



Forum: 1st Committee of the GA

Issue: Stabilising the Sino-Indian Border (Indo-Chinese)

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Description of the issue:

India and China are the two most populated countries, with a combined population of around 2.7 billion people. Both nations have nuclear weapons and two of the largest armies in the world. The latest incidents at the Sino-Indian Border (Indo-Chinese Border) heats up a long on going conflict between two global Asian super powers. Both nations have a history of border and territorial disputes. In May 2020 according to the Chinese authorities, Indian troops crossed the border at Ladakh twice while “provoking and attacking” Chinese soldiers. Both nations stated that no shots were fired. Indian officials gave record of both parties having fought each other with bare hands, stones and iron rods. The conflict resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers.

China and India's Disputed Border



Source: Adapted from U.S. State Department and Natural Earth.

Background information:

The roots of the Indo-Chinese conflict can be tracked back to 1914 a time where both nations did not even exist in their current form. At that time India was still a colony of the British Empire and China was called Republic of China. In 1914 representatives from British India, ROC and Tibet met to negotiate a treaty to declare and to draw borders between China and British India.

“The Chinese, balking at proposed terms that would have allowed Tibet to be autonomous and remain under Chinese control, refused to sign the deal. But Britain and Tibet signed a treaty establishing what would be called the McMahon Line, named after a British colonial official, Henry McMahon, who proposed the border. India maintains that the McMahon Line, a 550-mile frontier that extends through the Himalayas, is the official legal border between China and India. But China has never accepted it.”¹

India declared its independence from the British Empire in 1947, two years later the Red Revolution led by communist Mao Zedong ended and Mao Zedong proclaimed the People’s Republic of China. Immediately the two most populous nations in the world found themselves facing a row of high tension border disputes during the 1950s. The Chinese government mentioned that there never had been an independent and sovereign Tibet, therefore it could not have signed any kind of treaty what so ever. So in China’s line of arguments no international border has never been established.

¹ Goldman, Russel: “India-China Border Dispute: A Conflict Explained” in *The New York Times*: June 17, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html#:~:text=The%20conflict%20stretches%20back%20to,between%20China%20and%20British%20India.> [last accessed: 20.08.2020]



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“China sought to control critical roadways near its western frontier in Xinjiang, while India and its Western allies saw any attempts at Chinese incursion as part of a wider plot to export Maoist-style Communism across the region.”²

In 1962 the first war between the two nations broke out. Chinese forces crossed the McMahon line, marching onto Indian soil, capturing towns, villages and land strips. The war only lasted a month (Oct. 20th 1962 – Nov. 21st 1962), but resulted in the deaths of approximately 1000 Indian soldiers as well as 3000 captured Indian soldiers. The Chinese casualties were below 800.

“By November, Premier Zhou Enlai of China declared a cease-fire, unofficially redrawing the border near where Chinese troops had conquered territory. It was the so-called Line-of Actual Control.

Tensions came to a head again in 1967 along two mountain passes, Nathu La and Cho La, that connected Sikkim — then a kingdom and a protectorate of India — and China’s Tibet Autonomous Region.

A scuffle broke out when Indian troops began laying barbed wire along what they recognized as the border. The scuffles soon escalated when a Chinese military unit began firing artillery shells at the Indians. In the ensuing conflict, more than 150 Indians and 340 Chinese were killed.

The clashes in September and October 1967 in those passes would later be considered the second all-out war between China and India.

But India prevailed, destroying Chinese fortifications in Nathu La and pushing them farther back into their territory near Cho La. The change in positions, however, meant that China and India each had different and conflicting ideas about the location of the Line of Actual Control.

The fighting was the last time that troops on either side would be killed — until the skirmishes in the Galwan Valley on Tuesday. Indian news outlets reported that Chinese soldiers had also been killed, but Beijing was tight-lipped.

It would be 20 more years before India and China clashed again at the disputed border.

In 1987, the Indian military was conducting a training operation to see how fast it could move troops to the border. The large number of troops and material arriving next to Chinese outposts surprised Chinese commanders — who responded by advancing toward what they considered the Line of Actual Control. Realizing the potential to inadvertently start a war, both India and China de-escalated, and a crisis was averted.

After decades of patrolling the border, a Chinese platoon pitched a camp near Daulat Beg Oldi in April 2013. The Indians soon followed, setting up their own base fewer than 1,000 feet away.

The camps were later fortified by troops and heavy equipment.

By May, the sides had agreed to dismantle both encampments, but disputes about the location of the Line of Actual Control persisted.

³In June 2017, the Chinese set to work building a road in the Doklam Plateau, an area of the Himalayas controlled not by India, but by its ally Bhutan.

² Goldman: “India-China Border Dispute”.

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html#:~:text=The%20conflict%20stretches%20back%20to,between%20China%20and%20British%20India.>



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The plateau lies on the border of Bhutan and China, but India sees it as a buffer zone that is close to other disputed areas with China.

Indian troops carrying weapons and operating bulldozers confronted the Chinese with the intention of destroying the road. A standoff ensued, soldiers threw rocks at each other, and troops from both sides suffered injuries.

In August, the countries agreed to withdraw from the area, and China stopped construction on the road.”⁴

The dispute in 2017 was the last major one until June 2020.

Possible Solutions:

There would be multiple ways to solve the issue. You can find some orientation by looking at solutions found for other border disputes, such as the Korean conflict. In your research you should keep in mind that both nations are in the possession of nuclear arms and weapons, so an escalation needs to be avoided. Also, it is always a good option to have neutral nations to manage the negotiations.

Glossary:

Line of Actual Control (LAC): The LAC is the demarcation line that separates the Chinese from the Indian territory. An official border has never been negotiated and therefore the 3400 km long LAC substitutes the border between the two Asian super powers.

The **1996 bilateral agreement** says "neither side shall open fire... conduct blast operations or hunt with guns or explosives within two kilometres of the Line of Actual Control" (

Tibet: is a Chinese region in [East Asia](#) covering much of the [Tibetan Plateau](#) spanning about 2.5 million km². It is the traditional homeland of the [Tibetan people](#) as well as some other [ethnic groups](#) such as [Monpa](#), [Tamang](#), [Qiang](#), [Sherpa](#), and [Lhoba peoples](#) and is now also inhabited by considerable numbers of [Han Chinese](#) and [Hui people](#). Tibet is constantly suppressed by the Chinese government, any independence movement get stroked down.

⁴ Goldman: “India-China Border dispute“



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MacMahon Line: is the demarcation line between **Tibet** and the **North-east region** of India proposed by British colonial administrator Sir Henry McMahon at the 1914 Simla Convention signed between British and Tibetan representatives.

How to prepare as a delegate:

As a delegate you will have to write a Position Paper on two of the issues given, as well as at least one Resolution.

Is your country located in the region?

Which of the two parties does your country favor?

Does your country have nuclear arms?

From what other solved conflicts can we learn and project it on this one?

Should any of the parties be punished for their actions?

Useful links and Sources:

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/04/hustling-in-himalayas-sino-indian-border-confrontation-pub-81979>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/16/world/asia/india-china-border.html>

<https://hbr.org/2007/12/china-india-the-power-of-two>

<https://asiatimes.com/2020/06/1962-india-china-war-redux/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html#:~:text=The%20conflict%20stretches%20back%20to,between%20China%20and%20British%20India.>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53062484#:~:text=It%20happened%20in%20Galwan%20Valley,provoking%20and%20attacking%20Chinese%20personnel%22.&text=Both%20sides%20insisted%20that%20no,hands%2C%20iron%20rods%20and%20stones.>