



India and China Accuse Each Other of Provocations Along Their Disputed Border

In one of the latest developments this week with the ongoing standoff between the two countries, India and China have accused each other of military provocations along their disputed border in the Himalayas. Tensions have been high on both sides since a May clash near Pangong Lake, and New Delhi and Beijing have held several rounds of talks without success in an effort to deescalate the situation. This most recent incident is believed to be the first time that shots have been fired along the Sino-Indian border in over four decades, with each side blaming the other for violating bilateral agreements and engaging in provocative actions. The border confrontation has also damaged the economic relationship between China and India, as the latter has restricted Chinese investments into Indian tech companies and banned several popular Chinese apps. Ultimately, the two countries share a long and disputed 2,175-mile border, known as the Line of Actual Control, which has left them subject to potential territorial conflict because of its undefined nature.

China and India fought a border war in 1962 which ended in an uneasy truce and established the Line of Actual Control. However, because the two countries do not agree on the precise demarcation of the border, over the years they have accused the other of crossing it and seeking to expand their overall territory. As a result of this, in 1996, China and India signed an agreement outlining that neither side shall open fire within 2 kilometers of the Line of Actual Control to prevent provocative military activities. While this had been working for the most part in avoiding any serious armed conflict, tensions have flared over the past few months, leading to the current state of affairs which has included the worst round of skirmishes in decades.

Some regional analysts have projected that the ability to control the situation may depend on whether or not Chinese and Indian forces are able to contain the clashes, and prevent them from spreading to other areas along their massive border. This could prove difficult, due to the fact that they share thousands of kilometers of disputed territory which are hard to patrol and simultaneously monitor. Experts have also pointed out that while the breakdown of existing agreements and protocols that have been in place for years between the two countries is worrying, more largescale military conflict can and should be averted so long as they continue to practice relative restraint.

The recent rise in border tensions is thought to have been partially brought on by controversial action taken by India during the summer of last year. In August of 2019, India unilaterally declared Ladakh a federal territory and separated it from disputed Kashmir, putting an end to its semi-autonomous status and straining the relationship between New Delhi and Beijing. China was one of the countries which strongly condemned the move and eventually raised the issue at the U.N. Security Council. Thus, some believe that this course of events exacerbated already existing tensions and led to the border clashes which took place in May and June of this year.

It remains to be seen how the situation will unfold, however tensions along the Sino-Indian border are likely to continue so long as the countries are in dispute over its parameters.