, pp. 107-08) There is no doubt that the talks failed to resolve the issue, as there were huge differences between Indian and Chinese viewpoints, besides a lack of mutual trust.

Meanwhile, the report of the on-going Sino-Indian border talks was published on February 14, 1961. As expected by most of the non-communist opposition parties, it failed to resolve the outstanding disputes. Instead of one unanimously accepted report, the whole bunch consisted of two different independent reports, each narrating the arguments of one side, followed by a short three-page joint declaration. And the Indian version of the report was contrasted with the Chinese version. The fundamental difference was surrounded to the demarcation of the frontier line. While India argued that it had been demarcated previously, China said, it had never been delimited earlier. China also refused to discuss Sino-Bhutanese and Sino-Sikkim boundaries stating that they were beyond the scope of the present discussion. On the other hand, India argued that it was treaty-bound to protect Bhutan's boundary, hence it should be discussed in the on-going talks. Even the short joint report lacked any concrete mechanism to settle the border, hence the talk could be considered as a failed attempt. The Only thing both the parties gained out of the talks was perhaps an attempt to understand each other's stand. (Ministry of External Affairs 1960, pp.1-11)

### **India's Forward Policy and Sino-Indian War**

Despite all possible attempts to convince the Chinese leadership, China continued to occupy a large chunk of the Indian Territory and refuse to withdraw its troops back. The peaceful options such as talks and negotiation also failed to resolve the issue and there was a report of Chinese military buildups along the borders. At this juncture, India opted to use hard power to push back Chinese occupation from the occupied Indian territories, assuming that China was unlikely to launch a major operation to counter the Indian move. Popularly, known as India's "Forward Policy", the plan intended to deter further Chinese aggression and reoccupy the lost territories that India assumed to fall within its territorial jurisdiction. For the realization of the plan, the Indian government decided to create additional forward posts and cover unreachable areas along the Chinese border. In addition to this, the strength of the Indian posts was increased with the deployment of additional forces and the soldiers were asked to drive out the Chinese incursion. (Prasad 2010 pp. 273-75; Raghavan 2010 pp. 273-75) Though the operation gained success initially, it led to full-fledged war and cost heavy casualties subsequently due to improper planning and lack of logistics. The Forward Policy also became a point of Justification for China to lunch a massive attack against India that ended with a loss of a large chunk of Indian Territory to China.

By this time the Chinese authority began to object to India's forward posts and military buildups along the border regions. They also issued protest notes and ultimatums to India asking it to be prepared to face the consequences if it won't withdraw its troops from the Chinese borders. Such kind of protest note, for the first time was received by India on November 30, 1961. In this note, China suggested to call back Indian forward posts and to maintain the earlier line. (White Paper VI 1962, pp.3-5 & 15) Another similar note was presented to India on March 1, 1962, accusing India of refusing to hold talks with China while continue to march towards the Chinese territories. (White Paper VI 1962, p.18)

While the heated argument was being exchanged and the situation of the frontiers was intense, China proposed India to negotiate for a new agreement on trade and intercourse (as popularly known as Panchsheel earlier) on December 3, 1961. On December 15 government of India, in reply wrote a letter to the Chinese government showing little interest mentioning the collapse of the previous agreement due to China's unnecessary restrictions on Indian businessmen and pilgrims. (White Paper VI 1962, p.18) A few consecutive notes were exchanged between India and China. After a long exchange of notes, India, on April 11, 1962, informed that it had no objection to the proposed negotiation for a new agreement, but China had to withdraw its troops from the Indian soil. Hence in other words, it put the condition of vacation of occupied frontiers before any negotiation, on which China never agreed. Hence the proposed negotiation never happened and the old treaty of trade and intercourse lapsed on its due date of June 3, 1962.

### **China's All-out Invention**

Looking at the intensified Chinese aggression and heavy military buildups, a high-level meeting was organized on September 9, 1962, under the Presidentship of Defence Minister, Krishna Menon. In the meeting, it was decided that the Chinese forces had to push back from the Thang La Ridge immediately at any cost and by any means. (Prasad 1992. pp. 94-95) This decision was reflected in Prime Minister Nehru's statement. While leaving for Sri Lanka on October 12, Nehru informed the press that he had ordered the army to "clear Indian territory in the NEFA". (Orton, 2010, p. 50) The government of India decided to raise new army crops, named IV Crop, under the Eastern Command on October 12, 1962, and General B.M. Kaul was appointed its Commander to evict the Chinese occupation in NEFA. A Codenamed as "Operation Leghorn" an offensive military operation, for the first time from the Indian side, was launched in Thang La Ridge and the other regions of NEFA on October 10, 1962. (Kaul 1967, pp. 355-56) There was a general assumption among the Indian leaderships that, China would not involve in large-scale offence against India, which proved wrong later. Proving Indian calculation wrong, China reacted to the Indian movement and attacked back the Indian troops on October 10, 1962. After the Indian offensive attack and loss of 77 soldiers during the military clash, China decided to punish India and lodged a massive attack in NEFA and Ladakh simultaneously on October 20, 1962. (Deepak 2005, p. 250) With the large scale Chinese attack, an

undeclared war between India and China started in the high Himalayas. The overwhelming Chinese troops easily chased out Indian attackers and within 48 hours most of the Indian posts fell down in Ladakh and NEFA. Following the catastrophic casualties, Nehru, in a broadcast to the nation on October 22, 1962, appealed the people "to be united in this great enterprise and put aside the controversies and arguments, and present a solid united front before all those who see to endanger our freedom and integrity". (Ministry of External Affairs 1963, pp. 1-20)

Following the Mao Zedong's "da da, tan tan(fight fight, talk talk)." strategy, China offered three-point ceasefire proposal to India on October 24, 1962, stating that, the border was a disputed issue and never been demarked hence, the present ceasefire line should be maintained till permanent solution been achieved. (White Paper VIII 1962, p. 1) However, on October 27, Nehru refused to accept the proposal that attempted to compel India to follow the Chinese plan of boundary settlement by taking advantage of India's weak position in the war. He replied to China that, India had no objection to any further peaceful negotiation on border disputes, provided China would pull its army back to the pre-September 8 line (White Paper VIII 1962, pp.4-5). Few consecutive notes were exchanged between India and China but it failed to reach any conclusion. Following India's refusal of the Chinese designed ceasefire proposal, China marched ahead deep into the Indian Territory and continued its brutal attack on Indian defend lines. Looking at the increased Chinese attack, a state of national emergency, for the first time in the history of India was declared by the President of India, and the emergency session of the Parliament was called on November 8 to discuss the grave situation of the country. Meanwhile, China attacked the eastern sector and captured Tawang and Walong on November 16.

While the Chinese attack was at its peak during the late Novembers and Indian posts were falling consecutively, China declared the unilateral ceasefire in the eastern, western and middle sectors. It also declared to withdraw its troop twenty kilometre back from the line of actual control that was maintained on November 7, 1959. The note further asked the Indian government to re-establish the consultative activities and negotiation in the future to discuss the delimitation of the ceasefire line and demilitarized zones. (Appadorai 1982, pp. 676-77)

### **International mediation in dispute resolution and the Colombo Proposal**

Though both India and China agreed to adhere to maintain the ceasefire, neither side was able to fix the ceasefire line and demilitarization zone due to perceptual differences. Meanwhile, some Afro-Asian countries came forward to facilitate the ceasefire formula. With the prime initiative of the Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike, Six Afro-Asian Countries such as Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Ghana, Indonesia and United Arab Republic (Egypt) met in Colombo between December 10 to 12, 1962 to finalize a workable agreement between India and China to resolve the border disputes. At the end of the conference, a suggestive document was produced which prescribed a way out the formula for all the three disputed frontier regions. In the western sector, the document suggested, China had to withdraw its troops

20 kilometres from the ceasefire line as per the declaration, whereas, India could hold the present ceasefire line and need not withdraw its troops anyway. After the Chinese vacation, this 20-kilometre frontier region would be a demilitarized zone and would be "administrated by civilian posts of both sides to be agreed upon, without prejudice to the rights of the previous presence of both India and China in that area." In the Eastern Sector, both the countries had maintained the "Line of actual control" as the de-facto border, whereas, status quo had to be maintained in the middle sectors. A delegation led by Prime Minister Bandaranaike visited India and China to convince the countries to accept the Colombo proposal. India first did not accept the proposal and informed the Bandaranaike delegation that, it could give its reply to the proposal only after his consultation with Parliament. (Hoffmann 1990, pp. 226-28)

### **China's renounce of Colombo Proposal and the enduring hostility**

On April 20, 1963, Zhou Enlai informed the government of India that, China would not accept the added provisions (which included the clarification wanted by India) of the Colombo Proposal as it was not part of the official report. India strongly objected to China's decision and made it clear that there should not be half acceptance of the proposal suggested by Colombo Powers. (White Paper IX, p. 10-20 ) Zhou's letter in rejecting the Colombo proposal drove another huge anti-Chinese public opinion. While intimating the Chinese decision to Lok Sabha on May 7, 1963, Nehru once again repeated that no further negotiation was possible, if China would not accept the Colombo proposal in total. (Lok Sabha Debates, 1963, Cols. 14195-96) While answering to the question on Chinese border violation on August 16, 1963, Nehru acknowledged that China had set up twenty-six civilian posts in the declared demilitarized zone. He also argued that China had repeatedly violated India's air space boundaries and accumulating military presence in the Tibet regions to maintain the tension alive in the border. He was afraid that China might have a greater design just to maintain tension and might in a process to invade India once again. But, he assured, India was fully prepared to handle the situation better than the past.

### **Chinese Nuclear Explosion and territorial reclamation of NEFA**

Two years after the Sino-Indian border war, on October 16, 1964, China conducted a nuclear test at the Lop Nor nuclear testing site in the Xinjiang province and became the fifth nuclear power state on the planet. India, the forerunner of the nuclear Disarmament programme, reacted strongly to the Chinese. The newly elected prime minister approached the superpowers to guarantee security for India but failed to get a positive response. (Abraham 1998, p. 125) With the nuclear weapons in hand, Chinese leadership started threatening India over the unsettled frontier regions. Warning India, Chinese Prime Minister, Zhou Enlai stated that China had never relinquished its sovereignty over the 90000 square kilometres of territory south of McMahon line and condemned India's demand of dismantling of Chinese civilian posts across the frontier line. (The Hindustan Times, January 1, 1965)

## **Sino-Indian Border Skirmishes in Recent Past**

Though the border dispute between India and China dates back to decades, both the countries have been engaged in several high intensive border skirmishes in the recent past. Both the forces blame others for the border violation along the frontiers in the western, eastern and middle sector. Though no large casualty was reported due to the border skirmishes, both the forces engaged in several military standoffs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and other hotspots in middle and eastern sectors amounting to further escalation and war.

On the Line of Actual Control, for instance, China allegedly intruded into 19 km of the borderline and established a camp at Raki Nula, 30 km south of Daulat Beg Oldi on 15 April 2013. The incursion included the air space violation by Chinese military helicopters to drop supplies to the troops. However, Chinese officials denied any trespassing having taken place. Soldiers from both countries briefly set up camps on the ill-defined frontier facing each other, but the tension was defused when both sides pulled back soldiers in early May resulting in a 21 days long military standoff between the rivalry countries. (Lee 2013) Similarly, in September 2014 about 35 Chinese soldiers also reportedly entered into Indian territory and set up a camp at 30R post of Chumar valley located 300 km northeast of Ladakh. Confronted by the Indian Army, PLA refused to leave claiming the land as theirs leading to another military standoff in Ladakh. After multiple rounds of flag meetings between both the forces, China pulled back their army on the condition of some dismantling of Indian military structures, ending to 16 days long standoff. (Pandit 2014) In September 2015, Chinese and Indian troops faced off in the Burtse region of northern Ladakh after Indian troops dismantled a disputed watchtower the Chinese were building close to the mutually agreed to patrol line. (Indian Express, September 13, 2015)

Similarly, the border village of Demchok in Leh district had been the center of conflict between India and China for decades. Troops of both countries engage in two military standoffs in September 2014 and in November 2016 for the construction of irrigation canals in the village. On both occasions, the tensions were dismantled after the termination of construction work and the mutual withdrawal of troops from the region. (Singh 2016) Above all, the Doklam crisis, which occurred at the border tri-junction between India, China, and Bhutan was one of the low points of India-China relationships. Indian efforts to maintain status quo by preventing Chinese forces to build a strategic road in the disputed region led a long military standoff between Indian and Chinese forces. The repeated Chinese warning, subsequent live-fire drills in Tibet and wider media coverage make the situation worse leaving narrow scope for consensus building and negotiation. The standoff continued for 72 days both the parties withdrawn their troops from the disputed land and the status quo have maintained once again.

The Eastern Sector along the McMahon Line also remains hostile since the Sino-India war. China's claim over Arunachal Pradesh in general and Tawang, in particular, led to several small scale border skirmishes in the region. Among all border clashes, the 1987 border skirmishes are prominent, where both the countries came close to another hot war at Sumdorong Chu Valley. Soldiers of both the countries had engaged several border

clashes at various spots of the valley including, Namka Chu, Kya Pho, Yangtse, Khizemane, Asaphila, Longju, Tuting, and Fish Tail. However, both the countries maintain restraint and defused the tension after negotiations. In the recent past, several border violations by Chinese forces were reported and Chinese officials have been critical of Indian policies in the region.

### **India's China Policy Since the Border War**

The dynamic relationship India and China remain tizzy after the 1962 border war and both the neighbours remain estranged for years before their rapprochement in the 1980s. With the collapse of the great wall of Sino-Indian hostility at the end of the Sikkim crisis, both India and China decided to move ahead to develop a normal relationship. (Deepak 2005, pp. 298-99) The process of Sino-Indian détente was started getting momentum after the non-intervention of China in the Sikkim crisis and the goodwill visit of the Chinese Table Tennis team along with the Chinese Vice-Minister Wang Bingnan. Chinese leaderships showed her interest to re-establish the normal diplomatic relationship with India. On the other hand, Foreign minister Chavan declared to send K.R. Narayan as the Indian ambassador to China. Subsequently, Chen Zhayuan was sent as the Chinese ambassador to India in September 1976 and the two Asian giants once again re-established their ambassador level diplomatic relations after 15 years. Following the invitation of Wang Bingnan, foreign minister Vajpayee visited Beijing on February 12, 1979, and called for greater Sino-Indian engagement. (Jain 2010, p. 229) Following Vajpayee's visit, the Chinese vice premier and foreign minister Huang Hua paid his return trip to India on June 25, 1981. It was the first visit by any Chinese foreign minister ever. (Beijing Review, July 13, 1981) During the visit of Huang, both the countries agreed to resume talks to resolve the long-pending border problems. There were altogether eight similar talks held between December 1981 and November 1987. Though the talk failed to resolve the outstanding issue due to subsequent rejection of each other's proposal, it opened up several new doors for both the governments to understand each other's concerns. (Lal 2008, p. 24; Vang, 2008, p. 174) Subsequently, India and China granted the status of Most Favoured Nation (MNF) to each other on 15 August 1984. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi paid his historic visit to China on December 19, 1988, and Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng visited India in December 1991 followed by Narshimarao's China visit in December 1993. (Ranganathan 1998, pp. 443-45) From 1976 to 1997 several high-level visits and diplomatic exchanges occurred, which further strung the age-old relation between India and China and put the relationship on track.

The Joint Working Group (JWG) on border disputes that were set up by the mutual agreement during Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's China visit, became an effective tool in the subsequent years to reduce tension at the border and promoting peace and tranquillity at the border. The specialist group went through ten rounds of intensive negotiations from 1989 to 1997 in New Delhi and Beijing alternatively. As a result, in the eighth round of meeting in August 1995, both the countries agreed to withdraw their troops back from the Sumdorong Chu Valley to end the nine yearlong military standups. To avoid such kind of

standups in the future, both India and China decided to set up a meeting point for military officers at the Nathu La. More importantly, the 'pockets of disputes' were identified and it was decided to take utmost care to avoid any armed confrontation while patrolling. The subsequent meetings also helped to adapt the policy to boost the Confidence Building Measures (CBM) between both the armed forces and other normalization initiatives to deescalate the tensions. (Deepak 2005, pp. 349-350) To strengthen the bilateral ties further, Chinese President Jiang Zemin paid an official visit to India in 1996 and signed the CBM agreement with India. (Deepak 2005, pp. 151-53)

China also denied the allegation of the transfer of Chinese nuclear weapon technology or M-II missiles to Pakistan and clarified that it would not sell any of its advanced nuclear technologies to any of its neighbours. (Perkovich, 1999 p. 387) On the Kashmir disputes, China ruled out any third party mediation and stated that India and Pakistan had to resolve the issue bilaterally. That means, as Perkovich believed, Kashmir for China is no longer an international problem, rather a bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan now. (Perkovich, 1999 p. 387) During the Kargil war, China took a neutral stand despite Islamabad's appeal to world communities and its all-weather for support. 'Without slightest partiality to any side' Chinese leadership suggested Pakistan resolve the issue peacefully. (Deepak 2005 pp. 386-87) For Swaran Singh, China's decision to maintain complete neutrality was the result of its changing role in the post-soviet world order, but for India, it was the fruit of the yearlong normalization process. (Singh 1999 pp. 1083-94)

### **Cooperation and Competition**

With the beginning of the 21st century, the India-China relationship has entered into a new phase of cooperation and competition. After a short episode of disturbance following the Pokhran-II Nuclear explosion, the Kargil war and the Karmapa incident, the roller-coaster relationship between India and China started improving after the visit of Indian President K.R. Narayanan to China. India's timely negotiation regarding these issues did not let the thing go wrong. China also realized the importance of friendship with India to attain its global stature and maintained a constructive dialogue with Indian leadership to resolve the outstanding issues. In addition to this, the growing interdependency and trade relations also played a significant role to promote Sino-Indian cooperation. As a result, several agreements have been signed between the two countries to improve the state of the relationship, trade, and commerce. New Delhi and Beijing also decided to extend their area of cooperation in other non-explored areas including the energy section. However, this honeymoon lasts apparently for a short period. Due to the rapid global transformation and emergence of new economic world order, both the countries found themselves just as oppose to each other in many areas and knowingly or unknowingly, they indulged in the zone of competition soon. In this background, the present chapter discusses the course of India-China relations in the twenty-first century and the outstanding issues of this defining relationship.

The terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament by Pakistan based terror organization on December 13, 2001 and subsequent India–Pakistan military stand-up put China in a difficult situation (Swamy 2011 pp. 23-26). For India, it was the time to measure the Chinese attitude vis-à-vis the growing Sino-Indian cooperation. However, China condemned the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament and perhaps, for the first time acknowledged that it was also a victim of terrorism in Xinjiang. (The Renmin Ribao, November 14, 2001) Like the Kargil crisis, this time also China maintained equal distance from the crisis and asked both the countries to uphold calm in the border. Answering to a question during his official visit to India, Chairman Li Peng stated that, like India, China views international terrorism as a big threat to its national security and offers China's cooperation to tackle the menace of international terrorism. (The Hindu, January 14, 2001) This was a new development in India-China relations, as China was a little hesitant to support India in its war on terrorism. Similarly, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongli during his visit to New Delhi also condemned the Parliament attack and assured China's full cooperation to combat terrorism. Even, both the countries agreed to establish an anti-terrorist dialogue mechanism to reduce the menace of terrorism in the region. (Cherian 2002). However, the state-run China Institute of Contemporary International Relations stated the terror attack on the Indian Parliament was inside job and was carried out by the Indian outfits. Similarly, the state-run Institute of Strategic Studies warned that, if the war broke out China would support Pakistan. (Gupta 2014, pp 383) Besides, China was the only country that opposed to the blacklisting of Pakistan linked terrorist originations (Markey 2013, p. 183).

### **Widening Differences and the Beginning of India China Great Game**

The roller- coaster relation between India and China was gradually growing upwards since the official visit of the Indian president K.R. Narayanan. Since then, many high-level visits were conducted from both sides' subsequently including the state visit of Chinese Premier Zhu Rongli and Wen Jiabao as well as the visit of Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee to China in 2003. Meanwhile, for the first time, the total bilateral trade between New Delhi and Beijing crossed the US \$ 10 billion marks in April 2005 (Ministry of External Affairs). However, the Sino-Indian honeymoon did not last long. The growing relationship took a new turn when India decided to oppose China's inclusion into the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as an observer. Clarifying its position Indian External Affairs Ministry stated that, "India's position is that China's request along with others can be considered once the criteria and modalities for such association have been worked out." (Bhattacharya, 2005) Moreover, for India, China's entry into the SAARC, which is mostly dominated by India, would curtail its influence. (Gupta, 2014, pp. 383-85) However, with the help of its alliance partner Pakistan and the backing of Nepal and Bangladesh, China managed to get the observer status. India, on the other hand, agreed to the Chinese bid when other SAARC members agreed to grant observer status to Japan. Furthermore, China had been blocking the Russian proposal to grant observer status to India in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Beijing

proposed the name of Pakistan as an observer and only allowed India when Russia agreed to allow Pakistan into the SCO. Similarly, China also opposed the inclusion of India into the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as a full dialogue partner. For many, this was the beginning of a "New Great Game" and the Sino- competition (Nadkarni 2010, p.188; Hauser &Kemic 2009 p.116; Sánchez-Cacicedo 2014, pp.169-70).

Similarly, the Sino-Indian competition is quite visible in the energy sector despite the existence of the bilateral energy cooperation agreement (Jiali 2010). The competition between the two Asian giants was quite visible when China decided to challenge the Indian bid for the exploration of natural gas in Myanmar and use its political contacts to outplay the Indian bid (Zhao 2012, pp.119-131). Apart from this, both the states were competing with each other in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia in energy exploration (Bajpae 2005). Similarly, the Chinese refusal to issue a visa for the people of Arunachal Pradesh and subsequent issue of stapled visa to the Kashmiris has been one of the major bones of contention between Indian and China for a long time (The Indian Express, 2007; Luttwak, 2012, pp.78-79).

## **Conclusion**

The relationship between India and China during the first decade of the 21st century witnessed several ups and downs. The Indian president visited China to ease the tension that erupted following India's nuclear detonation and the Karmapa incident. Since then, both the countries have taken several measures to improve their relationship and several high-level visits have exchanged. Few important agreements also have been signed between New Delhi and Beijing to facilitate the growing bilateral trade, including the agreement to open the Nathu La pass. The India-China cooperation also reached a new high when both the countries decided to go for joint bidding and to co-operate with each other in international oil exploration. However, the promises deemed low as the two countries slowly entered into competition in many areas.

During this period the attitude of the Indian Parliament towards India's China policy was mostly cooperative as well as cautious. While most of the constructive initiatives, such as the improvement of relationship and promotion of trade between India and China were appreciated by the members of the Parliament. But the matter that affects India's national interest, including the Sino-Pakistan Nuclear cooperation and the visa issues with China, has been opposed by Parliament as a whole. The Indian Parliament, at large has been encouraging greater Sino-Indian trade and economic engagement and also encouraged the opening of the Nathu La to pass for border trade. However, there was a little hesitation among the members of the Parliament about the attitude of China towards India and the growing gap between the volume of importing and exporting in the bilateral trade with China. There was overall consensus among all sections of the Parliament for greater relation with China and no political party, whether the ruling party or opposition has opposed to improving relations with China.

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