

Committee: Security Council

Issue: The Sino-Indian Border Dispute

Student Officer: Alexandros Ballis

Position: President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Alexandros Ballis and I am a 11th grader at the German School of Thessaloniki and I'll be serving as the President in this year's Security Council.

First of all, I would like to congratulate all of you on both your decision to get involved in the challenging, but at the same time, exciting world of Model United Nations, as well as for choosing to participate in such a great conference. I can assure you that MUN is an incredible experience, since you get the chance to involve yourselves in current affairs and issues that will define our generation, improve your public speaking and negotiating skills, ameliorate your use of the English language and last, but certainly not least, make new friends!

The topics of this year's agenda are of utmost importance. However, this study guide will focus on the third topic of the agenda, namely "The Sino-Indian Border Dispute". The dispute between China and India concerning their borders and the territorial status of several areas between those two countries is an ongoing dispute that has caused instability in the area. Seeing that there is a risk of escalation between the world's two most populous countries, also having established themselves as nuclear powers, the possibility of a war is not far away. Therefore, efficient measures that will solve the crisis as soon as possible are needed.

This study guide, as mentioned, will provide you with some basic knowledge and explain the important aspects of the matter. However, be reminded that this study guide is anything but enough for your research on your country's policy. You are highly encouraged to conduct further research, in order to understand your country's view on the topic and be fully prepared for the conference.

My email address, alexandros.ballis@yahoo.com, always remains open for you. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this study guide, our topic, your delegation's policy or the rules of procedure in general.

I'm looking forward to meeting you all in person,

Alexandros Ballis

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Sino-Indian border dispute is the outcome of the failure of India and China to mutually agree upon the exact alignment and delimitation of their common boundaries within the Himalayan area, in which the two nuclear-armed Asian neighbors share a 3,500-kilometer unmarked border. India claims that there were treaties between India and Tibet that determine the boundaries in certain sections, while the other areas are traditionally part of India, which is also established due to their custom and tradition. China doubts about Tibet's past authority to conclude treaties and firmly supports the idea of new delimitation of the Sino-Indian borders. These border problems are rooted in the demarcation of the boundaries by the British colonial rules back in the decolonization period.



Figure 1: Map of the Line of Actual Control¹

¹ Jazeera, Al. "Mapping India And China's Disputed Borders". *Interactive.Aljazeera.Com*, 2020, <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2020/mapping-india-and-china-disputed-borders/index.html>.

Nowadays, China occupies the Aksai Chin plateau and claims 90.000 square kilometers of territory in Arunachal Pradesh, one of the Indian states. This specific area is shown as Southern Tibet in Chinese maps; On the other hand, India disputes all these claims and claims 38.000 square kilometers of territory near the Ladakh region that is currently being occupied by China. Generally speaking, the border can be grouped into three different sectors: the Central, the Eastern and the Western.

The two nations are also competing against one another in the infrastructure sector, seeing that both of them are building infrastructures, such as the India-China Boarder Roads (ICBR), along the border, commonly known as the Line of Actual Control.

The Indian project of the ICBR has been one of the main reasons behind the 2020 skirmishes in the area. Overall, 2020 can be described as one of the most violent years. In April, rival soldiers were engaged in skirmishes at several points of the mountain border between India and China, while the June clash in the Galwan Valley, a part of the Ladakh region in India, has been the first deadly incident after nearly 50 years, which resurged the conflict. At least 20 Indian soldiers were killed, and many others were injured; China did not acknowledge any deaths; however, there were some casualties that were reported after a few months. Since then, thousands of soldiers have been sent to both sides of the de facto border, while many experts are sounding the alarm of this dispute resulting in an unintentional war, with destabilizing consequences for the whole region. An economic fallout is also close, seeing that China and India are one of the biggest trading partners.

Political tensions between the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping are also reflecting the territorial dispute between those two countries.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Line of Actual Control (LAC)

“The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory. India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km. It is divided into three sectors: the eastern

sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, the middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and the western sector in Ladakh.”²

Line of Control (LoC)

“The LOC is a 450-mile-long military control line which serves as a frontier slicing the disputed Indian and Pakistani governed parts of Kashmir into two. Both countries claim the region in full. The line is covered in most parts with heavy coils of barbed wire—a fence put in place by India—and dotted with Indian and Pakistani check-posts.”³

De facto boundary

“An international or administrative boundary whose existence and legality are not recognized, but which is a practical division between separate national and provincial administering authorities.”⁴

Plateau

“A plateau is a flat, elevated landform that rises sharply above the surrounding area on at least one side. Plateaus occur on every continent and take up a third of the Earth's land. They are one of the four major landforms, along with mountains, plains, and hills.”⁵

Clash

A clash refers to a violent confrontation, skirmish.

Ambush

An ambush refers to an “attack by surprise from a hidden place”.⁶

Standoff

² "Line Of Actual Control (LAC): Where It Is Located, And Where India And China Differ". *The Indian Express*, 2020, <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/line-of-actual-control-where-it-is-located-and-where-india-and-china-differ-6436436/>.

³ Singh, Karan. "What Is The Line Of Control? – The Short Answer". *WSJ*, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/BL-263B-8246>.

⁴ "De Facto Boundary". *Thefreedictionary.Com*, 2020, <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/de+facto+boundary>.

⁵ "Plateau | National Geographic Society". *Nationalgeographic.Org*, 2020, <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/plateau/print/>.

⁶ "Definition Of AMBUSH". *Merriam-Webster.Com*, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ambush>.

“A standoff is a situation in which neither of two opposing groups or forces will make a move until the other one does something, so nothing can happen until one of them gives way.”⁷

Confrontation

“A situation of mutual hostility between two powers or nations without open warfare. a state of conflict between two antagonistic forces”⁸.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Background and battles between the parties

The Sino-Indian border dispute became prominent in July 1958, when China published a map showing many Indian territories as Chinese. This map was strongly objected and criticized by the Indian government and a plethora of diplomatic exchanges started after that event. In a letter by the Premier Chou En Lai both sides acknowledged that there were differences between their views over the borders.

McMahon Line

The McMahon Line was the result of the 1914 Shimla Treaty, which took place between India and Tibet, and was designed by Sir Henry McMahon, Foreign Secretary in the Government of British India. This 890-kilometers long line marks the boundary between India and the China-occupied area of the eastern Himalayan region. However, due to the fact that the Shimla Treaty was signed by representatives of India and Tibet, China recognizes neither this treaty nor the McMahon Line claiming that Tibet is a Chinese territory and therefore the Tibetan representatives are not given the right to accept any treaties without China's consent. Beijing questions the legitimacy of that agreement and argues that it is not binding on it and demands rights over the Arunachal Pradesh area.

Sino-Indian War

The Sino-Indian war is a four-week war between China and India over a border dispute that took place in 1962. It was the only war that the two coun-

⁷ "Standoff Definition And Meaning | Collins English Dictionary". *Collinsdictionary.Com*, 2020, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/standoff>.

⁸ "Definition Of Confrontation | Dictionary.Com". *Www.Dictionary.Com*, 2020, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/confrontation>.

tries have fought and has caused several casualties and caused the life of thousands of Indians. Aksai Chin, a region in the Western part of the disputed regions, was being retained by China, who wanted a passage between Tibet and western China. A truce and the formation of the Line of Actual Control, the de facto boundary, gave the Sino-Indian a war.

Nathu La Clashes

Nathu La is one of the highest mountains in India and more specifically in the

Sikkim state, a very small Indian state between Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan. The Nathu La clashes took place in 1967, when the People's Liberation Army attacked the Indian Forces.

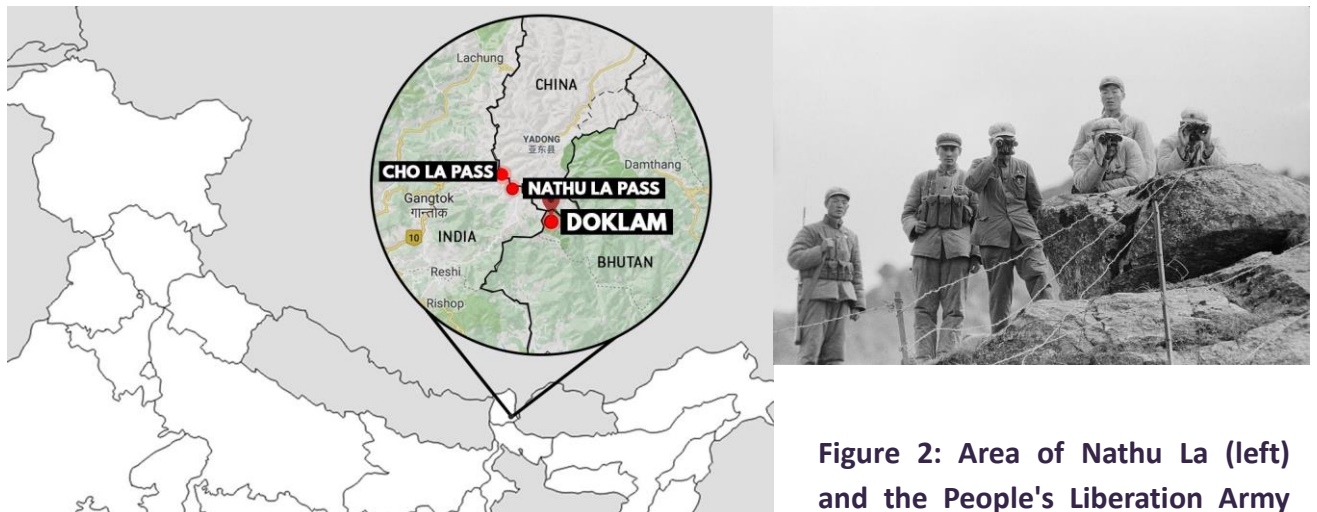


Figure 2: Area of Nathu La (left) and the People's Liberation Army

Tulung La ambush

The Tulung La ambush took place in 1975 and was the last skirmish that was reported between the two countries. Four Indian soldiers were snared by the Chinese soldiers and afterwards killed in the area of Arunachal Pradesh. While New Delhi blamed Beijing for crossing into Indian territory, Beijing dismissed that claim.

Doklam Standoff

The Doklam Standoff occurred in 2017 in Bhutan's Doklam region and lasted approximately one month. The Indian army was sent to the area to stop China from constructing a road in the aforementioned area. As mentioned before, the Doklam plateau is one of the most strategically significant areas for China, as it grants them a passage between India's northeastern states and the rest

of the country, while it is being claimed by Bhutan, an ally of India. This standoff was solved after negotiations between the two sides.

Ladakh confrontation

The Ladakh confrontation took place during June 2020 and the fighting between the armed forces of China and India led to the killing of 20 and the injury of approximately 76 Indian soldiers. The Ladakh confrontation was the result of the low-level tensions that started in early May after the injury of several soldiers of both sides due to some fistfights in the Sikkim area.

CHINA-INDIA Border dispute

India and China share 3,488km-long land border, most of which remain disputed.

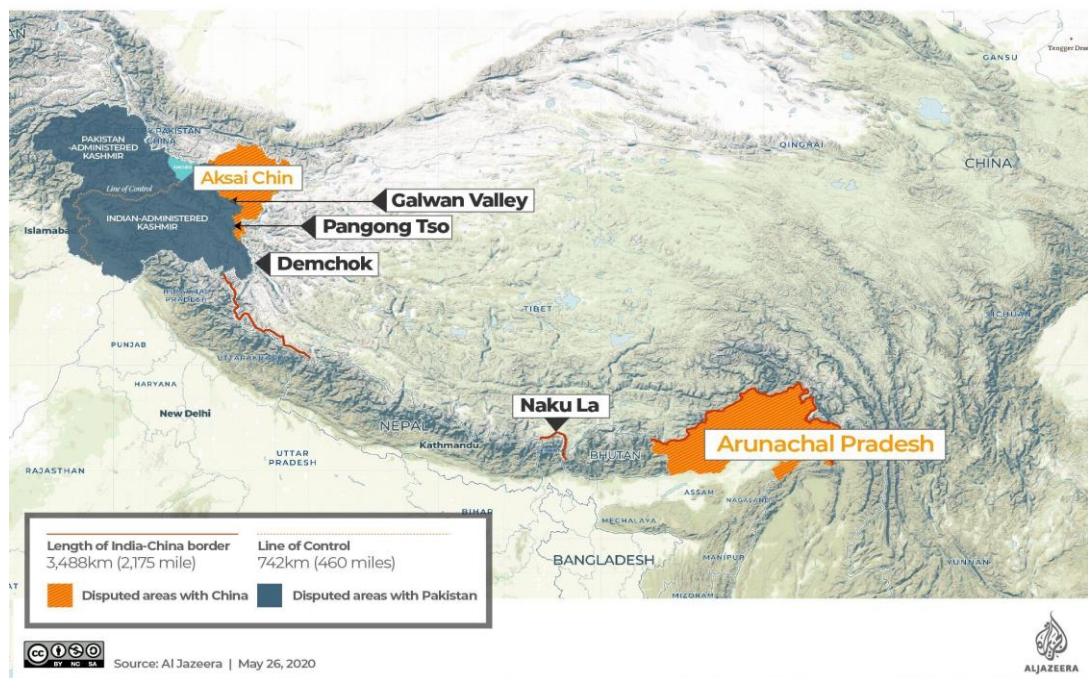


Figure 3: Map showing the three disputed areas

The Western Sector (Ladakh)

The Himalayan region of Ladakh in the region of Jammu and Kashmir along with the border regions of Himachal Pradesh form the Western sector of the Line of Actual Control. The Western sector can be described as the most active one, seeing that rival soldiers have clashed in many areas (such as the Galwan Valley, the Pangong Tso Lake and Demchok), while the Chinese soldiers built some bunkers and brought ar-

mored military equipment in the area. Experts are claiming that India has upgraded their defense policy near the border in Ladakh, while the change in the status of Kashmir last year triggered the latest Chinese pushback.

Territorial claims over Kashmir

Kashmir, one of the administrative regions in the Northern part of the country, is one of the most militarized zones in the world, seeing that more than 500 thousand Indian soldiers are based in the region.

The region of Kashmir is claimed by India, Pakistan as well as China and have fought several wars since its independence from the British colonial rulers in 1947.

Nowadays, a small portion of Kashmir, called Aksai Chin, is under the control of China, while the biggest part is under the control of India and

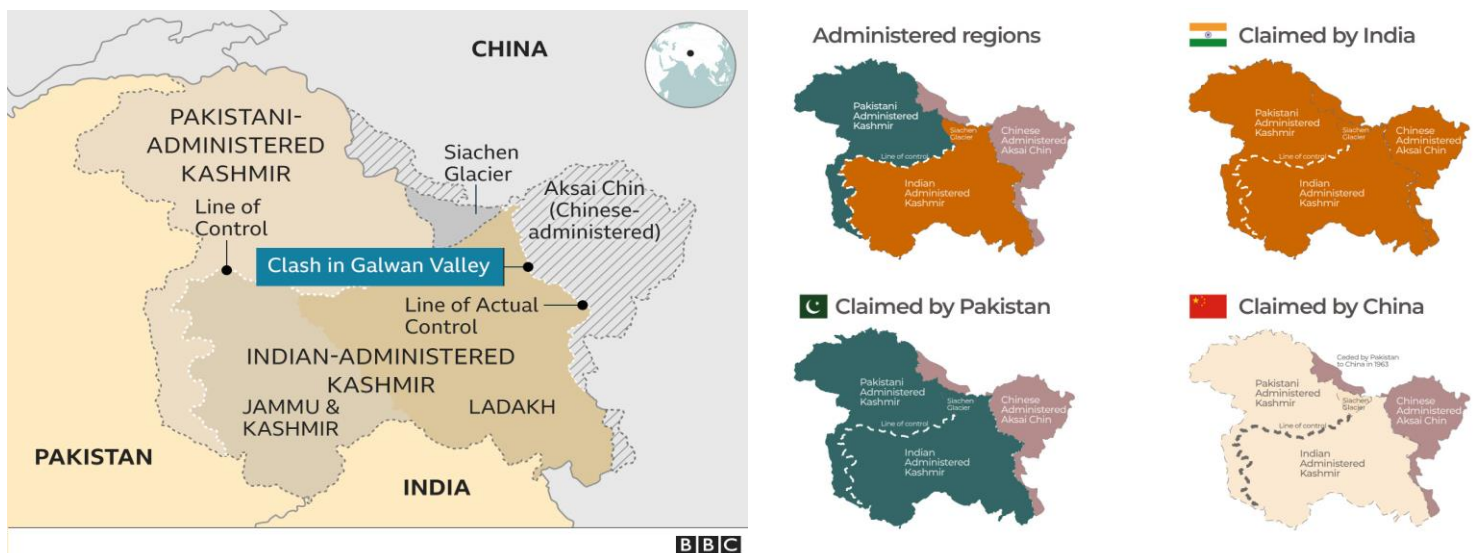


Figure 4: The Western Sector, Ladakh region (left) and the different territorial claims over Kashmir (right)

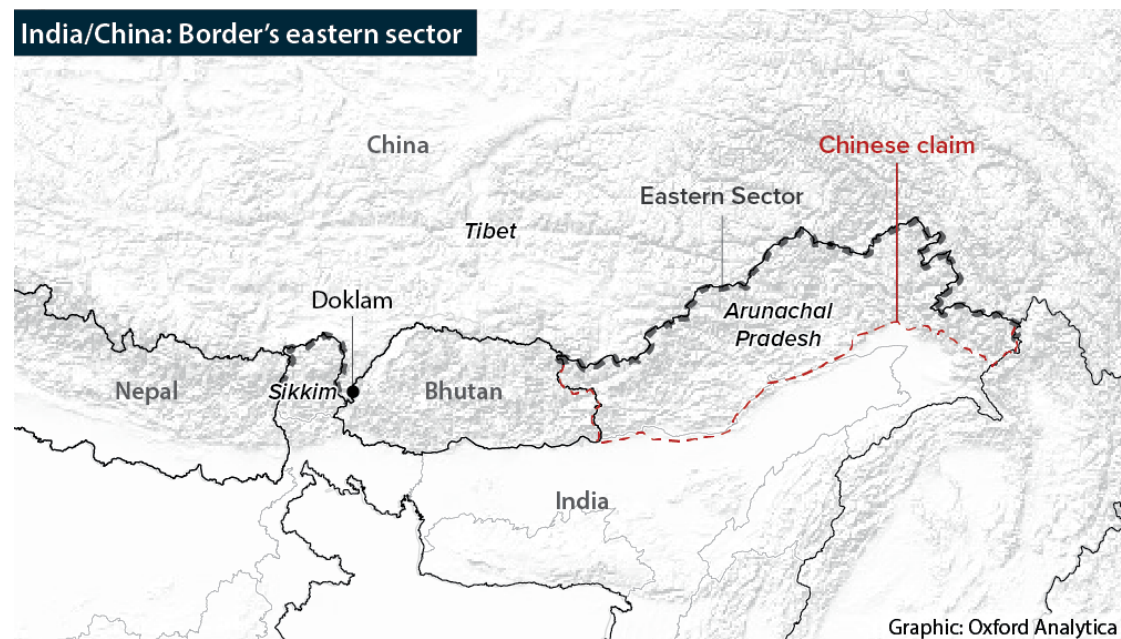


Figure 5: The Central Sector (the Doklam plateau)

Pakistan.

The Central Sector (Doklam Plateau)

The Central sector is the shortest, among the three, with a distance of approximately 90 kilometers. The Doklam Plateau, which is at the tripoint of Bhutan, India and China is the main area of conflict. Although there have been several clashes such as the Nathu La in 1967 and the Doklam standoff in 2017, the Doklam plateau is one of the



most peaceful areas in the LAC.

Figure 6: The Eastern Sector, Arunachal Pradesh area

The Eastern Sector (Arunachal Pradesh)

Arunachal Pradesh, which forms the biggest part of the Eastern sector, shares a 1,129 kilometers long border with China. This specific state is claimed by Beijing and was the center of the 1962 Sino-Indian War.

India-China Border Roads (ICBR)

The India-China Border Roads is a project, which was designed by the Government of India and seeks the creation of infrastructure such as roads, tunnels, bridges, airports, railway and ports in the areas near the borders. While China has upgraded many of their infrastructure in Tibet (such as their airbases and the railway system), India tries to counterbalance the situation.

The Foreign Ministry Spokesperson of China, Zhao Lijian, said that “for some time, the Indian side has been ramping up infrastructure development along the border and stepping up military deployment that is the root cause for the tensions between the two sides.”⁹

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

India

China is one of the biggest trading partners of India, with an annual bilateral trade worth approximately 92 billion American dollars. Shyam Saran, former Indian foreign Secretary, underlined the importance of keeping good economic relations and mentioned that any “knee-jerk reactions” against China will harm the economy of India, while it will be really difficult for New Delhi to find alternative suppliers in the near future.¹⁰

Vietnam

Vietnam and China are also on a dispute, seeing that China claims that large parts of Vietnam, mostly Islands in the South China Sea, belong to it. Therefore, Vietnam supports India and expostulates with China’s claims.

United States of America

The White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnaney recently stated that “China’s aggressive stance along the India-China border fits with a larger a pattern of Chinese aggression in other parts of the world and these actions only confirm the true nature of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).”¹¹ The White House also supported India’s decision to ban several Chinese apps, such as TikTok, with the Secretary of State Mike

⁹ "India Building Border Infra, Deploying Military Root Cause Of Tension: China". *Hindustan Times*, 2020, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/india-building-border-infra-deploying-military-root-cause-of-tension-china/story-HJlhvB3dUAsTYB8ldDO7ck.html>.

¹⁰ "How Modi Has Made A 'Nehruvian' Half-Blunder On China & Ignored Investing In The Military". *Theprint*, 2020, <https://theprint.in/national-interest/how-modi-has-made-a-nehruvian-half-blunder-on-china-ignored-investing-in-the-military/543859/>.

¹¹ "The Chinese Communist Party’S Ideology And Global Ambitions | The White House". *The White House*, 2020, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/chinese-communist-partys-ideology-global-ambitions/>.

Pompeo stating, “that those apps serve as appendages of the CCP’s surveillance state”.¹²

France

Florence Parly, the French defense minister, announced through a letter of him to her Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh that France will offer “steadfast and friendly support” to India, while she also expressed “deep solidarity” over the death of the 20 Indian soldiers that were killed by the Chinese troops.

“This was a hard blow against the soldiers, their families, and the nation. In these difficult circumstances, I wish to express my steadfast and friendly support, along with that of the French armed forces,” Florence Parly commented, adding that France is ready to discuss the issue in India. In addition, the French Navy is also closely cooperating with the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean.¹³

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is also in a dispute with China due to the status of Hong Kong. The UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson commented in light of the Ladakh confrontation that “violence is in no one’s interest”, while China is committing “clear and serious breach of several agreements”. A British high commission spokesperson expressed concern about the stand-off with China and said that “the U.K. encourages China and India to engage in dialogue on issues relating to the border.”¹⁴

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation is taking part in trilateral summits with India and China in order to address the border standoff. They are being described as key-mediators since the 1960s and have tried to facilitate the de-escalation of the dispute.

Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)

The ASEAN has been silent on the dispute and the several incidents that happened, however the 10 leaders are opposing China’s claim over the South China Sea. Their

¹² "Secretary Michael R. Pompeo At A Press Availability - United States Department Of State". *United States Department Of State*, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-at-a-press-availability-7/>.

¹³ "France Ready To Provide 'Steadfast And Friendly Support' To India Amid Standoff With China". *The Asian Age*, 2020, <https://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/010720/france-ready-to-provide-steadfast-and-friendly-support-to-india-amid-standoff-with-china.html>.

¹⁴ "UK PM Boris Johnson Urges China And India To Engage In Dialogue". *RUSI*, 2020, <https://rusi.org/in-the-news/uk-pm-boris-johnson-urges-china-and-india-engage-dialogue>.

stance over the matter of the South China Sea can be clearly understood by the following statement: “We reaffirmed that the 1982 UNCLOS is the basis for determining maritime entitlements, sovereign rights, jurisdiction and legitimate interests over maritime zones”. This shows that all members of the ASEAN are most likely to support India, if needed.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1912	McMahon Line is drafted, as a result of the Shimla Treaty
1947	China begins the construction of a road connecting Xinjiang and western Tibet through the area of Aksai Chin
1960	An agreement is signed between Jawaharlal Nehru, Indian prime minister, and his Chinese counterpart Zhou Enlai
October, 1962	The Sino-Indian war took place
September, 1967	Nathu La clashes
October, 1975	Tulung La ambush
1993	First bilateral treaty between India and China is being signed
1996	Second bilateral treaty between India and China is being signed
2005	Third bilateral treaty between India and China is being signed
2012	Fourth bilateral treaty between India and China is being signed
2013	Fifth bilateral treaty between India and China is being signed

September, 2014	A standoff begins when India starts constructing a canal in a border village
June, 2017	The Doklam standoff took place
May 5, 2020	Chinese and Indian soldiers clash at Pangong Two, a lake in the Ladakh region
May 10, 2020	Face-off battle at the Muguthang valley
May 21, 2020	Chinese troops entered into the Galwan River Valley in the Ladakh region
June 15, 2020	An Indian colonel and 19 Indian soldiers were killed in a violent face-off with the Chinese troops at the Galwan valley.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Five bilateral treaties between India and China

1993

“Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India - China Border Areas”.

This agreement was the framework for the border security between the two parties. More specifically, the two parties agreed upon reducing troop levels compatible with friendly and good relations between them.

1996

“Agreement on Confidence-Building measures in the military field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas”.

Through this agreement the two parties agreed upon some border security and confidence measures. It called for military disclosure during border exercises and for the reduction of troop levels in the border areas. It also gave the two parties to observe the troop movements of the other party upon invitation.

2005

“Protocol on the Modalities for the implementation of Confidence-Building measures in the in the military field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas”.

This protocol was a reminder of implementing the previous two agreements. Both parties also agreed upon the modalities to implement the confidence building measures including procedures for exchange of information regarding troop movements and the conduct of bi-annual meetings on border issues.

2012

“Establishment of a working mechanism for consultation and coordination on India-China Border Affairs”.

Both sides reviewed the situation in the Line of Actual Control and agreed to continue to maintain close consultations at a diplomatic and military level.

2013

“Border Defense Cooperation Agreement between India and China”.

This agreement was signed between the two parties on October 23, 2013 and was aiming to maintain peace along the Line of Actual Control. It is a ten-article agreement that promotes cooperation and communication between those two nuclear-armed states. According to Reuters, “Under the new deal, the two sides will give notice of patrols along the ill-defined border to ensure that patrols do not “tail” each other to reduce the chance of confrontation and exercise “maximum self-restraint” should the two sides come face to face in areas where the line of control is unclear”.¹⁵

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

In general, the two nations have tried to maintain peace in the past, however, the effort didn’t succeed. Seeing that the claims of both nations are quite absolute and both nations are not willing to concede any of their land to the other, a potential agreement is very unlikely. Nevertheless, the two nations should keep bilateral relations with each other, in order to avoid any potential conflicts and several other dis-

¹⁵ Staff, Reuters. “China, India Sign Deal Aimed At Soothing Himalayan Tension”. *U.S.*, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-india-idUSBRE99M04J20131023>.

puts. Bearing in mind that both nations are nuclear-armed, the whole process of solving the issue requires cautious handling.

The fundamental questions that need to be addressed are the following:

First of all, the question of a third-party mediator (such as the U.N. or any other country) is really important, seeing that both China and India are willing to do everything to validate their claims, and that includes a nuclear war as well.

Furthermore, the Security Council also needs to decide the role that it will play thus, determining the borders between the two countries and the political status of many areas such as the area of Kashmir. Lastly, seeing that both countries are armed on a nuclear level, the Council needs to make sure that terrorism in the region is prevented and also address the heavy use of nuclear threats, as it can harm international



security well beyond the bilateral level.

Figure 7: Sign on the borders between India and China in the Central Sector

BRICS: The New Development Bank

Both China and India are members of the BRICS, a group of nations that created several projects through the New Development Bank. The New Development Bank may be a space where the two nations, China and India, can closely cooperate with each other and perhaps stimulate the two countries in starting negotiations with each other over the borders.

In addition, the socioeconomic progress of the aforementioned areas should be safeguarded and therefore measures maintaining peace and frameworks that support the economy and social development should be implemented.

Boycott and sanctions

A boycott and sanctions to products may harm the economy and therefore should not be considered as a possible solution.

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